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**THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION IN MODERN CHINA  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Yu Qi**

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**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education**

**School of Education**

**University of Durham, 1991**



**- 8 SEP 1992**

## Abstract

The civilization of China is over five thousand years old. The present system of education, however, is almost wholly a product of the twentieth century. During that period its development has been uneven and has been variously retarded by the weight of tradition, by a series of wars and by political experiments. This thesis is an account of that development, an assessment of the achievement and an analysis of the problems of Chinese education.

There are nine chapters. Chapter one is introductory and presents the geographical, economic and political context of education in China. Chapter Two outlines the historical background and assesses the powerful and enduring influence of the traditional civil service examination. Chapter Three and Chapter Four describe the introduction of modern education into China and its development up to 1966. Chapter Five is an account of the theoretical and social determinants of the Cultural Revolution and its consequences for education. Chapter Six discusses the educational reform which has been undertaken in China after the Cultural Revolution. Chapter Seven outlines the present system of educational administration in China and Chapter Eight is a consideration of the provision for higher education both formal and non-formal. The final Chapter is an assessment of what has been achieved and an analysis of the remaining problems which have still to be solved. Throughout the thesis special care has been taken to obtain the most recent and the most accurate statistical data which is available.

In spite of its chequered history and the formidable difficulties which it has faced, the achievements of education in China in the present century have been substantial. Its continued progress is crucial for the future development of the nation.

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## Acknowledgements

I wish to use this opportunity to express my great gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. R. F. Goodings, for his invaluable advice and guidance during the progress of this thesis.

I also wish to thank my husband for his help in collecting references from China.

Finally, I am grateful to my parents and parents-in-law for their encouragement and those friends who helped type this thesis.

# Chapter I

## General Introduction

### 1.1 Geography

#### 1.1.1 Topography

The People's Republic of China is situated in the eastern part of Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. It is the third largest nation in the world after the USSR and Canada with a land area of 9.6 million square kilometers, one fifteenth of the total land area of the earth and one quarter of Asia. China's land boundaries measure over 20,000 km in length with a coastline of over 18,000 km. From east to west it measures over 5000 km and from north to south over 5,500 km.

China has a variety of terrains ranging from the high plateau in the west to the plains in the east. Mountains comprise 33% of the country's total area, plateau 26%, basins 19%, plains 12% and hills 10%. Plains and basins comprise the richest areas for agricultural production. Also a various collection of crops and trees are grown in hilly areas. Plateau and mountains unsuitable for agricultural production are found mainly in northwestern and central China. That is the reason why the majority of Chinese cities are found in the central, eastern and southeastern areas favoured by a gentle terrain.

China has a very rich resource of rivers from which its irrigation system has been developed and waters its vast land. The major rivers are Yangtze River, Yellow River, Pearl River and Heilongjiang River.

#### 1.1.2 Climate

China has various climatic regions ranging from the tropical, subtropical, temperate to the high frigid zones. The majority of the area is in the temperate zone. The

climate from north to south differs greatly with a temperature difference of over 30°C between Harbin and Guangzhou. While the north is covered with snow in winter, the inhabitants of Hainan Island in the further south start spring planting. In fact, the growing season in the south lasts almost the whole year providing two and three crops compared to the one-crop season of the north.

Rainfall varies greatly, being highest in the southwest and decreasing towards the northwest, where the huge province of Xinjiang is so dry that it depends for its water supply on the melting of snow from its nearest mountains. Rainfall also varies greatly from season to season, and from year to year, with about 80% normally falling between May and October. The annual average rainfall can be up to 630 mm.

### **1.1.3 Communication and Transport**

China has an extensive railway network which stretches to nearly every medium size city inland. Other forms of transport include highways, waterways (rivers, canals and sea coasts) and civil airlines. For short distances bicycles are the most popular vehicles and China manufactures the largest number of bicycles in the world. For transport in China the highway is the most used. China's total highway length is 1 million km. Except for Motuo county in Tibet Autonomous Region, where geological conditions are poor and population is small, all cities and county towns have highways. These road networks have promoted the developments of local economies and provided a great convenience in the life of the people. In 1984 the passenger traffic per 10 thousand persons was as follows: railway 113,353; highway 390,336; waterway 25,974; civil airlines 554. The figures for freight traffic in the same year were as follows: (10 thousand tons) railway 124,074; highway 78,868; waterway 46,892; civil aviation 15.0<sup>[1]</sup>.

Telegraph and telephone networks are well developed; television's 38 stations reached an estimated 20-30 million viewers, while radio reaches the majority of the population. In 1984 the total number of post offices was over 5 million <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **1.1.4 Administration Region Division**

China is divided for administrative purposes into twenty-two provinces, five au-

onomous regions and three municipalities which are administered directly by the central government. They are equivalent to the provinces in the administrative system. Under the provinces there are provincial cities, counties and towns as well as villages.

## **1.2 Population**

### **1.2.1 Growth**

China's population has grown from almost 550,000,000 at the time of liberation in 1949 to 1,160 million in 1990 as announced by the State Statistics Bureau on Oct.30,1990 on the basis of the fourth census results<sup>[3]</sup>. This is the largest population of any country in the world. Children under 14 years of age constituted only 28.04% of the population in 1988 compared with 40.7% in 1964. The proportion of people from 15 to 64 years of age increased from 61.6% in 1982 to 66.53% in 1988. Those over 65 years old amounted to 5.33%. The average life expectancy rose from 35 years in 1949 to 69.05 years in 1987. In the 1970s China first introduced the nationwide policy of family planning which caused the birth rate to drop dramatically from 33.59 per thousand in 1970 to 20.83 per thousand in 1989. Meanwhile the national growth rate decreased from 25.83 per thousand to 14.32 per thousand. <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **1.2.2 Distribution**

The area of the 22 provinces in eastern China along or near the sea amounts to 40% of the total land area but contains 90% of the population, with 10% in the vast land of northwest and south west China. The population density of Northern and eastern China is approximately 160 persons per square mile while the density in northwestern mountainous areas and desert areas is no more than 1 person per square mile. China's cities contain about 15% of its population. Over 80% of the population live in the countryside .

Provinces Municipalities and Autonomous Regions	Number of Pre- fectures	Number of Cities				
		Total (1)	Equivalent to Pre- fecture	Equivalent to County	Number of Counties	Districts Under City's Administration
Total 30	175	297	148	149	2,069	595
Beijing					9	10
Tianjin					5	13
Hebei	9	12	9	3	137	38
Shanxi	7	10	4	6	96	15
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	8	15	4	11	73	16
Liaoning		13	13		44	56
Jilin	3	9	4	5	38	13
Heilongjiang	4	16	10	6	63	64
Shanghai					10	12
Jiangsu		13	11	2	62	41
Zhejiang	4	9	6	3	67	17
Anhui	8	15	8	7	67	33
Fujian	5	10	4	6	59	14
Jiangxi	5	12	6	6	79	17
Shandong	6	18	8	10	95	31
Henan	8	18	9	9	110	39
Hubei	7	14	8	6	65	21
Hainan	9	18	6	12	86	25
Guangdong	5	16	9	7	93	25

**Table1: Administrative Division of China**

### 1.2.3 Ethnic Groups

The Han nationality makes up 91.96% of the population. In addition, there are

Provinces Municipalities and Autonomous Regions	Number of Pre- fectures	Number of Cities				
		Total (1)	Equivalent to Pre- fecture	Equivalent to County	Number of Counties	Districts Under City's Administration
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	8	11	5	6	76	21
Sichuan	12	16	6	10	179	23
Guizhou	7	6	2	4	77	5
Yunan	15	10	2	8	116	4
Tibet Autono- mous Region	7	1	1		77	1
Shaanxi	6	8	4	4	89	13
Gansu	10	7	3	4	72	7
Qinghai	7	2	1	1	37	4
Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region	2	4	2	2	15	7
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	13	14	3	11	73	10
Taiwan	(not available)					

**Table1: Administrative Division of China, continued**

Source : The Statistical Bureau of P.R.C (eds), Statistical Yearbook of China 1985, Oxford University Press, 1985. p1.

55 minority nationalities both in the hinterlands and the border regions of China comprising 8.04% of the population. According to the fourth census the population of ethnic groups is 91,200,314.<sup>[5]</sup> They are mainly concentrated in the northwest and southwest.

## 1.3 Society and Culture

### 1.3.1 Cultural Tradition

Throughout two thousand year span of Chinese history, its culture has been dominated by Confucian principles which have made Chinese society humanistic, secular, rational, practical in tone and conservative in spirit. In addition ,Daoist works,the LaoZhi,also made a great contribution to the tradition through their concern with understanding nature and encouraging scientific experiments. Another strand in Chinese philosophy is Buddhism which began to appear in China in the first century A.D and became deeply embedded in Chinese culture, flourishing particularly in the Tang Dynasty.

### 1.3.2 Religion

Chinese religion is very complex in relation to local beliefs and practices of the common people. There are folk religions and literate religions as well as foreign religions. The great literate tradition refers to Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Among the various folk religions the veneration of one's ancestor's spirit, the local belief of common people, was the oldest and most pervasive of Chinese religions. It was found in all classes of the society and in all geographical areas. The three literate traditions : Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are sometimes referred to as the three religions of China. Confucianism is the expression of the moral and religious aspects of Chinese civilization. For almost two thousand years it reigned supreme as the official political ideology and dominant intellectual tradition. Daoism started in the first century A.D appealing to the mystical side of human nature. It was linked in some ways with the local beliefs held by the common people. Buddhism was first introduced in to China at least as early as the first century. Its chief attraction lay in its promise of salvation. It was welcomed by the ruling class as well as by the masses of China. Among the foreign religions only Islam and Christianity have survived in China.

### 1.3.3 Language

Chinese language belongs to a branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. It has a basically monosyllabic structure. There is a vast variety of dialects throughout

China due to the size of its land and the population as well as to its many ethnic groups. But Mandarin, the standard spoken Chinese derived from the Beijing Dialect, is the mother tongue spoken by the Han nationality as well as the minorities in China ( In addition to the official language—Mandarin, each minority has its own language.) The structure of Chinese written language is pictographic and ideographic. Its written form, known as the Regular Script "Kai-Su", is a kind of art. In its origin, due to difficulties in mastering this language, it was only a literary language used by scholars and intellectuals, not by the common people. Afterwards when the twenty-six-letter Roman alphabet was used as a aid to pronouncing the written language it became more popular. The spoken Chinese has four tones including two even tones, one rising tone and one falling tone. These tones are essential in distinguishing words that sound the same but have different meanings.

## **1.4 Constitution and History**

### **1.4.1 Constitution**

The people's Republic of China is a socialist country under the leadership of the Communist Party, in which other democratic parties also play a certain role. The highest organ of the state is the National People's Congress (NPC) It is the main legislative organ of the People's government. The Chairman of the People's Republic is its head. The State Council is the highest executive or administrative organ of state power, consisting of several commissions, headed by the Premier, a number of vice premiers and directors of the Commissions. The highest leader of the Communist Party is the Secretary General. The Supreme People's Court is the main juridical organ of the state government. For each state organ there is an equivalent organ at the local levels from provincial level, municipal level to county level.

### **1.4.2 History**

Chinese civilization originated in the Yellow River region as early as 2550 B.C before the Xia Dynasty. The slave system of society was established until the Xia Dynasty. This was followed by the Shang Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty and lasted from 2205 B.C to 221 B.C<sup>[6]</sup>. Afterwards, a feudalist society came into

being under a centralised administration set up by QiShiHuang whose brief Qin Dynasty(221–206 B.C) saw the standardisation of the Chinese written language, currency, weight and measure and the promulgation of a unified system of laws. The subsequent Han Dynasty (202B.C to 220 A.D) established the Chinese culture which lasted until the early twentieth century(the end of the feudalist society). A characteristic of this culture was the civil service examination system, which selected officials on the basis of their knowledge of Confucian classical texts. The Tang Dynasty (618 to 907A.D) was the brilliant period in Chinese history marked by the expansion of the sovereignty , economic and cultural growth and the well-known poetry and literary writings. From the Song Dynasty (960to 1279 A.D) to Yuan(1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644) and the early Qing (1644–1840) Dynasties China enjoyed freedom from any kind of external interference. After the Opium War broke out in 1840 Chinese society gradually changed from being a wholly feudal society to a semi-feudal and semi-colonised society. China was forced to sign many unequal and humiliating treaties with more and more seaports open to foreigners. In 1911 a revolution led by Sun Zhongshan overthrew the corrupt and weak Qing imperial government. After 15 years of warlord chaos the reorganised Guomindang Party established a national government led by Jiang Jieshi in 1927. Meanwhile the Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921. After 8 years of War with Japan and 4 years civil war between the Guomindang Party and Communist Party, the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Guomindang and established a new independent country, the People's Republic of China. From that time on the Chinese people have been enjoying both a freedom and prosperity greater than at any previous time inspite of intermittent political campaigns which have retarded social and economic development.( The various political campaigns included 1958–1960 the Great Leap Forward and 1966–1976 the Culture Revolution ) Since 1977 the Chinese people have been working hard to realize the Four Modernizations under the Chinese government. The economic reforms have considerably improved the Chinese people's living standard.

## **1.5 Economy**

### **1.5.1 Pattern of Economy**

Chinese economy relies mainly on a socialist planned system with market adjust-

ment as a supplement. Its early economic policies were patterned after the soviet model. The period from 1949 to 1952 was the phase of recovery and rehabilitation marked by the implementation of Land Reform. The first five year plan 1952-1957 saw a rapid development of the economy. During this period national investment and resources went to heavy industry on the pattern of the Soviet model. The Great Leap Forward period from 1958 to 1959, the period of fastest growth, concluded with disaster. 1959-1961 was the period of the great depression and 1961-1965 was the phase of readjustment. From 1966 to 1970 the cultural revolution led to a decline in industrial and agricultural output . Then the economy during 1970-1977 underwent a revival of growth with trade. From 1977 to the present, economic prosperity has increased rapidly. Economic policies have increasingly stressed greater autonomy and self-management for individual enterprises, and a controlled use of the market mechanism to guide investment and a responsibility system has been adopted to arouse initiative and raise efficiency.[7]

### 1.5.2 Natural Resources

China's vast land provides it with rich mineral resources such as coal and iron . According to statistics published in 1985 the coal reserve was 7,371 billion tons and iron reserve was 471.98 billion tons . In addition there are rich water power resources, natural gas, petroleum and others, which ensure the further industrial development of the country.[8]

### 1.5.3 Agriculture

China is a agricultural country with 88% rural population. Agriculture is the foundation of the national economy. Traditional agriculture is labour intensive with low efficiency of production. The application of technology in farming and the mechanisation of agriculture has proceeded only slowly due to the difficult terrain in many areas and the low educational level of the farming population. However, over the last few years the pace of agricultural development has quickened following the implementation of the production responsibility system. And the agricultural production structure has been readjusted to suit the various local needs. Major farm products include grain, cotton, peanuts, tea and sugarcane .

#### 1.5.4 Industry

China's major industries include coal, crude oil, steel, electricity, heavy machinery and light industries such as textiles, silk, TV and radio sets, bicycles, sewing machines and watches . During the early years heavy industry was the priority in accordance with the soviet model. At present an increasing emphasis is being put on light industry to meet the growing demand for consumer goods.

Year	Gross Output Value of Agriculture and Industry	Gross Agricultural Output Value	Gross Industrial Output Value	Of the Gross Industrial Output Value Light Heavy Industry Industry
1949	466	326	140	103 37
1957	1,241	537	704	387 317
1959	1,980	497	1,483	616 867
1964	1,884	720	1,164	516 648
1968	2,213	928	1,285	690 595
1976	4,536	1,378	3,158	1,395 1,763
1984	10,797	3,755	7,042	3,335 3,707

**Table2: Gross Output Value of Agriculture and Industry**

(Rmb 100 million) Source : The Statistical Bureau of P.R.C (eds), Statistical Yearbook of China 1985, Oxford University Press, 1985. p24

#### Notes for Chapter One

1. The Statistical Bureau of P.R.C (eds), Statistical Yearbook of China 1985, Oxford University Press, 1985. p389, p393.
2. Ibid. p.407

3. Beijing Review, Nov.12-18, 1990, p.17. The first official census after liberation was conducted in 1953 (587,960,000), the second in 1964 (694,581,759) , the third in July, 1982 (1,031,882,511) and the fourth in July, 1990 (1,160,017,381).
4. Beijing Review, Oct.15-21, 1990, p.8
5. Beijing Review, Nov.12-18, 1990, p.18
6. The State Education Commission (eds), Chinese History(the Textbook for Senior Secondary Schools in China). p.10
7. Modern China Books Series(eds), The Economic System Reform in Modern China, China's Social Science Publishing, 1984. p170-173.
8. Statistical Yearbook of China 1985, op.cit. p.4

## Chapter II

### Historical Background : The Traditions of Chinese Education in Pre-Modern China

—Civil Service Examination, Moral Education and Shuyuan Spirit

A Japanese scholar wrote : “A society which is permeated by Confucian ideology is the one with diplomas, in which people are classified according to their educational levels”. Traditional China was a typical society of this kind. It was not wealth that determined social status but qualification for office. Qualifications were earned through education and especially examination. Education became the road leading to offices in the state and consequently to wealth, power and prestige. In addition learning was also valued for its own sake and scholars were highly regarded. As a result, education in traditional China was well established and highly developed. The Civil Service Examination, Moral Education and Scholar-Officialdom formed a giant pyramid of education in China. In addition, Shuyuan Spirit which developed from a kind of private academy, emerged towards the end of the Tang Dynasty and flourished during the Song Dynasty and only began to decline at the time of Qing Dynasty formed a supplement to the educational pyramid and played an important role in traditional education in China .

#### 2.1 The Dominant Confucian Ideology in Traditional Society

Throughout the history of traditional China Confucian ideology was the most pervasive intellectual influence. However, it did not control the intellectual field until the establishment of the first powerful Han Empire in 206 B.C. There were also Daoism, Legalism and Buddhism in the intellectual field. The reason why Confucianism was able to become dominant over other ideologies was because its doctrine served well the needs of autocracy under Han Wudi (140-87 B.C), the first emperor of the Han Dynasty. From this time onwards Confucianism became

the dominant ideology in traditional China and Confucian classics such as the Four Books and Five Classics became the sole didactic materials in traditional education.

Two aspects of Confucian ideology played an important role in shaping national life in traditional China. First, Confucian social thought held that all things including human beings are by nature unequal. Men differ greatly in intelligence, ability and moral character. However, social status should be determined by one's achievement and virtue not by birth. Xunzhi, the leading Confucian thinker of the 3rd century B.C claimed that : "Although a man is a descendant of a king, duke, or officer, if he doesn't observe the rites of proper conduct and justice he must be relegated to the common ranks; on the contrary, though he is a descendant of a commoner, if he has acquired learning, developed a good conduct and justice then elevate him to be prime minister".<sup>[1]</sup> The Confucian merit consisted mainly of learning, administrative ability and such moral qualities as humanity , uprightness and conscientiousness.

Secondly, Confucian ideology emphasized the importance of education in controlling the country. Only by way of education could the emperor control his people and make society stable as well as harmonious. Confucian social ideology spread rapidly and widely into the various parts of society especially among the lower classes. For example, a landless agricultural tenant, the father of the famous admiral Peng Yu-lin (1816-90) of Hengyang in southern Hunan knew that for a poor man the only way to achieve an improvement in social status was through the study of Confucian classics.<sup>[2]</sup> The study of Confucian classics to become a scholar-official was a powerful stimulus to many of the poor and inferior. For it was the only hope that they had of raising their social status.

## **2.2 Civil Service Examination**

In traditional China two ways were available for selecting talents. One was recommendation through superior officials and the other was through the competitive civil service examination. The latter had a long and important influence on all levels of education forming the traditional Chinese educational system -the examination system.. It was particularly important for ambitious Chinese youth who had nei-

ther the benefits of high birth nor wealth because the examination provided the only avenue leading to government office and attaining wealth, prestige and power.

As Confucianism became the dominant social ideology in the latter half of the 2nd century B.C. (Han Dynasty) selecting talents through recommendation was adopted. Then by the 7th century B.C. (Tang Dynasty) there was a further development as the Tang Empire made the competitive civil service examination a permanent system by which men of talents were selected as officials. From that time onwards advancement by way of examination was the sole road to social upward mobility. Many Chinese devoted their whole lives to studying the classics in the hope of becoming officials.

The examination system had a rigid hierarchical structure. Its operation was according to the following procedures :

- (1). Matriculation examination at the local level.
- (2). Examination for the first degree, *Xiucai* (cultivated talent) similar to the Bachelor's degree. It was held in the main city of the district.
- (3). Examination for the second degree, *Juren* (promoted person) similar to the Master degree was held at the provincial capital cities.
- (4). National examination for the degree of *Jinshi* (advanced person) similar to Ph.D degree was held at the capital city.
- (5). Examination by the emperor. Successful candidates were offered official ranks within the bureaucracy.<sup>[3]</sup>

The examinations were usually held every three years. Their contents concentrated on the classical *Cannons*, the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*. Other subjects such as mathematics and medicine were included only rarely. The *Hanlin Academy* with the most prestigious scholars in the empire administered the examination throughout the country.

The *Four Books* included *Great Learning*, *Mencius*, the *Analects* and *Doctrine of the Mean*.

The *Five Classics* covered *Poetry*, *History*, *Ritual*, *Music* and *Chronology*.

The examination was divided into oral and written tests with the emphasis on the latter.

The written tests consisted of essay writing known as BAGUWEN (i.e. eight-legged essay). The eight-legged style of essay writing was a highly formalised form of literary composition, starting with a terse introductory remark, followed by an equally terse explanation of the topic and then discussion of the main articles in the form of eight paragraphs with four parallel parts each developing the essay's theme in logical sequence and leading to a conclusion. The number of characters used was limited to around six hundred.

The system of the civil service examination at its best successfully produced a number of capable scholar-officials for the imperial government and served as a stabilizing factor for the country by controlling education and those who pursued the examination. It provided the road for upward mobility for everyone especially, those of humble birth.

Nevertheless, the system developed many shortcomings as well. First, the examination system produced many scholar-officials who were able to speak and write but without ability to solve practical problems in government and administration because the contents of the examination were based on the candidates' abilities in writing a good essay or poem in the formalised style, but did not measure the candidates' practical abilities. Furthermore, it depended largely on memorisation and temporary inspiration. "Promotion or rejection of a candidate was often attributed to fate and not to achievement".<sup>[4]</sup>

Secondly, long years of arduous and dull study in pursuit of the success in the examination exhausted the health of the educated in varying degrees. Also they had problems in adjusting themselves to secular life. Suan (sour) or Yu (inept) were terms often used to describe them in a sarcastic way in many traditional Chinese writings. While only a few could succeed in the examination the great majority of the scholar candidates had to take the examinations again and again and suffered from frustrations and failure. This often led to mental disorder among the candidates.

Thirdly, in order to pass the examination the scholar-candidates had to devote

themselves to the study of moral learning ,old cannons and classics without involving themselves in professional and specialized work. "Virtue makes for superiority and technology makes for inferiority." [5] was a principle which dominated the intellectual world.

However,although traditional education did not lead to the development of science and technology but morality and the application of politics,this does not imply that science and technology in traditional China was neglected. In fact, during this period China made many contributions to the development of science and technology such as the four great inventions: Powder,Printing,Paper-making and Orientating Clock-making and to well-known fine arts and to traditional medicine . In addition to a number of scholar-officials participating in government administration,the traditional Chinese education also cultivated a small group of people who were dissatisfied with the civil service examination and devoted themselves to true literary and artistic as well as scientific pursuits. It was through them, many of them folk craftsmen, that China acquired a rich culture.

The civil service examination well served the imperial government but it did not meet the needs of modern society which calls for talents with all-sided knowledge especially in science and technology . From its first introduction the criticisms never ceased and reached a climax in the late of 19th century. This finally led to the abolition of the age-old civil service examination in 1905.

### **2.3 Moral Education**

It can be said that the essence of the traditional education is moral education with a basis of ethical principles. Its content was based on the humanities, which included the subject areas of rites, music, poetry and classical literature or history. The main aim of traditional education was less the transmission of knowledge or learning of skills than the inculcation of a set of ethical principles,which guided human behaviour among the scholar-officials, who would serve imperial China. The most outstanding followers of Confucius were immortalized mainly for their accomplishment in morality and were taken as the standard type of the educated. Yen Hui, the favourite disciple of Confucius has been assigned the most honourable position among 72 well-known followers of Confucius because of his moral virtue.

Education was organised through public instruction, which consisted mainly of the study of morality and permeated every part of Chinese society. In traditional China most imperial edicts and bulletins were expressed in moralistic terms. And any judgement of officials' inadequacy was based on their moral deficiency rather than on their incompetence. Furthermore, the rites and moral sciences were transmitted through ancient texts. The Three Character Classics, The Hundred Family Names and The Thousand Character Treatise, the three basic primers were the foundation stones of traditional education and owed their popularity mainly to their ethical and didactic contents.

Because moral education was valued above anything else in traditional China the Civil Service Examination could be adapted to serve the purposes of imperial China. Chinese young men were educated with the promise of attaining to power, wealth and prestige by way of success in the examination. Many encouraging stories of success through long and hard study were available for those who wished to attempt the examination. The most famous example of dedicated study was that of Suqing of the warring states period who hung his head from a beam and jabbed his thigh to stay awake in order to keep on reading. The long study offered the opportunity for wealth, power, prestige and even sex, which were all powerful incentives. As the old saying goes "Golden Mansion and Yan Ruyu (a famous beauty who became the consort of the Han Emperor, Wudi) were both to be found in books" [6] Thus, the stability and order of the imperial China were well maintained by the Civil Service Examination, which was supported by a set of moral principles.

## 2.4 Shuyuan Spirit

In addition to the dominant civil service examination system in traditional education there also existed private academies. From the earliest private school to Shuyuan another kind of traditional education in Chinese society was evolved. From Shuyuan there developed an intimate and harmonious relationship between teachers and students as well as intellectual freedom due to the absence of a rigid hierarchical administration unlike the civil service examination. Scholars in Shuyuan did not only have true learning but also exhibited high moral conduct. The rise of Shuyuan was opposed to the ultra-utilitarian trend of integration of examination

and official rank. Its purpose was to pursue true scholarship and make up for the deficiencies of the traditional education. It was on the basis of Shuyuan teaching and research that there developed the rational, academic and non-utilitarian Shuyuan spirit, which made a special contribution to traditional Chinese education.

Shuyuan was established on the basis of private libraries and centres for collating scholarly texts and only gradually grew into academic institutions for teaching and research. It first appeared during the Tang Dynasty, became widespread in the Song Dynasty and lasted until the end of the Qing Dynasty. Shuyuan was most famous in the Song Dynasty.<sup>[7]</sup> Many well-known Confucian scholars in Chinese history such as Zhuxi, and Lu Jiuyuan were products of Shuyuan during this period. Before the Qing Dynasty Shuyuan were private institutions for academic discussion and instruction independent of the government. But during the mid-Qing under the pressures of the civil service examination the majority of Shuyuan had become government-supported institutions engaged in preparing candidates for the examination, lost their initial academic features and began to decline.<sup>[8]</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

The Civil Service Examination System supported by the moral education was well adapted to serve the purpose of imperial China for its stability and harmony so long as China was a world in itself. However, when China was forced to face the outside world in the mid-19th century the inherent defects of this system could no longer be hidden. It was unsuited to the needs of modern society.

Shuyuan Spirit, originally representing true scholarship and separating from the Civil Service Examination, later evolved to become the part of the examination system, the place for the candidates who were preparing for the examination.

China realized the problem and finally abolished the age-long civil service examination in 1905. From that time on Chinese education started on a new and tortuous road towards modernization.

## Notes for Chapter Two

1. Ho, Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368–1911*, Columbia University Press, 1962 , p7.
2. *Ibid* . p87.
3. Thut and Adams, *Educational Patterns in Contemporary Societies*, Foundation in Education/ McGraw–Hill Book Company, 1964 , pp268–269.
4. Franke, Wolfgang, *The Reform and Abolition of the Traditional Chinese Examination System*, Harvard University Press, 1963, p16.
5. *Comparative Education*, Vol.20, 1984, p22 .
6. Ho, Ping-ti, *op.cit.* pp86–87 .
7. Hayoe, Ruth, *Chinese, European. American scholarly Value in Interaction*, London Association of Comparative Education Publications, 1984. p13.
8. Franke, Wolfgang, *op.cit.* p14 .

## Chapter III

### Education from 1843 to 1949

#### —— The Beginning of Modern Education

The traditional educational system remained substantially without change until the opening of China to the western world after the Opium War in 1842 . This was the signal for the break up of the old system and the establishment of a modern education system. This chapter outlines the establishment and development of this early modern educational system during the years from 1843 to 1949. Two periods are covered : Transition Period (1843–1911) ; Education during the years 1912–1949.

### 3.1 Transition Period (1843–1911)

Three important developments leading to the modernization of the educational system took place during this period. They were the Westernization Movement, the Modernization Movement and the Establishment of the New Japanese Style School System.

#### 3.1.1 Westernization Movement

In order to deal with invasion from the west after the second Opium War of 1860 the Chinese government started to establish modern schools with the aim of strengthening the country by introducing advanced technology and military science from western countries. For this purpose, various specialist schools were set up through the efforts of officials such as Zhang Zidong, Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang. The schools included translation schools, technical and military schools.

The first of these schools were the Tong Wenguan of Beijing of 1862, the Guan Fang Yan Guan of Shanghai of 1863, the Tong Wenguan of Guangzhou of 1864 and

the Hubei Self-Strengthening School . All of these schools were designed to train specialists who would be able to translate foreign languages into Chinese. The second kind<sup>of</sup> schools were the Fujian Naval Yard Training School, Shanghai School of Engineering, the Tianjin School of Telegraphs, the Tianjing Naval Academy, and the Guangdong Naval and Military Academy . These schools trained specialists in technical knowledge and military science.<sup>[1]</sup> Meanwhile between 1872 and 1875 the first 120 Chinese students were sent to study technology and military science in England, France, Germany, Japan and America.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Westernization Movement lasted over 30 years, it proved very expensive but did not equip the students with the skills which were needed. In addition, it was still linked with the tradition of the civil service examination, which restricted the modern education institutions to the employment of government officials and the primary function of the schools which were established , continued to be preparation for the examination. In spite of the failure of the Westernization Movement to establish a modern school system, it did introduce some study of science and laid a foundation for the further modernization of education in the future.

### 3.1.2 Modernization Movement

After the Westernization Movement another movement was launched by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Yanfu and other scholars. These scholars attributed China's weakness to its underdeveloped education both in institutions and curricula. They considered that the strength of the west was not only due to advanced technology in machinery and weaponry but also to efforts made to develop academic studies and popular education. They attempted to reform the traditional examination system and the old administrative system and to establish modern schools in every part of the country.

The first three universities in China were set up during this period. They were the Nanyang Gongxue of Shanghai(1897, the predecessor of Shanghai Transportation University), the Xixue Xuetang of Tianjing(1895, the predecessor of Tianjing University) and the Imperial University in Beijing of 1898(the predecessor of Beijing University).<sup>[3]</sup>

The reforms proposed by these scholars were implemented. They included

- (1) reforming the civil service examination and the abolition of the eight-legged essays.
- (2) transforming the Shuyuan (old style academies) into modern schools.
- (3) establishing primary and secondary schools .
- (4) setting up a National Bureau of Translation.
- (5) sending students abroad to study advanced science and technology.<sup>[4]</sup>

This Modernization Movement only lasted a short time due to the overthrow of the Empress Dowager. However, it was significant as the first attempt to modernize the age-old traditional Chinese educational system.

### **3.1.3 The Establishment of the Modern School System**

After the Modernization Movement, in order to set up a nation-wide system of modern schools, high-ranking officials such as Zhang Zhidong, Zhang Baixi and Rong Xing drafted a school regulation in 1903. This introduced the first modern educational system in the history of China.

There were 7 stages from the kindergarten to higher education totalling 29 years of schooling. It included 13 years of primary education, with 4 years of kindergartens, 5 years of lower primary and 4 years of junior primary; 5 years of secondary education and 11 years of higher education. The higher education stage consisted of 3 years of higher school preparatory for the university, 3 years of university and 5 years of research. This system was supplemented by teacher training and vocational education . Furthermore, there were two kinds of special schools in this system. They were the School of Languages and a School for Postgraduate Study at the Doctoral level (Jinshiguan).

In 1903 primary education was divided into 5 years of lower primary school and 4 years of junior primary school. Children at the age of seven or over could be enrolled in the lower primary schools which provided moral, intellectual and physical education. The curricula for primary schools included 10 subjects. They were moral courses, traditional classics, Chinese language, arithmetic, history, geogra-

phy, natural science, physical culture, drawing and handwork. The primary education was not compulsory. In 1910 there were 1,469,412 primary school pupils.<sup>[5]</sup>

In the 1903 school system there were 12 subjects for the 5 years of secondary education covering moral education, Chinese classics, Chinese literature, foreign languages, history, geography, mathematics, biology, physics & chemistry, civics and economics, drawing and physical culture. In 1904 there were only 1,276 secondary school students (excluding the private and missionary school students).<sup>[6]</sup>

There were universities in the national capital and in the provinces. Each university was equipped to offer the following courses: (1) Chinese classics; (2) law; (3) literature; (4) medicine; (5) science; (6) agriculture; (7) engineering; (8) commerce. All courses lasted for at least 3 years and courses in law and medicine required 4 years. The course in the school of research was 5 years of postgraduate study. By 1909 there were 3 universities and 25 colleges throughout the country.<sup>[7]</sup>

Parallel to the general schooling there were equivalent institutions for vocational education and teacher training starting from junior primary school level up to higher school level. At junior primary school level there were 3 year industrial supplementary schools, 2–3 year primary industrial schools and 4 year apprentice schools. At the secondary level there were 5 year lower normal schools and 2 year preparatory schools and 3 year secondary industrial schools. At the higher level there were 3 year higher normal schools and 1–3 year industrial training schools, 3–4 year higher industrial preparatory schools. In addition, there were 5 year schools of language and the 3 year Jinshiguan (the school for postgraduate study at the doctoral level).

Although the 1903 school system was mainly copied from the Japanese school system, it was the first modern educational system China had ever had. It marked the beginning of the modern era in the history of Chinese education. However, this system still retained some features of the traditional civil service examination system as its teaching subjects put stress on Confucian classical literature and the graduates from secondary schools up to the school of research were all conferred the academic titles for successful candidates in the old examination system. Education during this period was in slow transformation from the old examination system to the modern school system. The number of both schools and students at each level

of schooling was few and primary education was not compulsory. Furthermore, this school system was only for boys and not for girls.

2  
1860 - 1865



## 3.2 Education during the years of 1912–1949

### 3.2.1 The Democratic Reform in the Beginning of the Republic

The 1911 Revolution saw the establishment of the Republic of China. In 1912 the first national educational conference was held in Beijing in order to formulate a new educational policy and regulations for schools for the newly-created republic. After the meeting the Minister announced the new policy. This consisted of the development of moral character, supplemented by military and industrial training and completed by aesthetic education<sup>[8]</sup>.

Under the 1912 school system primary schooling included 4 years of lower primary schools and 3 years of junior primary schools. Its curriculum was morals, mother tongue, mathematics, handwork, drawing, singing and physical culture. Classics, history, geography and natural science were dropped from the 1903 school curriculum. Coeducation was introduced in primary schools for the first time in the history of China.

The curriculum for secondary schooling covered Chinese literature, foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry, civics and economics, drawing and physical culture as well as handwork.

In the 1912 school system there were 3 years of university preparatory work and 4 years of university itself. The university was intended to provide education and training for those of the highest ability. There were generally 7 departments in one university. They were the departments of arts, science, law, commerce, medicine agriculture and engineering.

Parallel to general schooling there were professional supplementary courses and normal schooling from junior primary level to university level. There were primary industrial schools, primary supplementary schools, secondary industrial schools, secondary supplementary schools and secondary normal schools. Moreover, there were higher professional preparatory schools, higher professional schools, higher normal preparatory schools and higher normal schools. But the school of language and the school for postgraduate study at doctoral level were discontinued. The

western higher education degree system ,that is the Bachelors degree, the Masters degree and Ph.D degree was adopted in higher education.

In contrast to the 1903 school system, the 1912 school system made further progress towards modernization. The schooling years were shortened from an initial long 29 years to 18 years making it easier for the masses to have access to schooling. The age-old examination system was eradicated from the 1912 school system as the course of Chinese classics was dropped from the curriculum and the old examination academic titles were replaced by western academic degree titles.

*Handwritten scribble*

Chart 2 The Educational System of 1912

				24
	University			23
Research		Professional		22
Higher Normal	-----			21
School		-----		20
-----				19
Preparatory	Preparatory	Preparatory		18
Normal				
School				
-----	Supplementary	Middle	Industrial	17
Prepara-	Courses	School	School	16
tory			A	15
-----				14
	Supplementary	Higher	Industrial	13
	Courses	Primary	School	12
				11
		Lower		10
		Primary		9
				8
				7

Source : Djung, Lu--dzai, A History of Democratic Education in Modern China ,  
The Commercial Press, 1934, p51 .

### 3.2.2 Education under the Warlords (1915–1927)

During the period of the warlords, reform was again launched to promote the development of modern education . A new education system was recommended by the delegates from the provinces at the seventh congress of the national education association in 1922. This system was substantially copied from the American 6–3–3 educational system.

In the 1922 school system primary education lasted 6 years with the first 4 years compulsory education. The children went to school at the age of 6 . The curriculum for primary education consisted of 15 subjects. They were conversation, reading, composition, calligraphy, arithmetic, hygiene, citizenship, history geography, nature study, gardening, industrial arts, fine arts, music and physical education.<sup>[9]</sup> The inclusion of conversation was to popularize the common spoken Chinese, which was intended to solve the language communication problem which arose from the diversity of dialects spoken throughout the vast country.

Secondary education was divided into junior secondary school and senior secondary school, each with a 3 year period of schooling. At the secondary level there were vocational schools and normal schools, both of which had the same schooling years as the general schooling. The credit system was adopted in secondary schools. The curriculum of secondary schools included compulsory courses, elective courses and special required courses. The students were allowed to graduate only if they gained the required credits.

Higher education included universities, colleges and higher technical and vocational schools. The former preparatory schools to universities after secondary education were discontinued and the graduates of secondary schools could go to university directly. The credit system was used in higher education.

The 1922 school system reorganised schooling along American lines. The initial 7–4 plan for primary and secondary education was changed to a 6–3–3 plan.(The period of primary education was shortened to six year and one more year was added to the period of secondary education.) The objectives listed in the decree of the 1922 school system included “to develop individuality” “to adjust education to the needs of life”, “to facilitate the spread of universal education”. They showed

the strong influence of the American education model. The adoption of the elective courses and credit system in both secondary schools and universities was designed to cater for individual abilities. Furthermore, vocational education in this system was given high priority. Vocational courses could be provided even in the last two years of primary schools. It was in the 1922 school system that compulsory education first appeared and made education available to the majority of the people not only to a small number of elite. In short, in contrast to the 1903 and the 1912 modern school systems, the 1922 school system was more mature in its efforts to achieve modernization.

Chart 3 The Educational System of 1922

		School of Research	24
			23
			22
			21
Higher			20
Education		University	19
		Professional School	18
Secondary	Normal School	Senior Middle	17
education		School	16
		Vocational School	15
		Junior Middle	14
		School	13
			12
Elementary		Elementary	11
Education		School	10
			9
			8
			7
			6
Preschool		Kindergarten	
Education			

Source : Djung, Lu--dzai, A History of Democratic Education in Modern China, The Commercial Press, Limited, Shanghai, China, 1934 ,p54.

### 3.2.3 Education from 1928 to 1949

Education from 1928 to 1949 can be divided into two parallel parts. One was education under the rule of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party), during which education made slow progress. The educational development was mainly concentrated in the years 1928–1937 because after 1937 there was the war against Japan, followed by the civil war between the Guomindang and the Communist Party. Education made no progress and even declined during this period under the reactionary policy of the Guomindang. Meanwhile, during the period of 1937–1949 there developed Communist education, completely different from that of the Guomindang. It began in the locations of the Communist Party Headquarters and was commonly known as education during the Yanan Period.<sup>[10]</sup> In spite of its short history it was the first educational system created by the Communist Party and it exerted a profound influence on the formation of the educational policy of the Communist Party, especially during the Cultural Revolution.

#### 3.23 (1) Education under the Guomindang

During the years 1928–1937 priority in education was put on implementation unlike the previous period with emphasis on reform of the education system. The 1922 school system continued to be used and educational policy during this period followed the Three Principles of the People (Nationalism, Democracy and Livelihood). The development of compulsory education resulted in particular emphasis being placed on primary education. It was decreed at the second national educational conference held in Nanjing (the capital of the Guomindang government) in 1930 that all school age children should have compulsory education, which was initially limited to 4 years. It might be extended to meet local conditions when necessary. Secondary education emphasized general education on the one hand and vocational education on the other. Developing higher education concentrated on quality rather than quantity.

#### Primary Education

The Nationalist government promulgated a primary school law in 1932 and a new standard curriculum was officially promulgated afterwards. The curriculum included Citizenship training, Hygiene, Physical education, National Language,

Arithmetic, Industrial Arts, Fine Arts and Music; a total of 10 subjects. <sup>[11]</sup> There were three kinds of primary school, which were established to implement the compulsory education programme. They were the complete primary school (formal primary school with a total of 6 years schooling), the so-called "easy" primary school and the short-term primary school. The easy primary school consisted of full-time, part-time and supplementary schools mainly for school age children, who could not go to the complete schools. Because of the implementation of compulsory education primary education expanded considerably. In 1934 there were 259,451 primary schools and 13,128,635 pupils and in 1936 the number of primary schools increased to 318,797 and the number of primary school pupils increased to 18,285,125.

	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers	School-aged Children (%)
1929	212,385	8,882,077	407,044	17.10
1930	250,840	10,943,979	568,484	22.07
1931	259,034	11,683,826	544,193	22.16
1932	262,496	12,179,994	555,784	24.79
1933	257,498	12,335,967	554,232	24.97
1934	259,451	13,128,635	567,962	26.57
1935	288,227	15,041,542	607,987	30.78
1936	318,797	18,285,125	700,224	35.09

**Table3: Development of Primary Education from 1929 to 1936**

Source : Guo, Weifan, *Seventy Years of Education Under the Republic of China Taiwan*, 1981, pp381-382.

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### Secondary Education

Secondary education continued to be divided into 3 year junior secondary and 3 year senior secondary. The tentative curriculum of the junior secondary schools in 1929 included 14 subjects : Three Principles of the People, National Language,

Foreign Language, History, Geography, Mathematics, Nature Study, Physiology & Hygiene, Drawing, Music, Physical Education, Industrial Arts, Vocational Courses, Boy Scout Training. The curriculum for senior secondary schools was as follows : Three Principles of the People, National Language, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Chemistry, Chinese History, Western History, Chinese Geography, Western Geography, Physics, Biology, Military Training, Physical Education and Elective Courses.<sup>[12]</sup> In the curricula of secondary schools it is significant that a course of military training was included and this emphasized that the purpose of education under the rule of Guomindang was to train people who could serve its government. In addition to the formal general secondary schools there were independent vocational schools and normal schools at secondary level. In contrast to the previous period , vocational education was given higher priority during this period. According to 1929 statistics there was then a total of 219 vocational schools with 26,659 students. From a comparison with the number of secondary schools and students in 1923 and 1929 it is clear that secondary education developed more rapidly than primary education.

Kind Of Secondary School	No. of the Schools	No. of the Students
Normal School	275	38,277
Middle School	547	103,385
Secondary Vocational School	164	20,360
Normal Institute	119	5,569

**Table4: The Number of Secondary Schools and Students in 1923**

Source : Djung, Lu-dzai, A History of Democratic Education in Modern China Shanghai : The Commercial Press, 1934 , p61.

Higher education

Schools	No.of Schools	No. of Students	No. of Officers And Teachers	School Expenditure \$	Percentage of Students
Senior Middle School					
Government	5	1933	175	435,451	
Provincial and Municipal	121	44,718	3873	7,012,140	
County	60	6,289	458	625,945	31.35
Private	161	15,961	4,281	5,507,907	
Total	307	106,901	8,787	13,851,443	
Junior Middle School					
Government					
Provincial and Municipal	139	25,787	2,045	3,193,042	
County	506	72,478	5,215	4,416,615	41.57
Private	273	43,502	3,955	3,381,279	
Total	918	141,767	11,215	10,990,936	
Normal Schools	667	65,695	5,538	7,283,875	19.26
Vocational schools	219	26,659	3,028	4,131,919	7.82
Grand Total	2,111	341,022	28,568	35,988,173	100

**Table5: The Number of Secondary Schools and Students in 1929**

Source : Djung, Lu-dzai, A History of Democratic Education in Modern China , The Commercial Press, Limited, Shanghai, China, 1934. p230

Higher education consisted of four kinds. They were government or state universities, provincial universities, municipal universities and private universities. The courses in higher education were grouped in eight divisions: science, art, law, education, agriculture, engineering, commerce and medicine. For an institution to be recognised as a university it had to provide at least three of these divisions. The period of study was four years for university and five years for the college of medicine. Within the university there were research institutes and specialized institutes. The senior secondary school graduates or those holding equivalent qualifications were

qualified to enter higher education. The teaching staff included professors, associate professors, lecturers and assistant teachers. The university president, college dean and department chairman comprised the university administration. The academic degree and credit system were also implemented in universities. China's current higher education institutions have roughly adopted this system.

Year	No. of Schools		No. of Teachers	No. of students	
	Public	Private		College	Preparatory
1928	28	21	4,567	21,786	9,597
1929	29	21	5,495	25,499	9,439
1930	32	27	6,212	33,847	8,119

**Table6: Development of Higher Education from 1928 to 1930**

Source : Djung, Lu-dzai, *The History of Democratic Education in China*, The Commercial Press, 1934, pp232-233.

### 3.23 ( 2 ) Communist Education during the Yen-an Period

During the years of 1937-1947 in the areas liberated from the rule of the Guomintang in North Shanxi (the Northwestern Part of China) under Communist leadership an entirely different educational system had been developed. This educational system was unique because it consisted of a diversity of schooling and the regular schooling period was generally shortened because of the constraints of war. The main task of education during this period was to cultivate cadres for the Anti-Japanese War and later for the Liberation War against the Guomintang. "Cadre education, first of all" was the current slogan.<sup>[13]</sup> All the schools at each level were to train cadres, therefore political courses were most emphasized. Furthermore, education during the Yen-an period also developed the educational tradition of Chinese Communism, which the Cultural Revolution pursued and inherited. Education was organised in a 10-year school system with five years for primary education and another five years for secondary education. This was two years shorter than the educational system of the Guomintang.

In short, education during the Yen-an Period was actually a kind of adult education by training adult cadres for the Chinese Communism as well as eradicating illiteracy among peasants. (Most of the population in the liberated areas were peasants.)

### Primary Education

Primary education during the Yen-an period roughly adopted a five year school system with three years for junior grade and two years for senior grade, but different regions might modify this according to their own practical conditions. In primary schools boys and girls were treated equally. In addition to class study, work after class was required. The main purpose of primary education was to reduce illiteracy. The curriculum for the junior grades included Chinese, common knowledge (natural science, history and geography) mathematics, handicrafts, music and physical training. For the senior grades there were Chinese, mathematics, civics, natural science, history, geography, handicraft, physical training, art and music. In addition a course in the new words was conducted after class to spread a knowledge of the writing of the new Chinese characters for better and more general use. Due to poor material conditions in the liberated areas there were serious shortages of teaching materials and teachers. Education had to be conducted in very difficult situations. In spite of hardship the primary education still made progress. Table 7 illustrates the development of primary schools in the Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border region (the main liberated area).

In addition to the primary schools run by the communists, there were some people-operated primary schools. These schools were organised by the peasants themselves under their village leaders, with the government only helping by supplying limited funds and sending teachers where necessary. And it was peasants who decided the content of education according to their own practical needs. These schools had flexibility and included half-day schools, winter schools and evening classes. These schools made an important contribution to raising literacy in the liberated areas.

[14]

### Secondary Education

	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	School-aged Children (%)
1937	320	5,600	
1938	705	13,799	
1939	890	20,000	
1940	902	26,911	
1943	1,341	441,458	25

**Table7 : The Development of Primary schools in Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region**

source: Wang, Hsueh-wen, Chinese Communist Education : The Yen-an Period , Institute of International relations, Republic of China, 1975. p202

Secondary education lasted five years with three years of junior secondary education and two years of senior secondary education. It was divided into secondary normal schools, secondary general schools and secondary vocational schools. The secondary education put high priority on secondary normal education so that more teachers were trained to make up for the shortage of teachers in general schools as well as all other schools in the liberated areas. In addition to the normal courses offered in normal school (including three years of junior normal school and two years of senior normal school) both junior and senior secondary general schools might offer normal courses as well to enhance the normal education.

There were two curricula for secondary schools adopted one after another. The first one differed in general secondary schooling and normal secondary schooling. The courses for junior secondary schools included civil knowledge, Chinese, foreign Language(English or Russian), history, geography, mathematics, natural science, physiology and hygiene, arts, music, military training. Physical education and production work were conducted after class. In addition to the general subjects mentioned above, the junior secondary normal schools offered educational enforcement (educational policy, education in primary schools and social education), child psychology and educational methods as well.

The senior secondary school courses consisted of social science, Chinese, foreign

language, Chinese and world history, Chinese and world geography, mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, philosophy, arts, music, 2military training with physical education and production work were given after class. There were also some vocational subjects as options at senior secondary school level. In addition to the general subjects, the courses on educational administration, educational psychology, curriculum data and instructional materials, tests and educational statistics were offered in senior secondary normal schools. In all cases the productive labour was to be conducted after class.

The second curriculum was designed to meet the needs of border areas for both general and normal schools for three years of secondary schooling. It included construction in the border regions, political knowledge, Chinese language, mathematics, history and geography, natural science, knowledge of production, medical science.<sup>[15]</sup> Secondary education was the main part of education in the Yen-an Period in order to train cadres. There were altogether eight varieties of secondary schools. Among them there were two vocational schools, two general secondary schools and four secondary normal schools.

### Higher Education

The higher education during Yen-an Period was mainly designed to train senior cadres for the Communist Party. Its length of schooling was shorter than the ordinary regular four year period for higher education from between 6 months to 3 years. The main institutions of higher education included :

- (1) The Anti-Japanese Military and Political University ( was abbreviated as Kanda ) ;
- (2) Chinese Communist Central Party School ;
- (3) The North Shanxi Public Institute ;
- (4) Chinese Women's University ;
- (5) Yen-an University ;
- (6) Luxun Art College;
- (7) The Institute of Natural Science;

(8) The Administrative Academy ;

The higher education during the Yen-an period under the direct leadership of Communist Party , the guidance of a series of educational policies and through the joint efforts of teachers and students had considerable achievements. It trained a large number of cadres and various specialists for the Anti-Japanese War and later for the Liberation War against the Guomindang. In addition, the rich experience it created in running schools in teaching methods and in aspects of school administration laid a foundation for the future after the founding of the PRC.

Among the institutions of higher education the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University (Kangda) was the most important because Kangda's experience in running schools became the educational tradition, which the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 inherited. Kangda offered eight classes at different periods and produced over 10,000 party and political cadres. Together with the talents brought by its branch schools there were more than 20,000 excellent anti-Japanese military and political cadres trained in Kangda.<sup>[16]</sup> The curriculum of Kangda consisted of political education, cultural education and production work and physical education but political education was given the most emphasis.

The educational objectives of Kangda were summarized by Chairman Mao Zedong in his works as "Firm and Correct Political Orientation; A Plain, Hard-Working Spirit; Flexibility in Strategy and Tactics; to Study and Take Part in Production While in School " .

Education during the Yen-an Period was flexible and practical so as to meet the needs of war and border regions' production and construction. Education started under very difficult conditions : serious shortage of teachers and teaching materials and poor living standard , but it still produced a great many cadres for the Chinese Communist party, who played an important role in the war against Japan.

Because of the political divisions education during 1928-1949 developed in two distinct types with the Guomindang education on one side and the Communist education on the other side. Education of both sides was designed to serve the needs of the respective parties.

In spite of some success in educational achievement, on the whole the progress of Chinese education was slow due to the intermittent political disturbances in China before 1949. The development of education demands a unified country and a peaceful atmosphere.

### Notes for Chapter Three

1. Hsiung, Mingan, *The History of Chinese Higher Education*, Chongqing Publishing House, 1983, Chinese Edition. pp300–302.
2. Ibid. p318 .
3. Ibid. pp309–310.
4. Hayoe, Ruth and Bastid, Mariane (eds), *China's Education and the Industrialised World : Studies in Cultural Transfer*, M.E.Sharpe, 1987 .p59.
5. Djung, Lu–dzai, *A History of Democratic Education in China*, The Commercial Press, Shanghai, China, 1934. p56.
6. Ibid. p61 .
7. Ibid. p62 .
8. Ibid. p52 .
9. Ibid. p57 .
10. The Time of the Yen-an Period was defined as the years of 1937–1947 by Wang Hsueh–wen in his Books “Chinese Communist Education : Yen-an Period”, Institute of International Relations, Republic of China, 1975.
11. Guo, Weifan, *Seventy Years' of History of Education of R.O.C Taiwan*, 1981 p375.
12. Djung, Lu–dzai, *op. cit.* pp226–227.
13. Hsiung, Mingan, *op.cit.* pp426
14. Hayoe, Ruth (ed), *Contemporary Chinese Education*, Croom Helm Ltd, 1984. p33.
15. Wang, Hsueh–wen, *op. cit.* p146.
16. Hsiung, Mingan, *op. cit.* pp446–447 .

## Chapter IV

### Education Between 1949 and 1965

This chapter will present a chronological account of the development of the Chinese modern educational system between 1949 and 1965. The period may be divided into three phases : (1) 1949–1957, the reorganization of higher education on Russian lines ; (2) 1958–1959, the great leap forward period ; (3) 1960–1965, the consolidation stage .

#### 4.1 1949–1957 Reorganisation of Higher Education

As soon as the P.R.China was firmly established in 1949, the new government held the first national educational conference ,in which educational policy was formulated. The educational policy proposed that education in P.R.China was to serve the ordinary people, especially workers, peasants and soliders as well as to serve the needs of productive construction. It would be based on the experience of the education in the old liberated areas(education during Yen-an period), absorbing the useful experience of the education under Guomindang and seeking help from the experience of the Soviet Union.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to the policy a decree concerning the reform of the educational system was promulgated in 1951. The 1951 school system of P.R.China marked a new stage of Chinese modern education. The structure of this school system was as follows :

Pre-primary education—4 year kindergarden;

Primary education—5 year primary school; 2–3 year workers and peasants short-term primary school; spare time primary school;

Secondary education— 6 year secondary school with 3 year junior and 3 year senior ; 6-7 year secondary technical school; workers and peasants short-course secondary school(3-4 years); 3-4 year spare time junior secondary school; spare time senior secondary school;

Higher education—4-5 year university and independent college; 2-3 year specialized institute; research department;

Chart 4 The Educational System of 1951

Research Department				
University and Independent Colleges				
Specialized Institute				18
Senior	Secondary	Proletarian	Vocational Secondary	17
Secondary	Technical School	Short--course	School (3--4 years)	16
School		Secondary School		15
Junior			Vocational Junior	14
Secondary			Secondary School	13
School			(3--4 years)	12
		Proletarian	Vocational Primary	11
Primary	School	Short--course	School	10
		Primary school		9
		(2--3 years)		8
				7
				6
	Kindergarten			5
				4
				3

Source: Cheng, Youxin, Comparative Education Course, Chinese Version, Beijing Normal University Press, 1983, p14.

This school system inherited the Chinese tradition of an integrated school system and linked up all levels of schooling ensuring educational opportunity for working people and their children . Secondly, vocational and technical education was given priority in this system reflecting the educational policy, which was to serve productive construction. Thirdly, it emphasized the importance of short-course education and spare time education for the working people and for the cadres of workers and peasants. Thus a complete socialist educational system, which consisted of general education, vocational and technical education as well as spare time education was firmly established. It was the fourth stage in the progress of Chinese education towards modernization. However, due to lack of teaching materials and qualified teachers the continuous five year primary education system was discontinued in 1953 and the former 4-2 primary school system was reintroduced. Other parts of the system were unchanged.

During the years 1949-1957 China's higher education underwent fundamental changes. In 1949 among 207 institutes of higher education almost a third were private or missionary colleges and there was an excess of students in economics, humanities and social science, while there was a shortage of students in science, engineering and other technical fields of which the national economy was in great need . In order to train specialists needed for the new social and economic development between 1950-1952, China reorganized its higher education by developing technical colleges and specialized institutes along Soviet lines.

The main features of the reorganisation included :

- (1) Private and foreign higher institutions were completely eliminated;
- (2) The comprehensive universities were diminished in number. The few remaining ones kept the departments of natural science, social science and humanities. Departments such as engineering, medicine, agriculture and teaching training were transformed into specialized colleges or technical institutes by combining with similar departments from other universities. These comprehensive universities and a number of specialized institutes offered 4-5 year courses of study while the courses in some normal and technical colleges lasted 2-3 years. By 1953 there were 182 institutions of higher education with 14 comprehensive universities, 38 polytechnical colleges, 31 teachers colleges, 29 agricultural colleges, 29 medical colleges, 4

law and politics colleges, 6 financial and economic colleges, 8 language institutes, 15 fine art institutes, 4 colleges of physical education , 3 national minority colleges and 1 meteorology college.<sup>[2]</sup>

(3) The Ministry of Higher Education in the central government was set up to administer higher education over the whole country instead of the former Ministry of Education. There had been several changes in the administration of higher education between 1949 and 1957. From 1949 to 1951 higher education was under the control of the Ministry of Education without a separate ministry of its own, but after 1952 a Ministry of Higher Education and other ministries were set up to jointly administer higher education following the Soviet administrative system of higher education. Below the national level, were the provinces and municipalities , which included departments of education. Educational and cultural offices were the basic educational authorities for districts and counties.

(4) The internal university administration changed as well. Each university or institute was divided into departments, which consisted of a number of specialities. For each speciality a guidance group of teaching and research staff was set up to lead the teaching work, to study and improve curricula and teaching materials. This was the basic administrative unit.

(5) Large numbers of Russian textbooks were translated and used as teaching materials in the universities and institutes.

While higher education was entirely reorganised, other parts of the educational system were only slightly changed. At primary stage children went to school at the age of 7, one year later than during the Guomindang period. There were fewer subjects in the primary school curriculum . For the first four years there were language, arithmetic, handwork activity, drawing and singing with the course in language taking half of the total time. For the last two years in addition to the six courses for the first four grades, courses on nature study, history, geography and physical education were added to the curriculum .

Secondary education included general secondary school with three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education, secondary normal school, secondary technical or vocational schools and various workers and

peasants short-course secondary schools as well as spare time secondary schools. The general secondary schools were the main part of secondary education. In these schools the curriculum included politics, Chinese, mathematics, nature study (junior secondary), chemistry, physics, history, geography, foreign language, physical culture, music, arts, physiology(senior secondary), chart-making(senior secondary). Some Russian science textbooks were adopted in secondary schools.

During this period there was a spectacular development in education in contrast to the situation under the Guomindang. In 1949 there were 205 universities and institutes of higher learning with 117,000 students; 5216 secondary schools with 1.268 million students and 346,800 primary schools with 24.391 million students. About 20 % of school-aged children were enrolled in schools.<sup>[3]</sup> After the Chinese Communist Party took over all schools they made great efforts to extend the educational facilities to the majority of the population, especially workers and peasants. The enrolment in educational institutes between 1949–1957 increased largely. Table 8 shows the changes during this period.

School Year	Primary	Secondary General	University
1949–50	24,391	1,039	117
1950–51	28,924	1,305	137
1951–52	43,154	1,568	153
1952–53	51,100	2,490	191
1953–54	51,664	2,933	212
1954–55	51,218	3,587	253
1955–56	53,126	3,900	288
1956–57	63,464	5,165	403
1957–58	64,279	6,281	441

**Table 8: Enrollment in Educational Institutes in China 1949–1957**

(Numbers in Thousands) Source : Kwong, Julia, Chinese Education In Transition : Prelude to Cultural Revolution , McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979, p69 .

Through the effort of the first Five-year plan(1953–1957) by the end of 1957 there were 229 universities and institutes of higher learning with 441,000 students; 12474 secondary schools(1320 secondary technical schools; 11096 general secondary schools) with 7.081 million students(800,000 secondary technical school , agricultural school and vocational school students; 6.281 million general secondary school students); 547,300 primary schools with 64.283 million students and 164,000 kindergardens. About 40% of the school-aged children were enrolled in school . [4]

In the first few years between 1949 and 1957 the educational task concentrated on transforming the old education left by the Guomindang into the new one. Through a series of reforms,especially university and college readjustment,between 1950–1952 the government successfully established its own socialist educational system with the help of the Soviet Union. In addition to the formal schooling there was a number of informal institutions such as workers and peasants short-course schools set up to eradicate illiteracy as well as to raise the educational level of people. In the subsequent years especially between 1953–1957(the first five-year plan period) education made substantial progress in both quality and quantity.

## **4.2 1958–1959, the Great Leap Forward Period**

The years of 1958 and 1959, which are known as the Great Leap Forward in the history of China, marked the end of Soviet socialism in China and the beginning of Chinese socialism.[5] This drastic change stimulated further reform in education. The most important aspect of the reform was the introduction of productive labour into education. Productive work was demanded of the students at all levels of education. Factories and agricultural plots were set up near the schools and students were sent to these places to help in production. Another aspect of the reform was the establishment of red and expert universities( Red here means political consciousness and expert means academic quality. A red and expert university was in practice a political and academic university). This kind of university included three types. They were the full-time comprehensive red and expert universities, work-study red and expert universities and spare time red and expert universities. The academic standard of these universities was lower than in the formal universities.

Education during this period put stress on universalization by quantitative growth . There were tremendous increases in enrolment at all level s of schools. According to official statistics,in 1958 enrolment in primary schools increased by 34% , in secondary schools by 70% and in universities by 50%. Table9 shows the student enrolment from 1958 to 1959.

Year	Higher Education	Secondary Technical	Secondary General	Primary
1957	441	780	6,280	64,280
1958	660	1,470	8,520	86,400
1959	810			90,000

**Table9: Student Enrollment 1958–1959**

(Number in Thousands) Source : Kwong, Julia, Chinese Education In Transition : Prelude to Cultural Revolution, McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1979, p103

It was reported on June 10, 1958 in the Guangming Daily that primary education would reach 85% of the school-aged children in 1959. The main increase was in various work-study schools and spare time schools in which the academic standard was lower. The administration of education was decentralized to the local authorities.

The Great Leap Forward was an attempt to make educational opportunity available to the majority of the population. However, due to lack of planning and the haste in carrying out all kinds of educational programmes it resulted in a proliferation of a large number of schools, accompanied by a lowering of academic standards. It failed to produce positive achievements, on the contrary it caused enormous losses in education .

### **4.3 Education from 1960 to 1965**

Through the Great Leap Forward the quality of education had deteriorated. The period after that from 1960 to 1965 put stress on consolidation and the raising

of academic levels. Students spent more time on academic study rather than on politics and productive labour. Education was brought back to be under the central control as in the pre-GLP period and the independent initiative of individual institutions of higher education was reduced although provincial authorities still retained certain powers in their areas.<sup>[6]</sup>

Between 1960 and 1963 there was a decline in enrolment and many work and study schools with low academic levels were closed down. It was reported that the university enrolment dropped by about 14% during this period. That in secondary schools dropped by 8%–10% and in primary schools by 4%–11%. Table10 shows the student enrolment in China 1960–1963.

School Year	Higher Education Number	Percentage Difference	Secondary Schools Number	Percentage Difference	Primary Schools Number	Percentage Difference
1959–60	810		12,900		90,000	
1960–61	955	+17.9	15,000	+16.57	85,000	-5.56
1961–62	819	-14.24	13,100	-12.67	76,000	-10.59
1962–63	820	+0.12	12,000	-8.40	73,000	-3.95

**Table10: Student Enrollment in China 1960–1963**

(Numbers in Thousands) Source : Kwong, Julia, Chinese Education In Transition : Prelude to Cultural Revolution, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979, p126

From 1963 to 1965, inspite of intermittent debates over raising quality or univer-salization, education made a steady advance . According to the statistics there were 434 institutions of higher learning with 674,000 students; 80993 secondary schools(1256 secondary technical schools and 18102 secondary general schools ; 61626 secondary agricultural and vocational schools) with 14.318 million stu-dents(4.98 million secondary technical school, agricultural school and vocational school students; 9.338 million secondary general school students); 1.681 million primary schools with 11.6209 million students and 19200 kindergartens.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Conclusion

In summary, because of lack of experience the development of education during the 17 years between 1949 and 1965 was not smooth. The tremendous growth of enrolment in all kinds of schools during GLP resulted in great waste of educational resources and a lowering of academic levels. There were other weaknesses as well. However, due to the implementation of an educational policy which served workers and peasants, the majority of the population, education since 1949 had made greater progress than prior to 1949. Through a series of reforms especially in the 1950S' reorganisation of the structure of higher institutions, China firmly established its own educational system . This system consisted of both full-time schools, half study half work schools and spare time schools . Between 1949 and 1965 the government expanded the provision for secondary education more than 11 times and of primary education 5 times.<sup>[8]</sup> In 1965 there were 434 higher institutions, 1.1 times of the number of higher institutions in 1946(the best year of educational development during the Guomindang period) and 674,000 students , 3.3 times of the number of higher institution students in 1946; 14.318 million secondary school students, 3.9 times of that in 1946 and the percentage of school-aged children receiving education reached 85%. Meanwhile the half study and half work schools made progress as well, and became an important component of the educational system. In the same year, there were 177 higher institutions, which set up half study and half work classes with 44,000 students and 109 independent half study half work higher institutions set up by the factories, farms and communes with 29,000 students. There were 4.43 million secondary half study half work school and agricultural school students. In addition, there were 410,000 spare time higher institution students, 8.54 million spare time secondary school students and 29.6 million spare time primary school students. Moreover, China successfully conducted anti-illiteracy campaigns throughout the country and greatly improved the educational level of its population especially that of peasants.

Nevertheless, on the whole the seventeen years of education prior to the Cultural Revolution was an elitist education giving priority to quality inspite of the great efforts made by the Chinese government in universalizing the educational system. It was reported that only one in ten of the primary school graduates went to secondary schools and fewer secondary school graduates could go to university,

which became more competitive following the economic recession caused by the famine of the 1960's. This led to a dissatisfaction among the people with the educational system and culminated in the Cultural Revolution.

#### Notes for Chapter Four

1. The Central Educational Science Research Institute (ed), *The Important Educational Events 1949–1982*, Educational Science Publishing House, 1983. p8.
2. Ibid. p90 .
3. Ibid. p10 .
4. Ibid. p209 .
5. Kwong, Julia, *Chinese Education in Transition*, McGill–Queen's University Press, 1979. p88.
6. Taylor, Robert, *Chinese Intellectual Dilemma*, University of British Columbia Press, 1981 . p21.
7. The Central Educational Science Research Institute, *op.cit.* p391 .
8. *Achievement of Education in China 1949–1983*, People's Education Press, Beijing, 1985 . pp22–23.
9. *Educational Research* , No.1, 1984(JiaoYu Yanjiu) The Central Educational Science Research institute(eds), Educational Science Publishing House. p16.

## Chapter V

### Education during the Cultural Revolution

— From 1966 to 1976

The years from 1966–1976 were defined by the Chinese government as the decade of the Cultural Revolution, which ended with the downfall of the Gang of four.<sup>[1]</sup> This great upheaval, which affected 534,000 students in 434 universities; 6.4 million students in 56,000 secondary schools and 100 million students in China's one million primary schools totalling 107 million youth,<sup>[2]</sup> dramatically brought Chinese modern education into a new phase of development, with a great deal of disorder. This chapter provides a general survey of the development of education during this period. This period can be divided into two distinct phases : Beginning Phase, 1966–1967; Attempted Reconstruction, 1968–1976

#### 5.1 Beginning Phase 1966–1967

##### 5.1.1 Background

The origin of this revolution was very complex. It was based on the political, social and economic situation prior to the revolution, which is beyond our scope of discussion. But the students' dissatisfaction with the old educational system stimulated this revolution. They thought the school system of 6–6–5 years had changed too little since the founding of the PRC. They considered that young people spent too much time in schools without sufficient preparation for the world outside in general and for politics in particular. The domination of theoretical book learning led to an isolation from working people. The educational system widened the gap between workers and peasants and between city and countryside. Moreover, due to economic disaster between 1960 and 1963, many schools were closed down especially the locally financed half study half work schools. Student enrolment at

primary schools dropped by 14% and enrolment at secondary schools dropped by 20% during this period.<sup>[3]</sup> Educational opportunities lessened while competition increased. Academic performance became the main criterion for admission and promotion. The curriculum often included materials irrelevant to students' later jobs. The students' workload was so heavy that children from workers and peasants families dropped out due to their poor academic background. All these features led students to think that the school system was failing to create a satisfactory society. They considered that major reform was essential.

### **5.1.2 Beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

#### 5.12 (1) The Issue of Two Directives and One Notice

On May 7, 1966 Mao Zhedong, the chairman of the PRC issued one directive concerning the transformation of education. It decreed that the students should learn industrial production, agricultural production and military affairs in addition to book knowledge. The length of schooling was to be shortened and education was to be revolutionized.<sup>[4]</sup> This was the well-known May 7 Directive, which marked the beginning of the Cultural revolution.

In order to facilitate the development of the cultural revolution and the further transformation of the educational system, one month later, in June, 1966 a notice was issued by the central committee and State Council to change the existing entrance examination method of enrolling students in higher institutions and to postpone the 1966 enrolment for six months. A new method of enrolment, a combination of recommendation and selection was implemented. The same method was adopted in enrolling students at secondary schools and primary schools. The notice was intended to enable universities, secondary schools and primary schools to achieve the aim of the cultural revolution.<sup>[5]</sup>

Then on 8th of August of the same year the central committee published the decision of the central committee of the Chinese communist party concerning the great proletarian cultural revolution, which was generally referred to as the 16-point decision. On the tenth point referring to educational reform it stated : "In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a most important task is to transform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching. In

the revolution the phenomenon of our schooling being dominated by bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed. In every kind of school we must apply thoroughly the policy advanced by Comrade Mao Zhedong of education serving proletarian politics and education being combined with productive labour, so as to develop students morally, intellectually and physically and equip them to become labourers with socialist consciousness and culture".<sup>[6]</sup> This decision gave further encouragement and guidance to the Cultural Revolution.

These two directives and one notice could be summarized roughly as follows:

- (1) to abolish the old examination system so as to facilitate the entrance of children of the proletariat into schools and to provide an easier progress for them through the system.
- (2) to shorten drastically the period of schooling.
- (3) to integrate study and productive labour in all schools and to integrate urban and rural education.
- (4) to eliminate the theoretical and research fields of study.

#### 5.12 (2) Educational Activities

By mid-1966 formal schooling and teaching had stopped and schools, colleges and universities were used as centres of discussion and political activities. Students were relieved from school work. They roamed the country from one place to another to gain revolutionary experience. Millions of students from many parts of the country travelled to Beijing to exchange views and argue about policies while some other students were marching through the countryside helping with farm work and discussing the cultural revolution with the peasants. Many went to Yen-an and the old liberated areas as well. In addition to these activities studying Mao's works and directives was a compulsory part of the educational activities. Both students and teachers went to factories and communes to integrate themselves with workers and peasants to ensure the schooling in all educational institutes linked up with the lives of the working people. The schools ceased to function as centres of teaching and research and became centres of revolutionary activity. In 1966 there was no

regular schooling and teaching in Chinese schools. All the schools were closed for nearly one year.

## 5.2 Attempted Reconstruction from 1968 to 1976

In February and March of 1967 the Party CC issued several directives calling for the resumption of classes in primary schools, secondary schools and universities. As the People's Daily on 7th of March, 1967 stated, the purpose of reopening classes was to resume study of Mao Zhedong's thought and of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.<sup>[7]</sup> Classes had been restored at least in primary and secondary schools by the autumn of 1968 inspite of the slow pace of reopening schools. But when the schools reopened there was a different structure than had obtained previously. At the primary level education became a single-track five year system in which children in rural and urban areas were to be given the same courses. This was very different from the two track six year system which had existed before the Cultrual revolution with urban academic schools on one hand and rural work study schools on the other. This change was in accordance with Chairman Mao's policy of eradicating the difference between city and countryside. The new system at the secondary level sought to eliminate the inequalities of the old. A major object of the reform was to eliminate distinctions between schools and between students. The divisions between key-point and ordinary schools as well as between work-study and full-time schools were abolished. Key-point schools were those schools in which financial and pedagogical resources were relatively concentrated and at which the country's most promising students could be trained.<sup>[8]</sup> Entrance examinations for secondary schools and universities were eliminated. All students were required to spend at least two years after graduation from secondary schools in manual work before entering university. To ensure equality between students and between schools, all junior secondary schools and technical, vocational and work-study schools were transformed into general secondary schools.<sup>[9]</sup> table11 shows the number of secondary schools and students in 1965 and in 1976.

The length of primary and secondary schooling was reduced from the original 12 years to 9 or 10 years and sometimes even no more than 5 years or as few as 3 or 4 years. All examinations within schools were abolished. The teaching

Year	Total Number of Secondary Schools	General Secondary Schools (Junior and Senior)	Senior Secondary Students
1965	80,993	18,102	1,308,000
1976	194,595	192,152	14,836,000

**Table11: The Number of Secondary Schools and Students in 1965 and in 1976**

Source: Hayoe, Ruth (ed), Contemporary Chinese Education, Croom Helm Ltd, 1984. p75.

materials consisted mainly of the conscientious study of Chairman Mao's works and of his quotations, of documents related to the cultural revolution, the criticism of bourgeois teaching materials and methods and of a few academic subjects such as arithmetic and basic natural science. Political studies took precedence over academic subjects.

The policy of an open door operation of schools was adopted during the Cultural Revolution. The schools were not the only place, nor the most important place for learning and teaching. Classes might be held in the factories or on farms. Teachers and students went out of schools to participate in production. At the same time the workers and peasants entered the schools to teach and to take an active part in the management of the schools. The revolutionary committees, which consisted of workers, peasants and soldiers were in charge of the internal administration of the schools and universities at that time.

Higher education was the major target of attack during the Cultural Revolution and all the institutions of higher learning remained closed until 1970. But the reopened universities and colleges were different from the previous ones. They opened their doors to workers, peasants and soldiers and abolished the entrance examination. The entrants consisted of graduates of junior or senior secondary schools or those with an equivalent educational level, sometimes even primary school graduates or an applicant without any education could be allowed to enrol if they had high political consciousness. Those who had at least two years of work experience could be admitted through recommendation from their working units in industry, agriculture and military service based on their political performance and class origin and no academic credentials were required. The period of study was

shortened from an initial four or five years to two or three years. The curriculum was narrowed to subjects directly related to production and politics. In 1970 only 80–90 formal universities and colleges were enrolling students.

In addition to formal schooling some non-formal school and adult education at tertiary level emerged in the 1970S, of which the latter flourished during the cultural revolution. The main non-formal schooling was the July 21 Workers' College, which was set up following the guidance of the Chairman Mao's Directive of July 21, 1968.<sup>[10]</sup> Furthermore, in rural areas there were non-formal peasant colleges and communist labour academies as well as short-term training classes for intensive education.

At the same time, the administrative system was restructured. The ministries of education and higher education were abolished. The Revolutionary Committees became the leading administrative organs and their regional subcommittees on culture, science and education replaced the special bureau for education which had been in charge of educational administration at local level before the cultural revolution.

### 5.3 Conclusion

[11]

The unprecedented Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had thrown all of China into confusion and turmoil for an entire decade . Education especially was seriously damaged and there was sacrificed one whole generation by sending them to work in the countryside and tremendously lowering the general educational level.

The institutions of higher learning were particularly attacked. In 1965 there were 434 institutions of higher learning. In 1971 there were only 328 and 106 of them were reduced in size. The colleges of politics and law and the financial and economic universities disappeared . The collegiate administrators and teachers were compelled to transfer to other work units and much equipment and teaching material was lost. The institutions of higher learning ceased enrolling students for the entire four years (1966–1969). When they again began to admit students most of those who enrolled were workers-peasants-soliders students, who had an equiva-

lent education of junior secondary school level or even lower. Because the length of the courses was shortened and students spent most of their time participating<sup>in</sup> the class struggle, the academic quality of students was very low. Between 1960 and 1976 at least 1 million university students and over 2 million secondary technical school pupils failed to obtain any qualifications. This resulted in a lack of experts of all kinds , who were in great demand for the national economy.

The structure of secondary education was totally transformed. In 1965 there were 18,102 secondary general schools and 61,626 secondary technical schools and secondary agricultural schools. During the Cultural Revolution all the secondary schools became secondary general schools. This led to an imbalanced development of secondary education In 1976 there were 192,152 secondary general schools.

Primary education did not escape damage as well. The percentage of children attending school dropped and the dropout rate of students sharply increased. All kinds of spare time schools ceased to function . The quality of graduates of all kinds of schools during the ten years was substantially lower than that of the graduates before the cultural revolution.

In addition, the teachers were fiercely attacked. The teachers were sent to factories, the countryside and to the army for political re-education. They were deprived of all rights of teaching and research. Some of them even were persecuted to death. They received neither respect nor enough income to stay alive .

In short, during the ten years of Cultural Revolution, the progress of the Chinese educational system towards modernization came to a halt. Serious attempts were made to destroy the well-established modern educational system which had been set up after the founding of the PRC.

## Notes for Chapter Five

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## Chapter VI

### Education after 1977

Following the death of Chairman Mao and the downfall of the Gang of Four, the Cultural Revolution ended. A new leadership under Deng Xiaoping came to power. At the same time a new image of Chinese education emerged. In the first few years after the Cultural Revolution education concentrated on reconstruction of the education system to a pattern close to that of the pre-Cultural Revolution period. By 1980 this reconstruction was nearly completed. Since 1980 a wide range of educational reforms has been implemented throughout the country. There have been reforms at each level of schooling from primary education, secondary education to higher education. These reforms were highlighted with the official announcement of the decision on educational reform in 1985 and the passing of the compulsory educational law in 1986. This chapter discusses educational development from 1977 to the present time. It is divided into three sections. The first section describes the reconstruction in the late 1970s, ie, from 1977 to 1979. The second section gives an outline of the reforms in the 1980s. The last section is concerned with the plans which have been drawn up for future development.

#### 6.1 Reconstruction and Raising Standards :1977–1979

##### 6.1.1 Two National Conferences

After the Cultural Revolution there were serious shortages of higher level manpower and middle level technicians as well as other talents for the development of the national economy due to the over expansion of primary and secondary education without attention to quality. In order to make up for what had been lost and to remedy the error which had been made in all sectors of education, in 1978 two national conferences were held in March and in May calling for the implementation of an effective educational programme. The first one was the national science

conference in March of 1978, of which the main points could be summarized as follows:

- A. Science and technology are essential for the development of the nation;
- B. Pay respect to the teachers and other intellectuals, who are part of the working class.
- C. Ensure the efficiency of primary schools, secondary schools and universities as well as keypoint schools throughout the country.
- D. A body of people trained in science and technology should be built up.
- E. Education is essential for production of scientists and technicians <sup>[1]</sup>

The second one was the national educational work conference in May of 1978, at which the two points of improving the quality of education and of keeping pace with the requirements of national economic development were stressed.<sup>[2]</sup> These two conferences gave a new direction to the education task, aimed at reconstruction and the raising of standards. After the national conferences a series of educational conferences was held in provinces, cities and autonomous regions to disseminate the decisions of these two conferences and to carry out the new educational task of reconstruction and raising standards. As a first step the university entrance examination system and the keypoint school system were restored. At the same time other aspects of education were restored as closely as possible to the situation which existed before the Cultural Revolution.

### **6.1.2 Restoration of the university entrance examination**

Higher education was the part of the educational system, which had suffered most during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution. All institutions of higher education had ceased to enrol new students for 6 years due to participation in political movements. Although enrollment had started again in the last four years, the quality of entrants was low because they were recommended for their political consciousness and behaviour rather than for their academic qualifications. This inevitably led to a shortage of highly skilled personnel for Chinese economic construction after 1977.

In order to train the experts who were needed the first step was to restore the higher education entrance examination so that the quality of the experts would be ensured . The first higher education entrance examination after the cultural revolution was conducted in Dec. 1977. The candidates were mainly those who already had working experience were graduates of senior secondary schools or had equivalent qualifications. A small number of students about to graduate from senior secondary schools was also admitted. In the subsequent years the number of candidates who had working experience declined until by 1980 nearly all candidates were those who had graduated from the senior secondary schools. They took part in a standard entrance examination organised and held by the counties or districts. The first examination was not unified. The test papers were prepared by individual provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. The subjects of the examination included politics, languages, mathematics, history and geography for the liberal arts candidates, and politics, languages, mathematics, physics and chemistry for science candidates. Foreign language was not included in the subjects in 1977. But in 1978 the candidates for admission had to take a test in a foreign language, which was for reference only. In the following years the performance in a foreign language was taken into consideration by increasing the percentage until 1983 it was raised to 100%. In 1980 a preliminary test for entrance was organised for screening so as to lessen the burden of the entrance examination. In 1981 the subject of biology was added to the test. Approximately 273,000 new entrants through this competitive examination were enrolled to higher institutions in the Spring of 1978. From 1978 the entrance examination has been organised centrally by the ministry of education ( which was changed into the State Education Commission after 1985 ) and standardised for the whole nation. In each July the unified university entrance examination is held over three days. Meanwhile since 1977/1978 a number of research students has been enrolled at universities and research institutes.

The restoration of the higher institution entrance examination was an important step towards raising the quality of education. The candidates were selected through competitive examination. Without a good knowledge the candidates could not pass the examination . This guaranteed the quality of the entrants and was an important step towards producing the experts needed for the process of modernization.

### 6.1.3 Restoration of the Key-point School System

The task after 1977 was defined as the realisation of the Four Modernizations by the end of this century in the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in Dec. 1978 (i.e, the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology ). For China to modernize a large number of experts was needed. The problem was to turn out these experts quickly when resources were limited. It was necessary to focus limited resources on running a small number of key point schools. These schools would train the high quality scientists and engineers, necessary to meet the targets of the Four Modernization programme. At the same time a large number of non-key schools would provide basic educational skills to raise the cultural level of future citizens. Key point schools would receive the most funding, enroll the best students and have the highest quality teachers. Such schools were established from primary level to university. In January of 1978 the first 20 primary and secondary schools were nominated as national key point schools by the Ministry of Education. Subsequently key point schools were set up through the country. By the end of 1979 there were more than 5200 key point secondary schools with 5.2 million students and over 7000 key point primary schools with 5.10 million students throughout the country. At the same time there were 97 key point universities.<sup>[3]</sup> The key point schools were divided into different levels. At the top level stand the national key point schools, then the provincial ones and the county ones. In addition, there were key point schools in the towns and villages. Of course, not all key point schools are of the same standard. For instance, the village key point school can not compare with the key point school at the national level, or even with the one at the municipal level. They were only the best schools in the villages. The key point primary schools provided six years schooling, one year longer than non-key point schools. Both the key point secondary schools and key point universities have the same length of schooling as their non-key point counterparts. The key point school system stretched into the intra-school system as well. Among both the key point and non-key point schools there was intra-school streaming. The students within the schools were divided into fast, average and slow classes according to their academic performance. This was regarded as an efficient way of meeting the individual needs of students. Streaming did have the effect of raising the quality of education. However, a negative consequence followed as well. Some schools and teachers paid attention to only the fast class students

with neglect of students in the slow class and even those in the average class. The negative effect had proved harmful to students especially primary school students because primary education is the fundamental schooling. Under the streaming many students can lose confidence in themselves. This resulted in an increased dropout of students at each level of schooling especially primary schooling.

In the first few years after the cultural revolution in order to make up for what had been lost and quickly raise standards the restoration of the key point school system throughout the country proved to be the correct action. However, due to its elite nature it has always aroused controversies among the educationists and led to the changes in later years.

#### **6.1.4 Other Resolutions**

During the Cultural Revolution many technical and skilled worker training schools were closed down. All the secondary schools became general schools. This situation led to an acute shortage of technical and vocational manpower after 1977. The labour force lacked pre-employment training and enterprises were forced to recruit persons with only academic qualifications. In order to rectify this situation and keep pace with the requirements of national economic development, the restoration of technical schools was necessary. Formal technical and vocational education was fully reestablished in the late 1970s . In addition to formal technical schools there was a variety of informal technical and vocational schools set up by the factories and enterprises. Furthermore, educational administration was recentralized under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and the educational bureau of other ministries. At the same time the decentralized curricula and teaching materials were also unified on a national basis .

Through a series of reconstructions the system of education was closely linked to the attainment of the four modernizations. Because of the implementation of this policy education developed rapidly in the first three years after the Cultural Revolution. By the end of 1979 the number of institutions of higher learning had increased from 387 in 1975 to 633 with a total of 1.02 million students . In addition, there were 280,000 students in TV universities, which were set up in 1978 and 580,000 students in other informal universities. There were 1.199 million secondary technical schools students and 59.05 million secondary general school students

and 640,000 worker training school students. Moreover, there were 146.63 million primary school students and 8.79 million kindergarten children. The number of students in primary and secondary schools and higher institutions in this year was seven times of that in the year of 1946 . After 30 years the institutions of higher learning had provided a total of 2.946 million advanced personnel. In addition there were 5.207 million middle level technicians produced by the secondary technical schools , 39.15 million skilled workers with senior secondary school and vocational school qualifications, 130.88 million with junior secondary school qualification and 580,000 agricultural secondary school graduates.<sup>[4]</sup>

## 6.2 Educational reform in the 1980s

Through the reconstruction in the late 1970s the Chinese began to return to efficiency and relevance. However, Chinese educationists and administrators felt that the development of education still could not meet the demands of the construction of the Four Modernizations. In addition, the economic reform, which started at the end of 1978 brought pressure to bear on the educational field. In order to meet the new challenge after 1980 further reforms have been introduced . The early reforms were implemented only in a few areas on a trial basis. It was after the promulgation of the Decision of the CCP Central Committee on Reforming the Educational System in 1985 that the reforms started to spread throughout the country. The main items of this decision included :

- a. the granting of increased autonomy to colleges and universities in a wide variety of areas such as student enrollment, job assignment and international exchanges .
- b. the expansion of technical and vocational education leading to a linkage between the educational system and the job market.
- c. the gradual development of a nine year compulsory education system.<sup>[5]</sup>

In 1986 a Compulsory Education Law passed by the Fourth Session of the Sixth National People's Congress was issued, which laid down the guidelines for basic education which was the universalization of nine years of basic education. These two official documents introduced a new period in Chinese educational reforms. The following sections outline the main educational reforms since 1980.

### 6.2.1 Academic Reform

As far as the universalization of nine years of basic education was concerned a revised curriculum was necessary. This was because the schooling was intended to serve all students and to raise their cultural levels rather than to serve a small number of students who would proceed to further education. To meet this need it was necessary to adjust the curriculum. The State Education Commission has therefore formulated a draft teaching plan for universal education in full-time primary schools and junior secondary schools in accordance with the law of universal education of China. This teaching plan is designed to train all students in all aspects of development, i.e. morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically. It includes basic cultural knowledge, vocational and technical knowledge, labour skill and extracurricular activities as well as general knowledge of society. In addition, the State Education Commission has set up a body of experts to formulate teaching programmes for nine year universal education in conformity with this teaching plan. Both the teaching plan and teaching programme will be implemented in the near future.

In addition to the revised teaching plans the appropriate examinations and evaluation methods have been adjusted. The State Education Commission has abolished the examination at the end of primary school in those areas which have universalized primary education. This means primary school graduates can proceed to junior secondary school automatically. The nine year universal education may be divided into six year primary education and three year junior secondary education or five year primary education and four year junior secondary education. The urban schools have adopted the former division, i.e. 6-3 school system while the 5-4 school system is popular among the rural schools. The one year shorter in rural primary school and one year longer in rural junior secondary school is intended to increase the rural primary school attendance and give rural students some agricultural knowledge, which is useful for their future production work, by offering some vocational courses in junior secondary school. Most rural students work in the agricultural production after they complete their primary education.

The curriculum of higher education was developed on the basis of the Soviet model in the 1950s. It emphasized engineering studies with narrow specializations. But

the current economic development requires a large number of highly trained people with comprehensive knowledge. In addition, after the reconstitution in late the 1970s the educational system became recentralized. Consequently the curriculum of higher education was unified again. The unified curriculum specifies which courses, both compulsory and elective, must be taught for each speciality; the sequence in which they are to be taught and the number of hours per course. The universities are not permitted to alter the content of the courses according to their needs. The demand for a more flexible curriculum was popular among the teachers and administrators in institutions of higher learning. The new measures have been undertaken to secure greater uniformity.

Colleges now can now make their own teaching plans, but the State Education Commission formulates the policies and principles guiding these plans. In their plans colleges have paid attention to restricting the total number of class hours and providing students with more time for individual study. Students are given more elective courses and more opportunities for social activities. The increase in the number of elective courses makes students who major in science learn subjects in social science and students who major in arts to know something about science. In spite of the adoption of the credit system in recent years, which gives the students a choice between the compulsory and elective courses, most of the courses offered are still compulsory, only a few elective courses are available due to a shortage of teaching staff.

The proportions of the curriculum devoted to various fields have been adjusted. The amount of time devoted to humanistic, social sciences and administrative studies has been increased. Formerly there was an imbalance in the proportion of the curriculum devoted to various fields. The engineering studies were strongly emphasized while social science and administrative studies were allocated little time. This situation was not relevant to the requirements of economic development, which had been assessed by a number of invited experts. Thus, the time given to humanistic studies especially law, economics and business management as well as politics, social science, ethics and population theory has been increased. In the fields of engineering, the proportion of time devoted to light industries was increased particularly in food technology. Attention was also paid to interdisciplinary studies and new disciplines.<sup>[6]</sup>

In higher education, revisions have been made to the syllabus of specializations and a catalogue has been compiled for specializations in departments of arts, sciences, engineering, agriculture and medicine. These revisions have rationalized specializations and the scope of knowledge of students, so that they are better equipped for their work after graduation. In the new subject catalogue, the number of science and engineering subjects has been reduced from 878 to 325 and that of liberal arts from 398 to 214. At the same time, many disciplines have been added including the most recent developments in science and frontier subjects as well as subjects and disciplines new to China.<sup>[7]</sup>

In addition to these measures, the reform of the curriculum also includes the reinforcement of ideological and political education in schools of different types and at different levels. In primary and secondary schools, new courses on ideological and political education were adopted in 1985. These new courses consist of teaching on ideology and moral development, world outlook, a brief history of social development, and general knowledge of China's socialist constitution, economics and political science, aiming at creating qualified citizens for socialist construction. In addition the course in political education was reformed in order to strengthen labour education, which is an important feature of Chinese socialist education and which developed from the Yanan Period. In recent years courses in social practice and labour skills have been introduced in primary and secondary schools and the curriculum of colleges has included participation in production, social practice and military training. In this way students could improve their ability to analyze and solve practical problems as well as to integrate the theoretical knowledge they acquire from the classroom with practice.

### **6.2.2 Reform in Structure**

In order to meet the needs of social and economic development, different schools at different levels should fulfil different tasks so that all the kinds of personnel needed for socialist construction can be provided. To do this the school structure at each level has been reformed.

At primary level there is now a two-track system with full-time state-run urban primary schools on the one hand and rural primary schools on the other. The main task of urban primary schools is to supply students for higher levels of schooling

while the rural primary school is designed to provide a literate labour force for society. The urban primary school has made primary education universal in urban areas and in most rich areas junior secondary education is universal as well. However, primary education is still not universal in many rural areas. The rural primary schools include complete rural schools and simple primary schools which are run in various ways, for instance, part-time, every other day, mobile teaching and teaching classes. The rural primary schools adopt the teaching programmes and materials formulated and compiled by the province, city and autonomous region while urban primary schools use the teaching programmes formulated by the State Education Commission.

There are several factors which make the universalization of primary schooling in rural areas difficult. First, the implementation of the agricultural responsibility system, which was introduced in rural areas in the early 1980s has affected the universalization of primary education. Under this system family income was increased by farming the plot of land distributed to them. As a result many rural parents prefer to have their children work on the farm rather than go to school. Locally hired teachers also received a plot of land under this system. Therefore they tend to neglect their work in schools and spend time on their own land. In addition, the cost of textbooks and tuition, although it is a very small amount made parents unwilling to send their children to school especially the parents in poorer areas. Furthermore, in some mountainous regions the children have to walk long distance to get to school, which is also a deterrent to the attendance of school-aged children in rural areas.<sup>[8]</sup> This situation has been improved after the issue of the compulsory law in 1986. But the complete implementation of this law and the universalization of a 9-year basic education in China needs to become a high priority at each level of government and it can not be achieved in a short time.

At the secondary level, in spite of reconstruction in secondary technical and vocational education in the late 1970s, the intermediate technical education was still weak in many areas particularly in rural areas. The prestige of a school continued to be based on the number of its pupils who proceeded to higher education. This led to an over-emphasis on academic subjects. All secondary schools conducted teaching in accordance with the requirements of the national unified entrance examination. The students failed to acquire the necessary pre-employment training.

This situation is crucial because a large number of secondary schools are in rural areas and most rural students have to participate in production work after they finish primary and secondary education. In order to deal with problem, under the guidance of SEDC the secondary education structure has been revised and vocational and technical education have been developed in many different forms in accordance with local needs for technical personnel. In some areas, vocational and technical education has started at junior secondary school level and in other areas at senior secondary school level and many rural secondary schools are being transformed into agricultural technical or vocational schools so that rural education can better serve the development of the local economy.

Some measures have been taken to correct the one-sided emphasis on achieving the greatest possible number of graduates proceeding to higher-level schools. In localities where junior secondary school education is already universal, primary school graduates can automatically enter the nearest junior secondary school without taking entrance examinations. Furthermore, a unified examination for graduating secondary school pupils has been instituted on a trial basis so that teaching at secondary schools is in conformity with national educational programmes. Finally, an advisory system has been set up for secondary schools to help students choose their future careers.<sup>[9]</sup>

At the higher education level, the internal structural imbalance has been adjusted. According to the different tasks assigned to the institutions of higher education, they are divided into three categories by the SEDC. They are :

- (1) A small number of key point universities with good undergraduate and post-graduate programmes which are also important centres of scientific research.
- (2) Colleges with regular undergraduate courses concentrating mainly on undergraduate education as well as undertaking scientific research programmes. Most of the colleges are of this kind.
- (3) Colleges of specialized disciplines focusing mainly on teaching and specialized fields to provide practical technical personnel.

The first two categories of colleges have four or more years of schooling. The last one has two or three years of schooling. In this way higher educational institutions

will have a clear division of labour according to the actual needs of society. Each will fulfil the tasks assigned to them without competing with the other. At the present time more two or three years specialized colleges have been set up to produce quickly practical skills in the various specialities needed for the achievement of the Four Modernization programme. The four or more year colleges have not been increased in number.

Adult education has been reorganised as well. It has been changed from the initial limited number of types to the present variety of types in order to meet the different demands of adults from different fields (In Chapter 8 the types of adult education will be discussed in detail.) Adult education is now more closely linked to the adults' own jobs and their practical needs. For example, peasant adult education is designed to teach peasant students practical agricultural production skills as well as literacy and general agricultural knowledge. Adult education has become more relevant to the needs of economic development.

### **6.2.3 Administrative Reform**

A very important aspect of educational reform is the reform of educational administration for better efficiency . After the Cultural Revolution the Ministry of Education was reorganised with responsibility for educational work throughout the country. However, the system had previously suffered from overcentralization and a too rigid control. This led to a failure of initiative and enthusiasm among schools and local governments at all levels. It was necessary to improve state administration of education and strengthen party and government leadership over education. After the promulgation of Decision of the CCP Central Committee Concerning Reform in the Educational System, a State Education Commission(SEDC) was established in 1985 to replace the former Ministry of Education.

The SEDC formulates the guidelines and administers education as a whole at nation-wide level. It is the responsibility of local government to implement educational policies, systems and plans and to exercise leadership and supervision over local schools. Under this reform the initiative of local government has increased. At present the administration of basic education is under the local authority. The reform in educational administrative system by delegating powers to lower levels has enabled local governments to have greater power and responsibilities.

Another important aspect of reform in the system of educational administration is the granting of increased autonomy to colleges and universities in their management and in their response to the needs of economic and social development.

In addition to meeting the requirements of state plans assigned to them for producing qualified personnel, and undertaking scientific research projects, the universities have power to enrol a limited number of self-financed students and contracted students as well as to select their own topics for scientific research projects. They are also able to set up scientific research institutions or integrated complexes that combine teaching, research, and production either by themselves or in cooperation with other organisations. They may accept donations from enterprises and make their own decisions on expenditure, hiring and firing of personnel, finance and capital investment, and exchanges with foreign higher institutions.

On a trial basis a system of responsibility of college presidents has been implemented and the system of recruitment and of job assignment in higher education has been modified.

#### 6.23(1) The Responsibility System of College Presidents

The responsibility system of college presidents has been adopted in Chinese institutions of higher education on a trial basis. Under this responsibility system the college president is the highest authority for decision-making in the university administration. He is elected rather than appointed, based on his educational qualifications (at least postsecondary training) and administrative experience. His tenure is limited to four or five years and he can be dismissed if he is not performing satisfactorily. The party committees only retain a watchdog function to guarantee that the policies are being implemented correctly and the leaders of party committee are no longer encouraged to hold important posts in the administration. Similarly, at the departmental level the department chairman is responsible for teaching, research and administrative work within the whole department.

In addition, within universities each position is defined by the rank, authority and responsibility. Everyone is expected to know what their responsibilities are. Faculty members are graded by the number of class hours they teach and their contribution to research. They are assessed on their performance as set out by these

criteria, and can be rewarded, promoted or even dismissed. Faculty members can take up additional responsibilities after completing their basic job requirements on campus.<sup>[10]</sup>

### 6.23(2) Reform of the System of Recruitment

The enrollment of college students is centralized. It is conducted under the unified organisation of the enrollment committees of the various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions on the basis of the total scores in the national unified entrance examination according to a common plan drawn by the central and provincial governments. This plan stipulates in detail the number of students to be enrolled from each province into each school and even into each speciality. This unified enrollment system is intended to ensure the academic quality of the students. Many students after graduation are unwilling to accept employment in the countryside or in the areas where living conditions are relatively difficult but which are short of college-educated people.

In order to rectify this situation since 1983 the enrollment system for institutions of higher learning has been substantially reformed. In addition to the state-supported students enrolled, institutions of higher learning have been allowed to enroll a small number of self-financed students. These students have lower total scores in the national entrance examination than the scores required by the government but they pay the tuition fee and other fees involved themselves. They are not assigned a job on graduation but are responsible for finding jobs themselves.

Furthermore, a contract system has been established between employing organisations and institutions of higher education as a supplement to the state plan for enrollment. The employing organisations pay the institutions of higher education to train the specialists they need while the students upon graduation, in accordance with the contract, work in the employing organisations. This arrangement helps employing organisations which do not have any allocation of college graduates under the state plan to recruit the graduates which they need.

Moreover, in order to guarantee that there will be college graduates going to work in places and professions of which the working and living conditions are relatively unattractive, a policy of "designated" enrollment and job assignment has been

adopted. [11] Those fields such as teacher training, agriculture, water conservancy, geology, petroleum engineering and mining are included in the scope of “designated” enrollment and job assignment. Students in the nationalities institutes, which train for work among China’s ethnic minorities are also included in the directional plan. The required score in the national unified entrance examination for students who are willing to enrol in the “designated” plan is lower than for the other students in the non-“designated” plan(state plan).

Finally, a comprehensive assessment of students’ moral, intellectual and physical characteristics is now part of the enrollment procedure . The enrollment committee considers not only the attainment of the students in the entrance examination but also the students’ record of achievement in secondary school , and their moral character and their physical and mental health as well. For some examinees the required score may be lowered or they may enjoy precedence though they have the same academic marks as other examinees. These examinees include those who have been awarded the titles of excellent students by the district government(have a good performance in moral, intellectual and physical aspects), excellent student cadres or those who have made outstanding contributions to community life.

### 6.23(3) Reform of the Job Assignment System

The system of graduates job assignment established in the early days of P.R.China was relevant to the then highly centralised economic system. Now, following the establishment of a more decentralised economic system, the shortcomings of the unified graduation assignment system have become obvious. It is inappropriate for the mobilization of students and for the universities as well as for the employing organisations. The students’ academic performance has hardly had any relationship to their future job assignments. As soon as they enter the universities secured jobs are guaranteed to them no matter how poorly they perform. This situation adversely affected both the universities and the employing organisations. There was no incentive for the universities to improve the standards of either the teaching or administration because there was no competition between universities and all their graduates were adopted by employing organisations no matter how unsuitable they were. This situation required urgent reform.

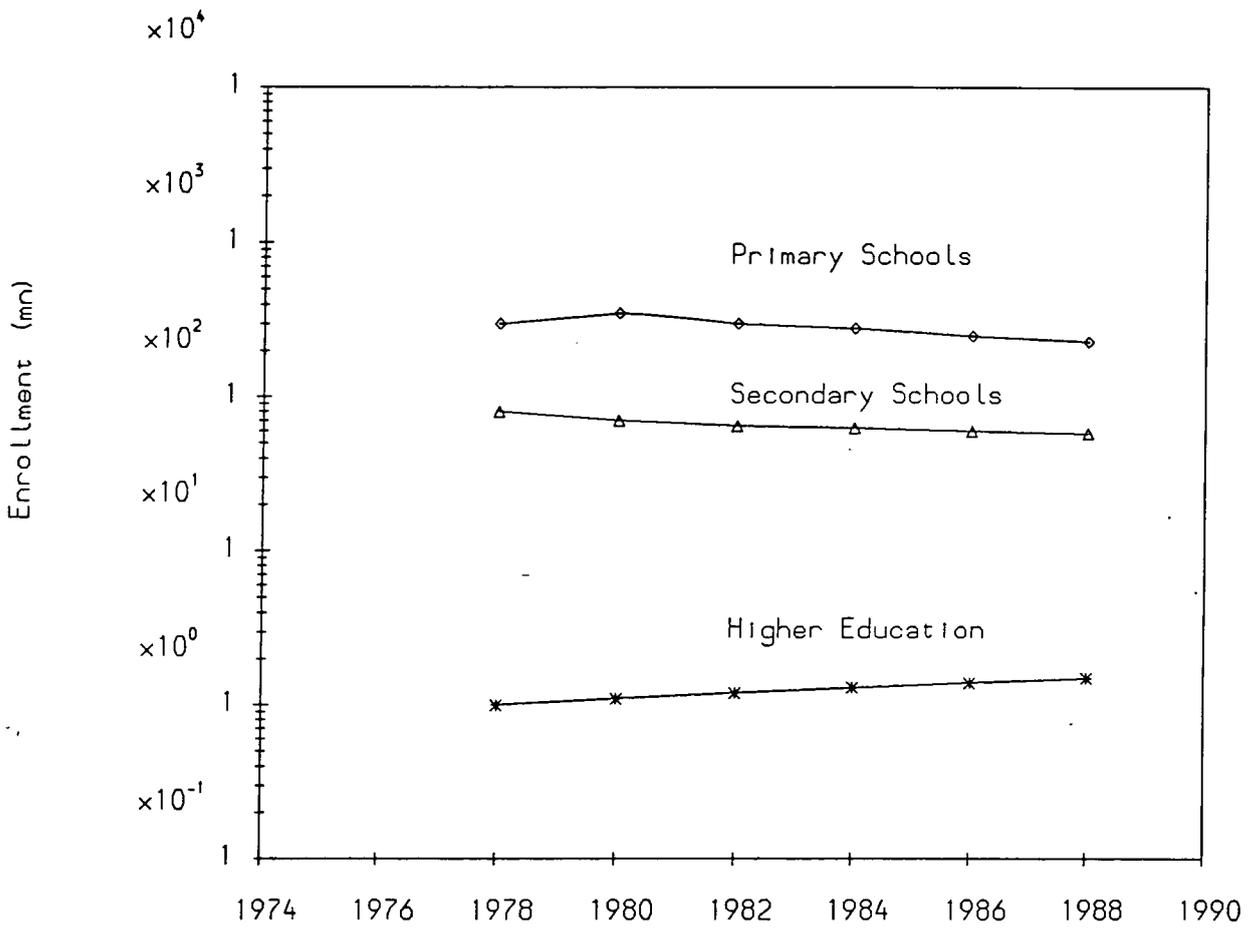
Now a system of two-sided choice is being used on trial basis. In this system the students can choose which employing organisations they wish to work for, while the employing organisations choose the graduates they need. Inevitably, the organisations select the graduates with a good academic record. This competition stimulates both the students and the universities.

However, this trial reform raises some problems as well. Though in theory it secures equal treatment for all students, in practice it is those students from big cities whose parents have well-connected friends and relatives in good work units who benefit most. They can easily get employment in better work units through their parents' influence. But those students who do not have such connections have to find less promising and less paid jobs even though they have the same academic qualifications as those students who have connections.

Furthermore many female students have difficulties in finding a job under this system even when they have a better school performance than the male students. The employing organisations prefer to employ male students with a poorer school performance rather than female students with better performance. This is because the tradition of giving priority to boys is still strong in Chinese society and the fact that, once married, the female students can not devote as much time as male students to their work because of the demand of their family and children.

Another problem is that most college students prefer to work in larger enterprises, joint ventures, government offices, scientific research institutions, and open coastal cities. The result is that there are too many college educated people in these areas while medium or small cities, township enterprises, rural and border areas and minority regions are unable to recruit the graduates which they need. Many secondary schools are short of new teachers as well. But most college students do not choose to work in these less attractive areas and professions. This exacerbates the imbalance in the distribution of college graduates. The government is adopting some measures to attract college students to work in these areas by granting some privileges, for instance, higher salary and better social welfare. Because of these problems, in 1990, the state-assigned job system was restored. What the Chinese college graduate job assignment system becomes, depends on the economic and political reforms, which are currently taking place.

Figure 1 The School Enrollment between 1978 and 1988



School Enrollment in China, ( 1978-- 1988 )  
China Facts and Figures Annual, 1989, p344

### 6.3 Summary of Reform

The ten year educational reform has achieved fruitful results. It has provided the country with a large number of proficient personnel, who have been playing important roles in the construction of the Four Modernizations. China's education is now better than at any time since the founding of P.R.China. However, considering the requirements for the construction of the Four Modernizations educational reform needs to go further. The past ten years of reform have mainly focused on the macro-reform, i.e administrative reform. The teaching process has remained almost unchanged. For instance, the teaching methods still follow the old way, with the teacher giving lectures and students passively accepting knowledge. Therefore further reform should pay attention to the teaching process, i.e the concept of education, the content of education and the method of teaching as well as the examination method in order to stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of both the teachers and students and further improve the quality of education.

#### Notes for Chapter Six

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## Chapter VII

### The Current Structure of the Educational System and its Administration

Through more than eighty years of evolution a modern education system has been established in China. This chapter is concerned with the structure of this educational system and its administration. It is divided into two sections. The first one outlines the structure of China's current educational system. The second section discusses the administration of this system.

#### 7.1 Structure of the Educational System

This system has four levels consisting of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education.

In the pre-school stage there are kindergartens for children from 3 years old to 6 years old, and prior to that, nurseries for infants from one to two years old. Formal schooling starts at the age of 7 in the primary school and finishes normally at the age of 13. In the main stream, students then go to the regular secondary school which is divided into junior secondary school and senior secondary school, each with 3 year's schooling. Many schools have the junior secondary schools and the senior secondary schools on the same campus under the same administration. Parallel with the regular type of secondary schools are the various vocational and technical secondary schools at both junior and senior secondary levels. The years of schooling for these technical and vocational secondary schools vary according to the nature of the courses and the needs at the time. Following on from the secondary schools are the colleges and the universities, which provide both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. In this main stream, the regular schools include both key-point schools and ordinary schools from pre-school level to higher education level. i.e. key-point kindergartens and ordinary kindergartens, key-point primary

schools and ordinary primary schools, key-point secondary schools and ordinary secondary schools as well as key-point institutions of higher education and ordinary institutions of higher education.

Parallel with the regular school system is a variety of schools for adults from primary literacy schools to the institutions of higher education for adults.

### **7.1.1 Pre-school Education**

Pre-school, for children between three and six is an essential part of the Chinese educational system. It is designed to provide children with some fundamental knowledge for their moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development and to lay foundations for their primary education. Pre-school education in China is conducted in kindergartens. There are various types of kindergarten. One type is run by educational organisations. The teachers and administrators of these kindergartens are appointed by the educational authority, and funds are allocated from the government's educational budget. This type of kindergarten is generally regarded as a model kindergarten. It is the so-called key-point kindergarten.

The second type is run by enterprises and public undertakings. The enterprises and public undertakings are responsible for the employment of teachers and administrators as well as for financing these kindergartens. This type of kindergarten is the most numerous among all types of kindergarten in China.

A third type is run by urban neighbourhood committees. The major funding for these kindergartens comes from local workers and tuition is paid by the parents. However, the local government also provides a subsidy to cover part of the cost. The teachers and administrators are employed by the kindergartens themselves.

The fourth type is the kindergarten run by rural communities. Funds for these kindergartens are raised by the business corporations of rural townships and villages. The townships and villages are responsible for recruiting the teachers and administrators for their kindergartens.

The final type is the private kindergarten. These kindergartens are supported mainly by the tuition fees paid by the parents and the teachers are hired by the kindergarten owners.

All types of kindergartens normally have three levels of classes according to different age groups. Children between 3 and 4 years old are placed in the lower classes, those from 4 to 5 are in the intermediate classes, and children between 5 and 6 are accepted in the advanced classes.

The major programmes for kindergartens include training for daily life and good health habits, physical activities, ethics, language training, general knowledge, arithmetic, music and art. These programmes are conducted through playing, physical activities, classroom teaching, observation, handwork practice, recreation and routine life designed to promote children's development in both physical and mental aspects as well as in their psychological and aesthetic aspects.

Table12 is the standard timetable for kindergartens drafted by the State Education Commission which was adopted in 1981 . (each session lasts for 10-15 minutes at the lower level; 20-25 at the intermediate, and 25-30 at the advanced level respectively)

	Lower Class	Intermediate Class	Advanced Class
	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM
Physical Education	0 1	1 1	1 1
Language	1 1	2 2	2 2
General Knowledge	1 1	2 2	2 2
Arithmetic	1	1 2	2 2
Music	2 2	2 2	2 2
Art	2 2	2 2	3 3
Total	6 8	10 11	12 12

**Table12 : Kindergarten Timetable**

Source : Education in China Today 1978-1988. p132

### 7.1.2 Primary Education

Primary education is the foundation of the whole educational system. It is universal throughout the country. At present it includes five year and six year programmes. The enrollment age is 7 (Some primary schools now start to enrol children at the age of 6 ). The tasks of primary education in China are to enable young children to develop morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically, and to lay a foundation for secondary education as well as to train the children to become responsible citizens.

The teaching programme for the full-time primary schools is formulated by the State Education Commission, the highest educational administrative body in China. In accordance with the programme the teaching period is 40 weeks in each academic year. The summer and winter vacations total 12 weeks. The curriculum covers 12 courses. They are : moral education, Chinese, mathematics, natural science, foreign language, geography, history, physical education, music, fine arts and handwork. There are 6 subjects for the lower grades (Grade 1 to Grade 2), 7 subjects for the medium grades (Grade 3 to Grade 4) and 9 subjects for the higher grades (Grade 5 to Grade 6). There are 24 to 25 class periods for the lower grades every week. ( Each class period lasts for 45 minutes with 10 minutes for a break.); 26 class periods for the medium grades and 27 class periods for the higher grades.

There are mainly three types of primary schools in China. The first one is the full time primary schools. This kind of primary school exists mainly in urban areas and constitutes a majority of all primary schools. The teaching programmes, teaching principles and teaching materials are formulated and compiled by the State Education Commission, but some modification can be made by each province, city and autonomous region according to its own needs. The second type of primary school is the one found in rural areas which offers only basic courses such as Chinese, arithmetic , general knowledge and moral courses. The third type is the simple primary school run in various ways, for instance, part time, every other day, mobile teaching and teaching classes with Chinese and arithmetic as the main courses. The teaching programme, teaching principles and teaching materials of these two types of primary schools are formulated and compiled by the province, city and autonomous region themselves.

### 7.1.3 Secondary education

Secondary education in China is an important stage between primary and tertiary education. It is divided into junior and senior secondary schools. Junior secondary schools are part of the 9 year period of compulsory education while senior secondary schools, together with technical schools, normal schools and agricultural schools offer higher secondary education. The majority of secondary schools have a 3 year junior and 3 year senior school system. Some schools have recently adopted a 4 year junior and 3 year senior system on an trial basis. A few others have a 3 year junior and 2 year senior school system.

The academic year consists of two terms with a total of 40 weeks . There are 11–12 weeks' holiday and 1 to 2 weeks available for flexible use. There are 6 classes per day. Classroom instruction occupies 30–31 hours a week in the junior secondary schools and 26–29 hours a week in the senior secondary schools. The regular secondary schools offer 14 courses. They are : Political Science, Chinese, Mathematics, Foreign Language, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Biology, Health Education, Physical Education, Music and Arts as well as elective courses. Elective courses are available for many students for the purpose of cultivating their interests and talents such as computer studies, electro–technology, astronomy etc.

Parellel to the regular secondary schools are the vocational and technical schools. There are vocational schools at junior secondary level, secondary technical schools , workers' training schools and vocational schools at senior secondary level. There are two types of secondary technical schools. One enrolls only junior secondary school graduates and the course lasts for 3 or 4 years. The other technical institution is for senior secondary school graduates. The courses last for 2 years only. These secondary technical schools are designed to train technicians and managerial staff at intermediate level. They train students in engineering, agriculture, forestry, medicine, finance and economics, law, physical education and fine arts. There are more than 450 specialities within 8 disciplines. The workers'training school is a kind of vocational and technical school at senior secondary school level. It enrolls junior secondary school graduates for 3 years of study. It is designed to train skilled workers at intermediate level. The vocational secondary schools include junior and senior vocational schools. The senior vocational schools enroll

junior secondary school graduates for 2–3 years of study while junior vocational schools take primary school graduates for 3 to 4 years of study. There are more than 400 specialities in the vocational secondary schools.

#### **7.1.4 Higher education**

The present higher education system consists of two parts : regular higher education and adult higher education. Higher education institutions undertake the training of advanced specialized personnel as their fundamental task and at the same time promote development in science, technology and culture. The institutions of higher education both the regular sector and the nonformal sector are discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

The academic year in Chinese institutions of higher learning is divided into two terms, from Sept. to Jan. and from Feb. to July. A few universities and colleges are experimenting with an academic year of three terms. Teaching at the institutions of higher learning is carried out in accordance with a plan that is formulated by each individual university. It includes the following basic teaching components : compulsory courses, optional courses, social practice, graduation thesis and examination. The enrollment of new students in higher institutions is through a national entrance examination according to the state plan, and is organised in July for three days by each province. The graduates are guaranteed jobs upon graduation by the university in accordance with the state plan.

Higher education for adults includes radio-TV colleges, institutions of higher education for workers, institutions of higher education for peasants, management cadre's colleges, pedagogical institutes, independent correspondence college and satellite TV education programmes. In addition the regular institutions of higher learning also operate some correspondence departments and evening institutes for adults.

#### **7.1.5 Conclusion**

The current educational system is an integrated system from kindergartens to the institutions of higher education. From primary school onwards at each level of schooling there is an entrance examination. The higher the level of schooling

, the more competitive is the entrance examination . The competition in key-point schools is greater than that in ordinary schools. In this way the quality of entrants is guaranteed. For those who can not go to the next level of regular schooling vocational and technical schools provide an opportunity for professional training. The structure of the educational system well served China's economic and social development when it was in the primitive stage of socialism.

## **7.2 Administration**

### **7.2.1 The Structure of the educational administration**

In educational systems there are three main patterns of administrative control : centralization, local responsibility and divided responsibility between central and local governments.<sup>[1]</sup> China's educational administration belongs to the type of centralization, which means that public education is a function of the state as are almost all other public services. It is under the supervision and control of the State Education Commission at the central level.

The State Education Commission (SEDC) is the supreme administrative authority for the educational system in China. It is a multi-functional executive branch of the State Council. It administers all educational affairs in China. It is responsible for formulating major educational policies, designing overall strategies for promoting education, coordinating educational activities supervised by other ministries and directing and guiding work related to the reform of the educational system.

Parallel to the SEDC there are the education departments or bureaux in ministries under the State Council at the central level. Under the leadership of the State Council and with the coordination of SEDC, the education departments of ministries exercise administrative authority over the subordinate institutions of regular higher education, adult higher education and secondary professional training. The education departments of ministries are also responsible for offering advice to locally administered institutions of higher learning concerning technical matters.

Below the central level there are provincial, autonomous regional or central municipal education commissions at provincial level and county education bureaux at

county level responsible for the implementation of educational principles, policies and regulations.

There are two major sections in the SEDC . The first section consists of 36 departments in charge of higher education, science & technology, political education, student affairs, primary and secondary education, teacher training, vocational and technical education, adult education, planning and inspection. The second section consists of a number of affiliated institutions such as the People's Education Publishing House, the Central Research Institute for Educational Science, the Central TV University and the Institute for Educational Administration.

The provincial educational commissions have responsibility for implementing the plans of SEDC and policies in their areas with respect to higher education, and secondary normal schools. The county level bureaux of education are responsible for ordinary primary and secondary schools. In addition to the educational administration at the three levels there are some non-state administrative organs administering the schools which they establish themselves without state funds. These bodies include large firms, popular organisations and political parties.

At each level of education the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) lays down fundamental political and ideological guidelines, and in some cases party heads hold key leadership posts in administrative bodies. In recent years there has been a tendency towards division of responsibility between party organs and administrative organs. The latter are in charge of all administrative affairs while the former provide only ideological guidance. The party heads are not now allowed to take key posts in administrative organs.

## Chart 5 The Organisation of SEDC

DEPARTMENT AND BUREAU	INSTITUTIONS
General Office	People's Education Publishing House
Office of Policy Studies	Central Research Institute for
Bureau of Personnel	Educational Science
Bureau of Planning and Financing	Central TV University
Bureau of Foreign Affairs	Central Audiovisual Education Institute
Bureau of Capital Construction	Editorial Department of People's
Bureau of Instructional and Technical	Education
Equipment	Institute of Educational Administration
Bureau of Audio--Visual education	
Bureau of Administrative Management	
Bureau of Veteran cadres	
First Department of Higher Education	
Second Department of Higher Education	
Third Department of Higher education	
Department of Postgraduate Education	
Department of Political Education	
Department of Science and Technology	
Department of Student Affairs	
Department of Teacher Training and	
Education	
Department of Secondary Education	
Department of Primary Education	
Department of Minority Education	
Department of Vocational and	
Technical Education	
Department of Adult Education	
Department of Physical and Health	
Education	
Department of Inspection	
Office for Examination for Self--	
Taught Programmes of Higher Education	
Auditing Office	
Office for General Educational	
Planning	
Office of Teaching Staff Management	
Office of Foreign Investment and	
Loans	
Office of Teaching Materials, Library	
Facilities and Information Management	
Office of National Review Committee	
for Primary and Secondary School	
Curricula	
Office of educational Information	
Center for Education Development and	
Policy Research	
Center for Educational Management	
Information	
Center for Examination Management	

Source : Education in China Today , SEDC , p37

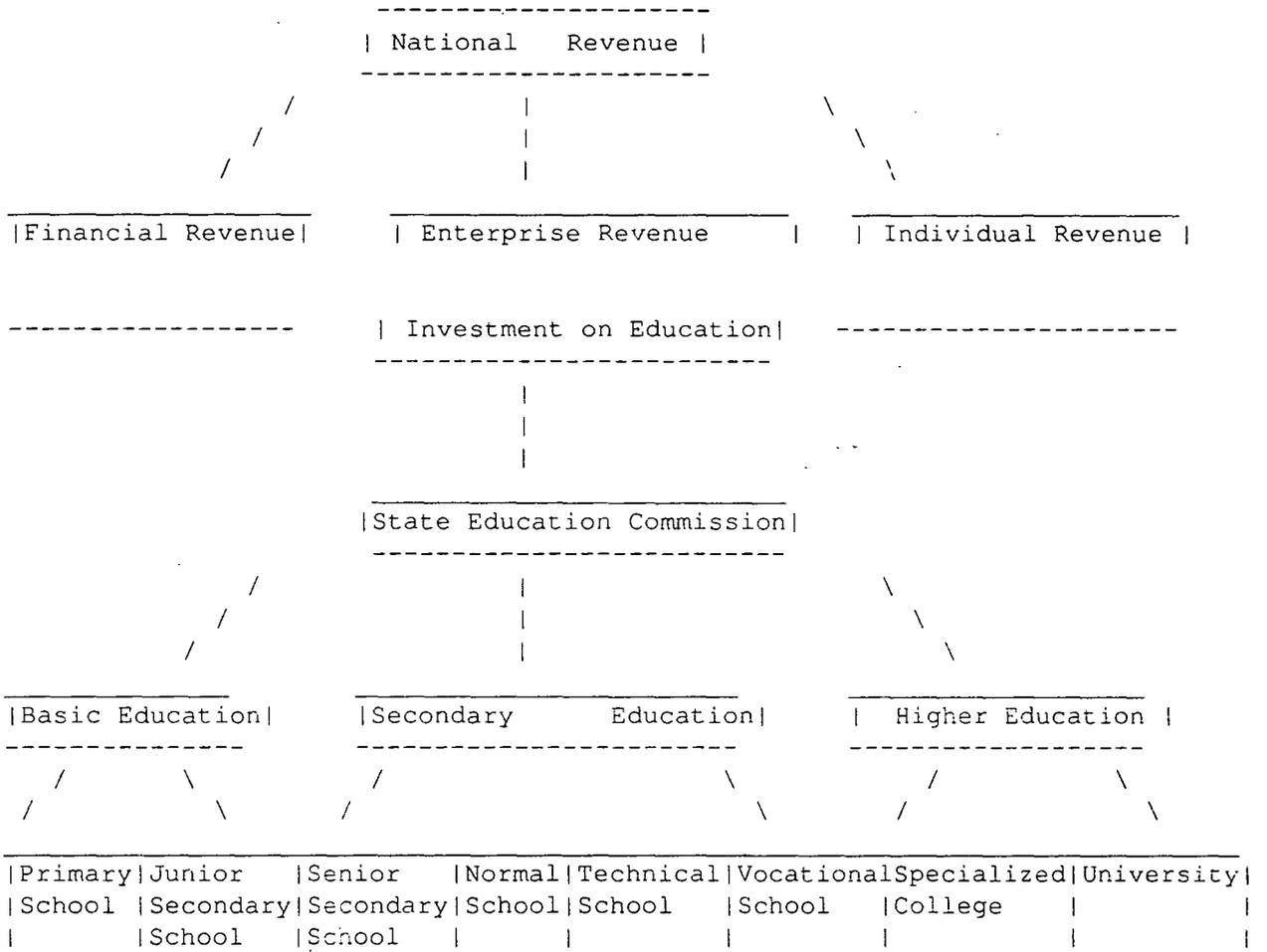


### 7.2.2 Educational Planning

Educational planning is undertaken by the State Planning Commission and the State Education Commission with resources from the relevant commissions under the State Council. The Educational Planning includes long-term and annual planning. Long-term planning focuses on policy matters. The annual planning has concrete targets. Once the draft document is agreed it is distributed to the provincial and county educational authorities for comments and revisions. The plans then are embodied in a formal directive from the central level to the local level educational bureaux, where they are made into provincial and county educational plans for implementation and adoption. The plans made in this way are sometimes not appropriate to local educational needs.

China carries out a policy known as "Walking on Two Legs" in financing education. On the one hand, the state sets aside funding agreed at national, provincial and local levels for different types and levels of state-run schools. It also subsidises the schools set up by the people. The schools run by factories, mines, firms and farming units are expected to be financially self-supporting. Before 1980 the financing of the educational system was put under the unified control of the central authorities and all allocations to education were made by the State through the government. From 1980 the financial management system of separating revenue and expenditure and each level assuming full responsibility began to be implemented. The education funds needed by the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions were handled by their respective governments. Now in addition to their contribution to the State through tax, the province and the county can use the rest of their money to make allocations to education according to local needs and resources. In this way the educational funding system is intended to become more flexible.

### Chart 7 Educational Finance



Source : Educational Research, 1990, No.1 p34 .

### **7.2.3 Administration of Each Level of Schooling**

The Department of Primary School Education of the State Education Commission is in charge of pre-school education throughout the whole country. Similar organisations have also been set up under the departments or bureaux of education at the province, municipality and autonomous region levels. They formulate the model teaching programmes and policies for preschool education while the different organisations which run the kindergartens may adjust them according to their own situation .

The administration of primary and secondary education is mainly the responsibility of local government at various levels, i.e provincial, municipal, county and town level. The Department of Primary education and the Department of Secondary Education of the SEDC is in charge of formulating policies for primary and secondary education .

The Chinese institutions of higher learning are administered at three levels. They are universities run by the SEDC and by other commissions under the direct leadership of the State Council , and those run by provincial or municipal governments. According to 1987 statistics, there are 36 regular institutions of higher learning under the direct leadership of the State Education Commission, 310 regular institutions administered by other commissions under the State Council and 717 by the local governments. In recent years large cities have been made responsible for insitutions of higher learning in their localities on a trial basis.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **7.2.4 Problems and Conclusion**

Effective administration in China is seen as crucial in the progress of education towards modernization. Without an effective and efficient administrative system the goals of modern education in China can not be attained. However, the educational administration system in China at present is far from satisfactory, and there is much to be further improved.

First, cooperation between the centralized leadership and the decentralized administration needs to be more effective. Due to the vast land, the demographic pressures, the uneven distribution of resources among the regions, the generally

low educational level of the citizenship and the developing economy China should seek to establish a multifunctional education administrative system to meet these various demands. In the past the central government not only exercised the leadership but also controlled the entire administrative machinery at each educational level. This system of administration had two consequences. The first was that such excessive central control stifled the initiative of other organisations, which would have been interested in setting up schools and destroyed any enthusiasm among administrators and teachers for participation in education innovation. The second consequence was simply inefficiency. The central authority could not control the local educational level which lead to administrative chaos. Therefore the main objective of reform of educational administration in China should stress the responsibility of the central authority for the formulation of policy , at the same time entrust basic administration to the local governments so that the mobilization of various organisations or agencies can be acheived. That is to say there should be controlled decentralization of administration.

Secondly, the educational directives in China are always transmitted from the central to the local level, but there is a lack of feedback from the local level for revisions. Educational administration is separated from the teachers, the local administrators, the students, their parents and the society. This leads to limited sources of information for decision-making. Also lacking is any system of effective inspection for information feedback through the administrative organs themselves at each level. As a result the information reaching the centre is always incomplete and often incorrect. The establishment of a system of inspection at each level is essential to guarantee a flow of accurate and comprehensive information.

Thirdly, there should be a close relationship between educational administration and educational research. For a long time the educational decision making in China has not received guidance from educational science. The education administrative organs should establish an evaluation system, which would provide an informed basis for the decisions.

Fourthly, a law should be passed to define the duties of education administration at each level. At the present time there is no complete education law concerning the administration of the educational system, the financial allocation, and teachers'

rights and interests. The absence of such a law leads to bureaucracy and inefficiency in educational administration. The implementation of such a law is essential for reform to be both relevant and effective.

### **Notes for Chapter Seven**

1. Education in China Today 1978–1988, SEDC. p73 .
2. World Survey of Education : Handbook of Educational Organisation and Statistics, Paris, Unesco, 1955 . p24 .

## Chapter VIII

### Higher Education Provisions

After discussing the structure and administration of China's educational system we now examine the higher education system, an important part of the educational system, whose success or failure will determine China's modernization and its destiny in the next century. Higher education in China includes formal and nonformal parts. This chapter starts with a discussion of formal higher education, then presents the nonformal higher education (the higher education for adults). Finally teacher education is also included for discussion in this chapter.

#### 8.1 Formal Higher Education

Formal education constitutes the main body of higher education in China. As part of the plan to realize the Four modernizations by the end of this century, China is giving high priority to developing formal higher education, which will be responsible for advanced specialized personnel as its fundamental task and at the same time will promote development in science, technology and culture. This section will present the general features of formal higher education in China. The topics which will be considered include the types formal higher education, higher education administration, university administration, student admission university teachers and teaching, curriculum, job assignment, postgraduate studies, research and international exchange, and administration of higher education.

##### 8.1.1 Types of Formal Higher Education

Chinese institutions of higher learning can be considered in three main tiers and five distinct types. The three tiers consist of keypoint universities, ordinary universities or colleges, and specialized or vocational colleges.

The first tier of institutions includes the first-class universities and those universities and independent colleges with strong academic capabilities. There are two levels of this tier of institutions. One is the universities with graduate schools, the other is those without graduate schools. They cover a variety of comprehensive universities, science and technology universities as well as independent or specialized institutes.

The second tier is ordinary universities and colleges. It also has two levels. One is universities which offer postgraduate courses at the degree of M.A and Ph.D. The other is those institutions which do not have the facilities for postgraduate studies. For the first and second tiers the courses last for 4 years, sometimes 5 or 6 years for some science and medical universities.

The third tier is specialized or vocational colleges which are similar to the American junior college. The course for this tier is 2 or 3 years.

The first and second tiers of institutions are still the mainstay of higher education in China. According to 1987 statistics among all institutions of higher education there were 941 universities or colleges of the first and second tiers, but only 122 specialized or vocational colleges of the third tier. <sup>[1]</sup> This situation can not meet the needs of economic construction which requires varying levels of scientific, technical and administrative experts and in appropriate proportions. China is aware of this problem and is reforming its structure of formal higher education by developing more two or three year specialized or vocational colleges in order to produce rapidly specialized personnel in science, technology and administration for the Four Modernizations.

In addition to the division of tiers there is division of types according to the specialization the institutions of higher education offer. Under this division Chinese higher education institutions are divided into the following five distinct types:

- (1) comprehensive universities offering various courses in humanities, natural sciences and so on;
- (2) technological universities and institutes (Polytechnic universities);

(3) specialised institutes such as institutes of geology, institutes of petroleum technology, aeronautical institutes and institutes of medicine .

(4) normal universities and teachers' colleges (the duration of studies on these universities and institutes is 4 or 5 years.)

(5) specialised or vocational colleges, where studies last for 2 or 3 years.<sup>[2]</sup>

Among the five types of institutions of higher education the second and third types i.e technological universities and specialised institutes are the main forms , not the comprehensive universities as in many western countries. The specialised institutes concentrating on humanities, finance and economic, politics and law were few. This is the result of the 1950s Chinese higher education reorganisation following the Soviet pattern. . At present this imbalance has been changed and the number of specialised institutes concentrating on the social sciences, the humanities has been increased.

### **8.1.2 Intra-university Administration**

Each university in China is administered by two parallel structures with administrative bodies on one side and academic bodies on the other. It is organised at three levels : university, department and division, teaching and research group ,and section. A small number of institutions of higher education has adopted a four level administrative system due to specific needs. The four levels are university, college, department and division, teaching and research group and section.

The administration of universities is based on the responsibility system . Each post no matter whether administrative or academic is defined by certain duties. Faculty members and administrative staff are assessed on their performance of these duties.

The heads of departments or divisions and teaching and research groups or section are chosen by the teachers and the staff members through secret ballot and the decision is ratified at the higher level. The presidents are appointed by the government departments that provide direct leadership to the universities. The tenure for these posts is normally up to four years. At the university level there

is a committee for university affairs to help and supervise the presidents on administrative work. It consists of representatives from the departments, divisions and other important administrative units in universities. Similarly the head of a department or division is in charge of the administration at the departmental level. So is the head of the teaching and research group or section at the lowest level of administrative units in universities.

There are four grades among the faculties in institutions of higher education. They are teaching assistant, lecturer, associate professor and full professor. These posts can be obtained either by promotion or by appointment. The SEDC has specified the basic qualification, teaching and scientific research responsibilities for all types of staff and clearly defined the criteria of engagement as well as of the tenure. Normally this tenure is from two to four years and can be extended for a further period.

### **8.1.3 Student admission**

University admission is based on the entrance examination together with medical and political evaluations. The political evaluation for college admission is based on the candidate's political behaviour and moral character, which is provided by his or her secondary school.

The college entrance examination is the key factor in student admission. It is unified on a national basis. The examination papers set by SEDC are given throughout the country on the same days, at the same hours and in the same sequence. The individual provinces are responsible for administering and marking. The candidates attending the examinations are selected through a preliminary screening test among the senior secondary school graduates without prior work experience. The maximum age limit is 25 years. These candidates take one of two examinations, either in science, or liberal arts. Science candidates sit for examination in seven subjects. They are politics, Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry, foreign language and biology. Liberal arts candidates take six subjects in the examination. They include politics, Chinese, mathematics, history, geography, foreign language. Among liberal arts candidates, those who apply for foreign language as their future specialisation can be exempted from the mathematics examination but have to take a 20 minute English oral test. The examination is limited to two or two

and half hours for each course and is held in the mornings and afternoons for three consecutive days (generally on 7–9 th of July). The minimum passing score for the national key universities is fixed by the SEDC. Similarly, the individual provinces fix the minimum passing scores for ordinary institutions of higher education in the provinces . Each university or college, department and speciality can fix their own admission requirments within the limits of the fixed minimum scores.

The SEDC and other ministries under the State council organise enrollment at all institutions of higher education throughout the country. The SEDC allocates quotas of college places to each province and the number of students from each province to be assigned to individual colleges throughout the country is also fixed in advance. For the provincial universities or colleges, enrollment is conducted within the province. The provincial education committee further decides the quotas of college places.

#### **8.1.4 University Teachers and Teaching**

University teachers have a high status in China. They have high academic qualifications and most of them have undertaken postgraduate studies. They are well paid compared with primary and secondary school teachers. Most of the university teachers are provided with rented housing on the campuses.

Teachers in the colleges or universities are organised into teaching and research groups according to the nature of the subjects they teach. Each teacher presents for discussion in his group, the syllabus, lecture contents, teaching method for his course, the research work he is undertaking , and the problems that exist. Normally two teachers teach one course (one must be at least a lecturer while the other is a teaching assistant). Since the implementation of the responsibility system in universities each faculty memeber has specific responsibilities. They include :

- (1) time devoted to lectures;
- (2) consultation with students;
- (3) laboratory work;
- (4) developing curricula;

- (5) marking papers;
- (6) supervising young teachers;
- (7) other administrative responsibilities.<sup>[3]</sup>

Each of these activities is given different working hours according to the titles of the teachers as well as the complexity of the task assigned to them. At the beginning of each term, the heads of the teaching and research groups decide what each faculty member is expected to achieve and review the progress for each member twice during the academic year.

The Total Number	Number of Professor	Number of Associate Professor	Number of Lecturer	Number Teacher	Number of Assistant
393185	14778	78777	147184	15090	137356

**Table13 : The Number of Teachers in the Institutions of Higher Education in 1988**

Source : China's Encyclopaedia. 1989(Chinese Edition) , p179

### 8.1.5 Curriculum

The curriculum in institutions of higher education is drawn up in accordance with the plan that is formulated by each individual school. It includes three parts :

- (1) foundation studies consisting of a general course in political theory (the history of the Communist Party of China, political economy and philosophy), foreign languages and physical education (some institutions of higher education offer Chinese language and the history of China as foundation studies.)
- (2) studies fundamental to the specialization.
- (3) the specialized studies.

The teaching involves the following basic components: compulsory course, optional course, social practice, graduation thesis and examination. The credit system is

used so that the students have more time to study on their own and choose their favorite subjects .

### **8.1.6 Job Assignment**

Upon graduation every student is assigned a state job according to the state plan.

To remedy the situation of a shortage of college graduates in border and rural areas, minority regions and township enterprises it is required that undergraduates and postgraduates must work for a period at the grass-root level after graduation . [4] There are two reasons for this regulation. First, the small units are desperately short of college graduates but have little chance of recruiting them in an open market. Secondly, the students have learned theoretical concepts in college and working in grass root units will enable them to gain practical experience.

### **8.1.7 Postgraduate Studies**

Postgraduate studies are the highest levels of higher education. There are two levels: doctoral degree level and masters degree level. There are three kinds of students, i.e doctoral degree students, masters degree students and non-degree students.

The masters degree programme lasts two or three years. In some specialities it can be shortened to two or two and half years . The curriculum includes courses in Marxist theory , a foreign language and three or four basic and specialized courses as well as the preparation of a thesis . To obtain the degree it is necessary to pass the course examination and successfully defend the thesis. Those who do the course work without a thesis, receive a diploma. But if they later write a thesis they can then obtain the masters degree.

The length of the doctoral programme is three years. In addition to the courses on Marxist theory, they are required to take two foreign languages, basic and specialized courses and prepare a dissertation. The Ph.D students are required to conduct academic research under the supervision of their professors. To obtain the degree they must complete the courses and succeed in the examination and the dissertation defence .

The SEDC is responsible for admission of students for the masters degree throughout the country. The candidates who are required to have the B.A or B.Sc degree or its equivalent will take preliminary and final tests. The preliminary test consists of Marxist theories, one foreign language and three specialized subjects. The test papers of marxist theory and foreign language are designed by the SEDC and unified on the national basis and the test of papers for the other three specialized subjects are prepared by individual universities. The admission of Ph.D students is conducted by the individual universities. The age limit for a Ph.D student is 40 years and 35 years for a masters degree student .

Upon graduation these postgraduate students are assigned by the State to work in the institutions of higher education or research institutes.

#### **8.1.8 Research and International Exchange**

In addition to cultivating talents the institutions of higher education bear the responsibility for conducting scientific research. There are some full-time research staff in universities and all teachers are required to undertake some research after fulfilment of their teaching tasks. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students are encouraged to take part in research activities.

The research projects are selected chiefly from the national plans for scientific and technological development and plans for social science development, from the different government departments, enterprises and joint research programmes with overseas partners. Researchers can also choose their own projects. In addition to the funds allocated by the state , the universities can also obtain funds from the research assignments of enterprises and others. They can also apply for financial assistance from the National Natural Science Foundation, the Social Science Foundation and the Science Foundation for Youth.

The institutions of higher education are strengthening their links with production, research units as well as with other outside bodies to establish multiple inter-organizational groups with teaching, research and production functions.

Since China was reopened to western countries after the Cultural Revolution many institutions of higher education have established institution-to-institution



exchange relationships with their counterparts around the world for exchange of personnel, cooperative research, short-term language training, exchange of books and materials and bilateral and multi academic seminars. Many teachers and research staff of institutions of higher education have been sent abroad as visiting scholars to do research.

At the same time, many institutions of higher education have begun to accept foreign students and scholars for long-term and short-term programmes in the subjects of liberal arts. In addition, Chinese institutions of higher education have conferred honorary professorships on noted foreign scholars and professors and Chinese scholars and professors have also received honorary degrees or academic titles from institutions of higher education abroad.

These exchanges have promoted development in both teaching and research, especially, the development of some new disciplines, in which China was formerly weak. In the long run, these exchange should increase and expand so long as China's open policy remains unchanged.

### **8.1.9 Administration of Higher Education**

The State Education Commission in the State Council administers higher education throughout the whole country. There are two departments of higher education in SEDC responsible for formal higher education. The First Department of Higher Education conducts academic management in humanities and social sciences in higher education institutions by formulating appropriate policies, plans, educational goals and requirements for college and universities specialising in humanities and social science, and develops basic requirements for the core courses in these subjects.

The Second Department of Higher Education undertakes academic management in higher education in the following disciplines : natural sciences, engineering, agricultural and forestry sciences, medical and pharmaceutical science. It formulates appropriate policies, develops educational goals for both university and college level programmes and specifies the educational requirements for key courses.

There are some higher education institutions directly administered by the various

ministries of the State Council. While these ministries often have special educational departments concerned with their colleges, the SEDC is the only coordinator and overseer. Those universities or colleges under the administration of various ministries have been set up by the ministries concerned to meet their specific needs. Many of these universities or colleges are technological, specialized or economic institutions of higher education. In addition, many institutions of higher education are administered by provincial governments.

The formal higher education constitutes the main part of higher education provision. In 1989 the total number of all formal institutions of higher education was 1,079. In the context of the current economic development this number is adequate and further development of formal higher education should concentrate on quality.

## **8.2 Nonformal Higher Education**

In the Chinese context, nonformal higher education means higher education for adults who are outside the regular formal age-graded school system at the tertiary level. It is offered for those who already are employed either in urban industrial enterprises or in rural production units. The regular higher education is unable to meet the needs of rapid modernization, which demands large numbers of skilled personnel. Adult education is an efficient supplementary means to reach this goal.

This section focuses on adult education at the tertiary level. It is divided into five parts. Part one introduces the types of higher education for adults. The second discusses administration. The third examines the curriculum. The fourth considers funding and the last one analyses the problems of higher education for adults.

### **8.2.1 Types of Higher education for Adults**

Higher education for adults has various forms. It is mainly divided into six categories :

- (1) education for workers and staff
- (2) education for cadres
- (3) education for peasants

- (4) correspondence education
- (5) T.V and Radio University
- (6) self-study examination system

#### 8.21(1) Education for Workers and Staff

Study can be full-time from six months to three years with full pay while studying , part-time (inservice training) or spare time. Higher education for workers and staff is carried out by factories and other employing enterprises as well as by local governments . It is mainly designed to produce personnel with higher specialised and technical knowledge that will be applied to production and management in their enterprises.

The main form of higher education for workers and staff is the universities for workers and staff, which are mainly run by factories and major enterprises. All entrants must take an enrollment examination and those who succeed are entitled to three years of study in certain specialities relating to their jobs. During the study period he or she still receives full pay from the work units. In recent years, in order to meet the demands of rapid modernization, universities for workers and staff run by local governments have been established in most cities and large towns. The teachers from formal institutions of higher education are hired by the local governments and conduct teaching in the classrooms provided by them. The students, mainly from those enterprises which are too small to organise their own educational programmes, have to take an entrance examination and pay a small fee to study vocational subjects though their work units pay the fee for them .

The workers and staff universities link work and study effectively. The worker students can find practical solutions for the problems they meet in their daily work. What they learn is highly relevant to their work. In spite of the institutions run by local governments being less directly linked to production than those operated by enterprises, they also coordinate practical work with neighbouring factories and workshops. Large number of students attend this kind of adult university.

Higher education for cadres is designed to train senior managerial personnel for the government at all levels and for enterprises. There are only a few universities

of this kind.

Higher education for peasants has developed as well but at present there are only a small number of institutions.

#### 8.21(2) Correspondence education

Correspondence education organised by formal universities and colleges is one of the most important forms of adult higher education. In higher correspondence education the students study materials with written guidance from the teachers. There are also regular periods of face-to-face instruction. No enrollment examination is required for higher correspondence education but at the end of the period of study the students must pass a strict examination to graduate and be awarded a certificate. The teachers from the formal universities teach in higher correspondence education in their spare time. This form of higher education for adults has proved to be a very economic and flexible way for everyone in service or out of service to receive higher education. In the context of the large population in China and the limited opportunity for formal education or nonformal higher education for workers, correspondence education caters for those who would not otherwise have access of further education.

#### 8.21(3) T.V and Radio University

China's radio and T.V university was founded in 1979. It is a new form of higher education for adults, which offers programmes in a variety of disciplines at different levels. In recent years it has developed rapidly and become a key part in China's higher education. The T.V university presents lectures through radio and T.V transmission and correspondence. At present, courses in science and engineering are mainly presented through T.V transmission, courses in liberal arts and economic management are given mainly through radio transmission. The curricula are designed according to the needs of the national economy and the social development. The central T.V university offers the basic courses and the more general specialised courses, local T.V universities offer the basic courses and the specialised courses needed in particular areas and the work units (factories or enterprises) offer the specialised courses to meet their own needs.

At present the T.V university in China offers three levels of education in an unified way: higher education, secondary education and follow-up education with higher education as the main part. The majority of students at T.V universities are staff, workers, army men and farmers. They are divided into two categories. The first group is enrolled after an entrance examination. These students are subdivided into three groups: full-time students, part-time and spare time students. The second group consists of self-study students, who do not sit an entrance examination. They are provided with teaching materials and are given certificates after passing the regular examination. Their transcripts are recongnized by the state. The credit system is adopted in T.V universities. Teachers in these universities consist of three groups : leading lecturers, responsible teachers and tutors. The leading lecturers are mainly from well-known formal universities all over China with high academic qualifications and substantial teaching experience. The responsible teachers' main task is to organise teaching and give guidance. The tutors are full-time teachers from formal higher education institutions or engineers and technicians from enterprises whose main task is to give guidance to the students in their laboratory work, their graduation projects and their theses.

T.V universities at the different levels are under the direct authority of governmental institutions at the corresponding levels. The funds of T.V universities come from different sources but basically from those bodies which run the T.V universities. Funding for the central T.V university is allocated by the SEDC. Funds for local T.V universities at different levels are allocated by their respective authorities. Funds for T.V universities run by enterprises, companies and factories are raised by these bodies. The students pay a fee . T.V universities are an economic way of raising the cultural and technical level of adults. From 1986 like other regular higher educational institutions, the T.V universities began to enrol a certain number of senior secondary school graduates. This has opened up a new avenue to higher education in China.

#### 8.21(4) Self-study Examinations in Higher education

The self-study examination system in higher education is a newly-established phenomenon in Chinese adult education. It is a kind of national higher education

examination based mainly on individual self-study and social support in pursuit of higher education diplomas.

It started in 1983 in only three provinces. Now all the twenty-nine provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government have established their network for self-study examinations in higher education.

The administration of the examination consists of three levels. There is the national instruction committee of self-study examination in higher education at the central level and there are the provincial instruction committees and the municipal instruction committees at the local level. The national instruction committee is composed of officials from the SEDC and other ministries concerned, directly under the leadership of the State Council. It also includes representatives from social organisations as well as presidents, experts and scholars from famous universities. Its responsibilities include :

- (1) the formulation of policies for examinations and principles for specialities;
- (2) the unification of standards for examinations;
- (3) providing guidelines for the work of higher education self-study in different areas.

The instruction committees in different provinces, autonomous regions and the municipalities directly under the central government are in charge of organizing the local self-study examination appointing the schools for examinations and also responsible for professional work such as assigning topics and monitoring examination papers as well as conferring graduation certificates and other qualifications.

Throughout the country altogether 70 specialities such as liberal arts, science and engineering, agriculture, finance and economics have been opened to these examinations. The didactic materials and reference books used by the self-study students are devised by the provincial instruction committees for self-study examination in higher education and some universities. In addition, some journals relating to self-study are also available such as "Self Study" and "Self Study University" which are published by SEDC and there are other provincial education journals. Various forms of educational assistance are offered to those engaged in

self-study such as college-run guidance courses, follow-up schools run by mass organisations, democratic parties and individuals as well as advisory centres set up by factories and enterprises.

The national self-study committee under the SEDC establishes the unified self-study examination standard for the whole country and different provincial committees decide the specialities to be examined and design plans for examinations in special subjects as well as drawing up outlines for course examinations according to the needs of society. Each course is examined according to the method of accumulating credits and planned examination requirements for different specialities. Those whose credits meet the stated requirements obtain diplomas. Those whose credits fail to meet the requirements can take the next examination of the course. The self-study diplomas are recognised by the government and the holders enjoy the same treatment as graduates from formal ordinary institutions of higher education.

The system of higher education through self-study examination has the characteristic of very great adaptability. Under the present condition of limited educational opportunity available for the largest population in the world with a relatively low cultural level, this system is a very rapid and inexpensive way for large number of people of different ages and different educational backgrounds to raise their cultural levels to meet the needs of rapid modernization. It provides a wide range of specialisations so that people from different educational backgrounds and different jobs have the chance to improve themselves. Furthermore, every self study student can choose the study schedule suitable to his or her own needs. However, there are problems which still require solutions. First, although under the regulations all people from different professions and different educational backgrounds can join the exam, those who have senior secondary education are given priority. Second, just as in other forms of adult education the self-study examinations system recruits mainly those who have access to the full range of formal education.

### **8.2.2 Administration**

The department of adult education at the SEDC is the highest administrative body for adult education in China. It formulates relevant policies and action and gives guidance on all adult education work throughout China. It also sets national

standards and provides quality control for the overall education programmes for adults. At the provincial and county levels, and various divisions perform parallel functions and serve as the implementation arm of the department of adult education at SEDC. In rural communes, urban municipalities and production enterprises there are also some bodies responsible for adult education. There is thus a vertical administrative organisations from SEDC to the lowest unit. The other vertical administrative organisation is from other commissions directly under the State Council which have the same legislative function as the SEDC down to the lowest units with their own system . In addition, there is a set of horizontal mass organisations at each level such as the labour unions, the Chinese Communist youth league, the national women's federation and the Chinese scientific and technological association. They coordinate policy formation, exchange experiences and provide resources.

### **8.2.3 Funding**

The funding of adult education reflects its decentralized nature with most contributions coming from local government and enterprises and rural communes with little funding from the state. The funding sources include the following :

- (1) finance from the central government through grants allocated to teacher training, distribution of materials, seminars etc.
- (2) payment from enterprises totalling 1.5% of the factory's total annual payroll;
- (3) contributions from labour unions;
- (4) local government contributions;
- (5) student fees;

### **8.2.4 Curriculum**

The curriculum for adult education programmes is flexible and various. The materials used are either centrally or locally produced. When the materials centrally produced are used there is a large measure of flexibility to add or omit so as to suit local needs. The curricula are almost all focused on some aspects of science and technology .

### **8.2.5 Problems**

In spite of the great achievements which have been made in adult higher education in China, there are many aspects which need further improvement. They are mainly :

(1) Teachers in adult higher education programmes have little or no experience in teaching adults. Some teachers are from the regular system, and have no special preparation for the particular needs of working adults. Others are technicians within enterprises with no training as teachers at all. Even full-time adult education teachers have little training in the special requirements of adult education.

(2) The current curricula for adult education are not always relevant to the particular needs of adults. Little distinction is made between the curricula for adult learners and those for students in the regular system. Although there is freedom for locally designed materials, few adult schools have the capacity to do this because they are not trained to create their own materials. Therefore there is increasing reliance on centrally produced materials, which may lead to irrelevance to particular local situations in industry and agricultural enterprises.

(3) Adult education does not enjoy the same status as the regular school system. The regular higher education is still the most prestigious throughout the country.

(4) The funding resources are inadequate.

This situation has been made even worse by the current decentralized funding arrangements in which most resources go to the larger enterprises at the expense of smaller ones, whose employees are equally in need of education. Furthermore, enterprises and unions prefer to transfer educational funds to non-educational uses such as wage bonuses.

Adult education is the direct result of modern education development. In spite of its short history it is playing an important role in Chinese education especially in the recent movement towards modernization.

## **8.3 Teacher Education**

In China there is a well-developed system for training teachers for all levels of edu-

cation. At present the teachers of pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are trained in the normal universities and schools, which are administered for the Directorate of normal education by the International Division for teacher education.<sup>[5]</sup>

This section will first present the structure of teacher education in China, and then describe the curriculum of the courses. Afterwards the administration of teacher education and the status of teachers are discussed. Finally a summary is given.

### 8.3.1 Structure

In China, teacher education is divided into two types : preservice education and inservice education. Preservice education includes normal university education and teacher training in special secondary schools.

#### 8.31(1) Normal University Education

Normal university education is a very important component of teacher education as well as an important part of higher education. It is designed to produce qualified teachers for secondary education .

Normal universities are divided into two levels. One is a four-year undergraduate programme and the other is a two-three year specialised course. Normal universities offer a four-year programme for training senior secondary school teachers, while the specialised teacher's colleges train teachers for junior secondary schools. Both of these universities and colleges enrol senior secondary school graduates through the national unified entrance examination, which is common for all institutions of higher education.

#### 8.31(2) Teacher Training Secondary Schools

These schools train teachers for nursery and primary schools. Before 1966 nursery school teachers were produced by the junior teacher training schools, which enrolled primary school graduates for three-four years training. These schools have now been discontinued. All nursery and primary school teachers are trained in secondary teacher training schools. There are two kinds of courses in the secondary teachers' schools. One is a two year course for senior secondary school graduates, the other is a three-four year course for junior secondary school graduates.

Students in the former course will become primary school teachers while those following the latter will be primary school or nursery teachers. All secondary teacher schools are regional. The entrance examination is organised by the provinces and the students from the countryside and remote areas given priority in order to reduce the shortage of pre-primary and primary school teachers in these backward areas.

Upon graduation the secondary teacher school graduates are assigned to posts by the provincial education commissions. There is a variety of secondary teachers'schools. They are as follows :

- (1) general teachers'schools for primary education;
- (2) teacher schools for pre-school education;
- (3) teacher schools for ethnic groups;
- (4) teacher schools for special education ;
- (5) teacher schools for physical education;
- (6) teacher schools for foreign language education; at present English is the most popular foreign language followed by Japanese and Russian.

### 8.31(3) Inservice Training for Primary and Secondary School Teachers

Many teachers at present in primary and secondary schools were recruited during the cultural revolution. They had little or no preservice training either in secondary teacher schools or normal universities and colleges. As a consequence many primary school teachers have not reached the academic level of graduates from the secondary schools. Many junior secondary school teachers do not meet the entry requirements of specialised teacher colleges and many senior secondary school teachers are not equipped with the knowledge obtained by normal universities graduates. Because occupational mobility is discouraged in China, for those who are not fully qualified inservice training is imperative to raise their level of competence. Even <sup>for</sup> those who have met the requirement, inservice training is still necessary to upgrade their standards and refresh their knowledge. At present there are two kinds of inservice teacher institutes. One is the college of education run

by the state and province, the other is the school of education run by the region and county.

### 8.3.2 Curriculum

The curriculum of teacher education in China includes :

- (1) political education and fundamental courses;
- (2) courses on specialised subjects;
- (3) pedagogical courses (pedagogy, psychology, subject teaching methodology);
- (4) teaching practice;

In theory all courses listed above are equally stressed in teacher education. However, in practice the courses on subjects occupy the most time , other courses are allocated little time or are not included at all in the curriculum. From the curriculum of secondary teacher training schools, which are unified throughout China, we can see the subject-orientation in the curriculum. Although the curricula of normal universities and colleges as well as inservice colleges are not unified the courses are similarly dominated by subject matter. Moreover, the higher the teacher education, the more subject-oriented is the curriculum. Therefore in China the primary school teachers are better prepared in teaching methods and teaching practice than are secondary school teachers. In contrast, the latter have a better command of the subjects they teach. This is a consequence of the pressure of promotion to higher education at each level of schools.

According to the 1985 World Bank Report the curriculum of the secondary teacher training schools in China devotes 84% of the scheduled time to subject teaching, about 6% to pedagogy and psychology and about 10% to teaching methodology. This is a 3-year courses totalling 101 weeks, with an additional 8 weeks of teaching practice and 4 weeks of manual work.<sup>[6]</sup>

The normal universities and colleges as well as inservice colleges of education offer their own curricula based on a model supplied by SEDC and can modify it to suit their own needs. Pedagogy and psychology account for 2-3% while the remaining

95% is subject teaching. Some normal universities and colleges do not offer any courses in pedagogy.

### **8.3.3 Administration**

In addition to six normal universities directly under the supervision of SEDC other normal universities, teacher colleges and secondary teacher training schools as well as inservice colleges of education and schools of education are the responsibility of educational commissions and bureaux or offices of provinces, municipalities and counties. The Department of Teacher Education in SEDC only issues directives and guidelines. The local educational authorities have autonomy to run their own teacher education programmes. Each province has at least one normal university, several teachers' colleges and inservice colleges of education and many secondary teacher training schools.

Few preservice teacher education institutions offer inservice teacher education programmes while the inservice colleges or schools of education only have educational programmes for inservice teachers. Each of them is an independent administrative unit.

### **8.3.4 The Social Status of Teachers**

Traditionally teachers have been held in high regard in China. The two greatest educationists, Confucius and Mencius are remembered and honoured. In the early years of the PRC the teaching profession continued to have high status until the Cultural Revolution when teachers were attacked politically and physically and they became the least esteemed of all the professions. "It is unfortunate to be a teacher" was a popular saying of that time. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution the Chinese government has made great efforts to restore the teachers' status. In 1978 Deng Xiaoping in his speech at the National Education Conference called for a raising of the quality and status of teachers so as to meet the great demand for skilled persons and experts for the Four Modernizations.<sup>[7]</sup> Between 1977 and the present teachers' salaries have been raised four times throughout China. Those teachers who have been in the profession for over 30 years continue to receive their full salary after retirement, while persons from other professions only receive pensions of 95% of their former salaries. Teachers are now given the glorious titles of

“People’s Soul Engineers”, “People’s Heros and G ardeners”. The 10th of September every year is designated official Teachers Day in order to encourage respect for teachers among the people. In addition the government provides other privileges for teachers such as guaranteeing employment for their children. Recently a law concerning teacher’ status, rights and qualifications has been passed by the State .<sup>[8]</sup> These measures show that the government is making great efforts to raise teacher status.

In spite of these efforts by the government the harm caused by the cultural Revolution can not be remedied in a short time. Some social discrimination and prejudice still exist. First, as far as the recruitment to teacher education is concerned, other forms of higher education and senior secondary schools are given priority in recruiting the best students. All secondary teachers training schools and most normal universities and teacher colleges can only recruit students from among those who have failed to enter the senior secondary schools or other universities or colleges. Many students in teacher education institutes try to avoid entering the teaching profession on graduation. Second, inspite of being raised four times in recent years the teachers’salaries are still lower than those of other professions of the same level. Moreover, many rural non–state teachers’salaries have not been raised at all.

### **8.3.5 Summary**

Teacher education in China is now seen as crucially important for training skilled personnel for the realization of the Four Modernizations. For the further development of the profession the following measures need to be taken :

- (1) More effective means are necessary to raise their status.
- (2) Inservice training should be strengthened to remedy the current shortage of qualified teachers and train the large number of teachers needed .
- (3) Preservice and inservice teacher training programme should be combined in one administrative unit. This would be a more economical and effective way because it would be possible to use the same teachers and facilities. Also, through the experience of teaching inservice students, the teacher would find appropriate teaching programmes for preservice students.

(4) The subject-orientated curriculum should be adjusted and courses on pedagogy and methodology should be given more weight.

	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers And Staff
Normal Colleges	262	490978	169069
Secondary Normal Schools (Including Preschool Normal Schools)	1065	105568	105568
Preschool Normal School	67	36013	6742

**Table14: The Numbers of Normal School, Students and Teachers and Staff in 1988**

Source : China's Encyclopaedia, 1989(Chinese Edition), p236

China has had considerable success in building a modern higher education system. Formal higher education is firmly based and widely distributed and it is supplemented by a structure of nonformal higher education for adults. And both formal and nonformal higher education provide a large number of advanced personnel for the movement towards modernization. Teacher education is well-established providing teaching staff for various levels of schooling in China from preschool teachers to teachers in institutions of higher education.

### Notes for Chapter Eight

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## Chapter IX

### Conclusion and Remaining Problems

The traditional Chinese education system was essentially an examination system with the aim of cultivating a small number of officials to administer the Chinese imperial government. The civil service examination system existed in China for almost two thousand years. The officials were chosen by means of a series of complicated competitive examinations based largely on the Confucian classics. In spite of being theoretically open to almost everyone, in practice only the children from rich families had any real prospect of success in this examination. It was an elitist system isolated from the ordinary people.

Following the aggression of the European powers against China in the late 19th century, western ideas spread and attempts were made to make schooling available to a wide section of the population and to modernize the age-old traditional Chinese educational system. In 1903 the first Chinese modern educational system was introduced following the Japanese educational system. This first "KUIMAO" educational system divided schooling into 7 stages from kindergartens to the higher education institutions totalling 30 years. However, it still possessed the features of the civil service examination with different titles available for graduates of different levels of schooling corresponding with the examination. Except for a slight revision at the beginning of the National Government this system persisted to the year 1922. Then the reforms of 1922 introduced the American educational model and created the second Chinese educational system, the embryonic form of the current educational system. The six-three-three structure of primary and secondary schooling of this system is being implemented at the present time. From 1928 to 1949 China suffered a long period of wars. One was the anti-Japanese war in 1937, the other was the war of liberation waged by the Guomindang against

the Communist after the defeat of the Japanese. During these war years the Chinese education made slow progress towards modernization and when the PRC was founded in 1949, there were some 80% of the population illiterate.

As soon as the PRC was established the Chinese government made great efforts to expand and consolidate the existing educational system. A dual track system following the Soviet influence had been set up in the 1960s. The first track consisted of regular education from nurseries to the research institutes. Within this track keypoint schools existed. The second track was a variety of short-term educational programmes. Under this system Chinese education made considerable progresses.

As a result of dissatisfaction with the inequalities created by this dual track system, a single track system emerged during the Cultural Revolution (from 1966 to 1976). Under the Cultural Revolution all schools became regular schools and the period of schooling from primary education to senior secondary education was shortened from the original 12 years to 9 years. Senior secondary school graduates were not allowed to go to universities directly but had to go to countryside to do manual work for a couple of years instead. The purpose of this system was to equalize educational opportunity, to focus on mass education and eradicate the distinction between city and countryside. In fact, it jeopardized the development of education and under it Chinese education suffered greatly.

At the end of the Cultural Revolution and with the launching of the Four Modernizations the educational system was restored to that prior to the Cultural Revolution. This was the dual track system with the formal schools on one side and nonformal schools on the other. Within the formal schools the key point schools exist and are given more priority than that prior to the Cultural Revolution because the great demands of the Four Modernizations for experts of all kinds.

In short, it is over 90 years since modern education was first adopted in China in 1903. This period of development of Chinese education has included a separation from the traditions, imitation of foreign models and a number of reforms and experiments. It finally returned to a system close to its original spirit and traditions but modified to serve the needs of a modern society.

## 9.1 Achievements and Credits

China has been successful in constructing a modern school system. Formal schooling is firmly based and widely distributed and is supplemented by a comprehensive structure of nonformal education. The educational level of the population has been raised. A body of teachers has been built up. In addition, the education of women, minority education and vocational education have all made substantial progress.

### 9.1.1 Formal Schooling

After many years' efforts a formal school system has been set up including postgraduate education, university education, secondary education ( general secondary education and technical or vocational education), primary education and kindergarten education. At present, there are primary schools in each village (the smallest unit in rural areas), junior and senior secondary schools in towns and counties. Each province has its own specialized polytechnics for agriculture, medicine and teacher training. According to the State Communique of the State Statistical Bureau of the People's Republic Of China on National Economic and Social Development in 1990 , the student enrollment was 13.2 million at senior secondary school level and there were 38.69 million students in junior secondary schools and 122.42 million pupils in primary schools in 1990. The enrollment rate of school-age children was 97.9 % ; and 74.6 % of primary school graduates continued their study in secondary schools . 1459 counties had universal primary education. There were 1075 institutions of higher education with 2.06 million undergraduates and 93,000 postgraduate students. [1]

### 9.1.2 Nonformal Schooling

Nonformal schooling is a very important component of contemporary Chinese education. It includes adult literacy classes, adult primary schools, adult secondary and professional schools as well as various adult institutions of higher education. There is a variety of adult higher education. They are TV universities, worker universities, peasant universities, cadre administrative colleges, correspondence education, self-study examination system and teacher inservice training colleges. In 1990, institutions of adult higher education had a total student enrollment of 1.74 million and there were 1.58 million students in adult secondary specialized schools,

12.82 million students in adult technical training schools. In addition, there were 23.69 million students in adult junior secondary schools and adult primary schools. Furthermore, 3.972 million people became literate in 1990. [2]

### **9.1.3 The General Educational Level of the Population Has Been Raised**

In 1949 80% of the population were illiterate and the enrollment rate of school-aged children was as low as 20%. In 1947, the best year in educational development before the establishment of the PRC there were 150,702 higher education institution students. In 1946 the number of secondary school students was 1.8 million and that of primary school students was 22 million . At that time there were three university students per 10,000 population; 38 secondary school students and 486 primary school students. In the same year, the number of children at kindergarten was 123,277.[3] As a result of 40 years of effort up to 1990 there are now 142 people per 10,000 with higher education and 804 people with senior secondary education; 2334 people with junior secondary education. The illiterate and semi-literate rate has dropped to 15.88%. And the enrollment rate of school-aged children has increased to 97.9%.[4]

### **9.1.4 The number of teachers have been substantially increased.**

In 1987, the number of teachers at all levels of schools reached 10.2 million. Also the quality of teachers has improved. 65.9% of primary school teachers have reached the level of secondary normal school graduates, senior secondary school graduates or above. 43% of secondary school teachers have reached the level of specialized teacher colleges and normal universities.[5] In comparison with the year of 1946, the number of primary school teachers has increased 5.4 times and of secondary school teachers 36.9 times. [6]

### **9.1.5 Growth of Vocational Education**

In 1946 only 5.7% of students in secondary schools were attending secondary technical or vocational schools. The development of vocational education was then very backward.[8] Since 1949 China has established a complete network of vocational education including vocational universities, secondary vocational schools, secondary technical schools, secondary agricultural schools, secondary normal schools and

short-term training courses particularly for the rural population. In 1990, there were 6.048 million students studying in various types of secondary vocational or technical schools, comprising 45.7% of the total students enrollment at senior secondary school level.<sup>[7]</sup>

### 9.1.6 Minority Education

[8]

China has 55 minority nationalities making up 6.7% of the total population. Since the founding of PRC the government has made great efforts to promote the education of minorities. Now minority areas have set up their own primary schools, secondary schools, secondary agricultural schools, vocational schools and normal schools as well as colleges and universities. In 1987 the minority students at various levels of schools were as follows : 10 million in primary schools; 2.8 million in secondary schools; 272,500 in secondary agricultural schools, vocational and normal schools; 118,700 undergraduate students and 2,300 postgraduates. The number of minority teachers reached 642,000.

In 1987, there were some 80 autonomous counties where primary education was more or less universal. There is at least one secondary normal school in almost each of the 31 autonomous prefectures in the country. By 1986 there were 108 colleges, universities and teacher training centres in minority areas. The government has implemented a number of measure to develop higher education for minorities. One measure has been to set lower entrance requirements for higher education for minority applicants. A second measure has been to organise special classes for minority students in top key universities. Third, special teacher training centres have been set up to train teachers for the minorities. Fourth, higher education institutions offer support in the form of intercollegiate and cross-provincial exchanges as well as sending teachers to teach in the minority areas.

Many primary and secondary schools in minority areas are using minority languages as the medium of instruction. Primary and secondary school textbooks have been prepared in 20 minority languages. The state has given priority to funding minority education. In addition to the normal state funding, minority areas receive various subsidies from the state .

### 9.1.7 The Education of Women

[9]

In China, as in other countries, women constitute half the population. Their educational level is directly linked to social progress and development. The development of women's education reflects the educational level of a nation. Before 1949, 90% of women were illiterate and only 20% of female children could go to school. At all levels of schools the percentage of female students was much lower than that of male students. Before 1949 there were only 25.5% of girls in primary schools, 20% in secondary schools and 17.8% in institutions of higher education. The education of women before 1949 had been neglected. Since the establishment of the PRC, the education of women has made great progress. In 1988, 95% of girls from age 7 to age 11 went to school. A total of 100 million women have become literate in the past 40 years or 70% of the nation's total illiterate population. The participation of women in higher education has also been dramatically improved. At present, there are 70,000 female undergraduates in institutions of higher education, hundreds of female Ph.Ds and thousands of women with the masters degree. In 1988, women teachers in higher education institutions comprised 28.24% of the total number of teachers in higher education institutions. In addition, the education of women in minority areas, remote and backward areas has made similar progress. Before 1949 there were hardly any women in these areas who had been to school. At present, these areas not only produce female secondary school graduates but also female undergraduates and postgraduates. Table 15 shows that between 1951 and 1988 the number of girl students at each level of school.

## 9.2 Remaining Problems

So far we have seen that modern education in China has travelled a tortuous road in its development since it was first introduced into China in 1903. Since 1949 modern education has performed rather well considering the low base from which it started at the beginning of this century and the setbacks which it experienced during the war periods. In the foregoing chapters we have traced the development of different phases of modern education in China and discussed some of the problems. But

	1951	1951	1988	1988
	Number of Girl Students	Percentage (%)	Number of Girl Students	Percentage (%)
Primary School	1206.3	28	5715.58	45.6
General Secondary School	40.12	25.6	1951.18	41
Secondary Agricultural School			122.31	43.8
University	3.51	22.5	68.94	33.4

**Table15 : The Number of Girl Students at Each Level of Schools Between 1951 and 1988**

Source : Educational Research, 1991, No.3, p73

there remain problems at the present time and for some there is no short term solution. This section discusses a few of the educational problems which can be solved fairly quickly so that the obstacles which hinder the progress of modern education in China may be overcome and further advance may be facilitated.

### **9.2.1 Problems in Higher Education**

#### 9.21(1) The Problems Concerning investment in higher education

In recent years China has implemented a centralized planning of the economy, in which the finance of higher education depended solely on state investment from the state financial budget. The government provided the students' accommodation and maintenance and implemented unified enrollment and job assignment while the enterprises and work units have utilized the advanced skills generated by the state through taxation. This form of educational investment is justified in the context of the centralized planning, economic and financial system. Although many highly skilled people for the economic construction were trained through higher education under this form of educational investment, there have been some unexpected consequences well. In China educational investment as a percentage of GNP is

low—less than 6%. The amount of educational investment per person is much lower than in the industrialized nations. Money spent on higher education is inevitably a long-term investment. It appears to be expensive without producing rapid results. Moreover, it will take an even longer time before its effects are manifest in the production field. Therefore, investment in education fails to catch the attention of people. Educational investment has been increased in recent years in China but its growth has been insufficient to meet the demands of economic development, which requires a greater number of skilled people. The rapid development of science and technology as well as the changed economic system requires more talents than are available and the shortcomings of a system which relies exclusively on state investment have become increasingly obvious.

First, this form of investment leads to a waste of advanced talents in the enterprises and work units. There is no direct linkage between the amount of highly educated people which the enterprises employ and the tax they pay to the state. Thus, some enterprises employ more graduates than they need while others are short of the highly skilled. The anomaly of both short supply of talents and talents lying idle remains in some departments and enterprises.

Second, under this form of investment the universities have no incentive to plan their courses to meet the economic needs of the country. The central control of educational investment means that there is no connection between the universities and the enterprises or any linkage in demand and supply between the educational departments and the receiving units. This has led to the following consequences: (1) an out-of-date curriculum; (2) an over-specialisation in students' knowledge; (3) an irrational establishment of different disciplines; (4) the production of students with little capacity for finding practical solutions to problems. Under the present system the separation of students of institutions of higher education from social reality can not be remedied.

A third problem is the low efficiency and high wastages within universities' administration. At present the problem of wasteful expenditures in higher education institutions is very serious. For example, some universities spend a great deal of money purchasing equipment and facilities which they do not or can not use. Even worse, there is considerable duplication of facilities within a single university. Poor

university administration is one reason but that the university is not subject to any kind of financial control as a result of the way in which the funding is distributed, is the main cause of this problem.

Fourth, the present form of investment stifles the students' initiative. Because the state controls everything from the unified enrollment to the job assignment, the students' academic achievements have hardly anything to do with their future careers. All of them are given secured jobs upon graduation by the state assignments.

Although the state investment in higher education has been increasing especially in recent years, the higher education finance is still inadequate particularly for basic construction such as teaching facilities and students dormitories. This is the result of its weak base, and the failures of administration for many years. It has been exacerbated by soaring prices and rising standards of all kinds of expenditure. Finding a new and better way for collecting more funds for higher education through a wider variety of sources is essential and urgent to maintain the present rapid development of higher education .

#### 9.21(2) Problems of Teachers in Institutions of Higher Education<sup>[10]</sup>

At present the quality of teachers in higher education institutions is inadequate for the demands of economic growth and the challenges of new technological revolution as well as for development of higher education itself.

First, the career structure of teachers is unsatisfactory. At present there are 1,5000 professors and 7,5000 associate professors in universities throughout China. The average age of professors has fallen from 69 years old to the present 59 years old. The average age of associate professors has dropped from 56 years old to 53 years old. Nevertheless many problems concerning academic titles, age structure and academic qualifications remain. The number of teachers with senior academic titles is small while the number of teachers with junior and lower academic titles is large in proportion. The ageing of lecturers and associate professors as well as professors is a major problem. Consider, for example, Shanghai, the biggest and most industrialized city in China. The teachers who are over 46 years old constitute 43% of all the teachers in higher education institutions in Shanghai. Few teachers have had postgraduate education and among those who teach basic

and elective courses, very few have postgraduate qualifications. In addition, it is essential that teachers should have a wider experience of the university system throughout China. At present around 70% of postgraduates are assigned to work in the universities in which they graduated, and the percentage rises to 80% in some key point universities. In many teaching and research groups (the smallest unit in the universities) there are three generations, four generations or even five generations working together. This seriously stifles the teachers' initiative and effectiveness and there is little opportunity for the younger teachers to be promoted.

Secondly, as far as the distribution of teachers of higher education institutions is concerned key point universities are very generously staffed while teachers in new universities and universities in remote areas are in short of supply. Further, there are more teachers in traditional disciplines than in newly established disciplines which are in urgent demand as well as more specialized teachers than basic or elective courses teachers.

Thirdly, as for utilization of teachers is concerned there is a great waste of teachers in those universities which are over staffed. Many are not teaching their specialist subjects and are unable to make an effective contribution to scholarship and research. And sometimes they have to be demoted to a lower level. Because they are unsuitably employed they are unable to realize their potential. In contrast, in those universities in which teachers are in short supply, the staff are seriously overworked, and sometimes have to do work beyond their capabilities.

### 9.21(3) Imbalance of Geographical Distribution of Institutions of Higher Education [11]

Before 1949, 60% of the 205 institutions of higher education were situated in the coastal areas which comprised only 10% of the land areas, while there were only 14 institutions of higher education in the minority and remote areas, which comprised 60% of the area of the country. There were no institutions of higher education in Mongolia, Qinghai, Ningxia and Tibet areas. This imbalance of the distribution of institutions of higher education was serious. After the establishment of PRC the development of higher education in minority and remote areas made considerable progress as a priority of party policy. The percentage of higher education institutions in minority and remote areas increased from 6.8% in 1949 to 13.9% in 1960.

Except in the Tibetan area all of the provinces had their own higher education institutions. Meanwhile the percentage of higher education institutions in coastal areas dropped from 57.6% in 1949 to 43.3% in 1960.

In spite of the great progress made by the government in developing higher education in minority and remote areas the difference in the academic level of higher education institutions in coastal areas and those in minority and remote areas remains striking. At present most of higher education institutions in both coastal areas and minority or remote areas are situated in big cities. Very few are in middle-size or small cities. There are 618 higher education institutions in 60 big and middle-size cities consisting of 68.5% of all the higher education institutions throughout the country.

Generally speaking, because of the vast land, demographic pressures and the difference of economic and social development between areas, the imbalance of distribution of higher education institutions will exist for a considerable time. However, considering the future development of minority and remote areas especially in Northeastern and Southwestern areas, the imbalance should be rectified as a matter of urgency.

#### 9.21(4) Unsatisfactory Structure of Higher Education

The present structure of higher education is inappropriate for the requirements of economic development. There is an imbalance between the number of four year universities and the number of three year specialized colleges. Among 1054 higher education institutions there are four year universities and three year specialized colleges. The ratio between four year students and three year students is 1:0.02. Obviously, this situation can not meet the requirements of economic reconstruction, which creates a great demand for various levels of scientific, technical and administrative experts. In spite of the increase in the number of 3-year students from 3-year specialized colleges through many channels such as enrollment of self-financed students and contract-training of students, and establishment of cadres and teachers specialized classes and local short-term vocational universities as a result recent reforms, this disproportion remains as a serious problem.

The immediate solution is to establish more three year specialized colleges and

short-term vocational universities, Furthermore, the relative proportions between different disciplines are also imbalanced. The proportion for humanities and social studies and of administrative and financial studies is relatively low and medicine and agricultural studies also need to be strengthened. In addition, within a discipline there is also disproportion between different specialities. The new interdisciplinary specialities are weak and small while the old basic specialities are strong and large. The structure of higher education is being reformed, but the problem will remain for the near future. It is impossible to implement a transformation in a short time!

#### 9.21(5) Inadequate Training Capabilities of Higher Education

The number of highly skilled people trained by higher education institutions is not enough for rapid economic development, which calls for a vast number of experts. China has a population of over 1.1 billion but only 10 million of them are college-educated. Among employees less than 1% have higher education. There are only three technicians with higher education per thousand rural population. The educational level of the work force is relatively low. This is not only due to its weak basis but also to the inadequate training capabilities of higher education. The output of higher education could be increased by various means such as the expansion of nonformal higher education both full-time and part-time.

#### 9.22 Problems in Rural Education

China has 1.16 billion people, of whom more than 80% live in the countryside. Therefore education in rural areas is an important component of modern education. A solution of the problems in rural education is essential for both rural development and the progress of the whole Chinese nation. The matter is one of considerable urgency.

##### 9.22(1) High-Rate of Dropout

The problem of a high rate of dropout in rural schools remains acute. In 1988 the number of school dropouts totalled 7,577,000 throughout China<sup>[12]</sup> and most of them were rural school students. At present no statistics for the total number of dropouts in all rural schools are available. Nevertheless, the number of dropouts in one county rural secondary schools in Heilongjiang province (in northeastern part

of China) can serve as an example of how serious the situation is in rural schools. Table 16 shows the percentage of dropouts on all rural schools in Jinxian county, Heilongjiang province over a period of 3 years.

	Number of Enrollment	Number of Graduates	Rate of Dropout(%)	Rate of Preservation(%)
1979-1982	2778	1534	44.1	55.9
1980-1983	4755	1581	66.7	33.3
1981-1984	2981	827	72.3	27.7

**Table 16: Information of Dropout of All Rural Schools in Jinxian County, Heilongjiang Province for a Period of Three Years**

Source : Educational Research, 1985, No.8, p33

From the table we can see the dropouts among students enrolled during the years 1979 and 1982 was not too alarming but still amounted to 40%. In the subsequent years the rate of dropout gradually increased. The rate of dropout of pupils enrolled in 1984 reached 72.3%, 28.2% higher than among the pupils enrolled in 1982. According to a survey conducted by the Journal of Educational Research in 1991, in rural schools the poorer the areas are, the higher the rate of dropout will be. This is because the schools in poorer rural areas have fewer facilities and lower teacher quality due to lack of educational funds. The implementation of the responsibility system in recent years has adversely affected school attendance. It has become clear that, under this system, the students' parents choose to keep their children at home working on their individual plots to support the family income. Also the teachers in rural schools are not energetic and enthusiastic because of low salaries and the need to earn more money from working on their land. This inevitably diminishes the students' willingness to study. In addition, family financial problems and poor performance of students also contribute to the high rate of dropout.

The high rate of dropouts in rural schools not only affects the implementation of compulsory schooling in rural areas and increases the numbers of illiterates and

semi-literates but also reduces the effectiveness of educational investment. This problem has been a matter of serious concern to the government, educationists and administrators in schools. Some measures for improvement were put forward such as the "Hope Project " initiated by the China Youth Development Fund (CYDF) operating in 40 remote and poverty-stricken counties in 1990 to finance the children , who dropped out of school because of family financial problems to return to classrooms.<sup>[13]</sup> However, the problem can not be solved in a short time. But the situation will improve so long as the government keeps the situation under review. and an increase in educational investment is available.

9.22(2) Rural education is not directly relevant to the rural economy.

Rural education is designed to prepare the pupils for the next level of education, the same function as has education in urban areas. The students are taught only for personal development and the curriculum is not relevant to the needs of the economy. Therefore primary and secondary schools graduates from rural schools have not played the roles they should because their skills are not the type that the countryside requires. On graduation, the students have neither the production skills nor the sort of knowledge that is of direct use in local production. After many years, many graduates have even forgotten what they learned at schools. Thus, although rural education has developed greatly in the past decades, the rural areas still face a shortage of capable people. The main reason for this phenomenon is the competition for admission to higher education. Both traditional ideology and the current educational system have joined in stressing the importance of pursuing higher education. The traditional Confucian ideology—"Study for Officialdom " has deep roots in the hearts of the people. And the current one-directional educational system has encouraged people to study principally in order to qualify for higher education.

Due to the difference between the rural and the urban areas, the rural children wish to use their studies in order to leave farming. "Primary Education—Secondary Education—Higher education—Government Employee ", this is the path which most rural children dream of and which the current educational system has encouraged them to follow . Nevertheless, the number of students who can be admitted into universities and secondary technical schools comprises only 5% of children who

complete primary and secondary schools. The overwhelming majority of them must work in the countryside. Unfortunately they have only had an education that directs them towards the college entrance examination. Thus, they have neglected the skills and knowledge needed by the rural areas. Unable to go to higher education institutions they have not the skills that would make them able to serve in agricultural production.

Furthermore, this problem is most acute in the poorest rural areas. This is because the students in poorer areas have a stronger desire to leave. Their success rate of admission to higher education is higher than in richer areas in the countryside. However, few of those who enrol in universities from poorer areas come back to work in their home locations. Obviously a vicious circle is formed; the poorer the area, the greater the shortage of graduates, the greater the shortage of graduates, the poorer the areas become.

In summary, rural education should be changed from a single-purpose system to a multi-purpose system. It is realistic that rural school students should learn a wide range of basic knowledge as well as what is specifically needed for local construction. The curriculum of schools in rural areas should include local history, geography, resources and agriculture, skills and specific techniques relevant to village and township industries.<sup>[14]</sup> Rural education should be oriented towards the rural economy. At present some short-term technical training classes are being opened for senior and junior secondary graduates who stay in the countryside in order to rectify the current weakness of rural education.

### 9.22(3) Low educational level of rural labour force

China has over 80% of the population living in the countryside. The educational level of the rural population is crucial for the process of modernization and the development of the whole nation. Despite the strenuous efforts made by the government since 1949 and substantial improvement the educational level of the rural population is still low. According to the 1990 census there are 180 million illiterate or semi-literate amounting to 15.88% of the total population. The majority of them live in the rural areas. Since 1949 the agricultural institutions of higher learning have educated 1.04 million graduates. However, 0.63 million no longer work in units that specialize in agriculture, and the number who actually work in

the countryside is currently only 150,000. On average, less than one university or secondary technical school graduate is working on every 666 hectares of farmland. [15] Around 70% of young and middle aged peasants have no more than primary education. (No statistics available for rural population with primary and secondary education). [16]

The problem of the low educational level of the rural population became acute after the implementation of the agricultural responsibility system. This increased the need for people with a sound knowledge of agriculture. Difficulty in implementing mechanization and the use of farm chemicals and fertilizers is a common experience in the countryside. Many farmers are unable to prosper because of their inability to use technical skills in production. If this problem of the low educational level of the rural labour force remains, how can China realize its goal of agricultural modernization, which depends on the development of science and technology as well as on farmers who can master technical skills? The government is aware of this problem and has been making great efforts to solve it. Recently a new way to eradicate illiteracy and raise the educational level of the rural population has been adopted. This is the combination of anti-illiteracy campaigns with the teaching of production skills. In this way the students learn not only how to write and read but also how to make money. But how effective the method will be in eradicating illiteracy and raising the low educational level of the rural population remains to be seen.

## **9.2.2 Problems in Secondary Education**

9.23(1) One-sided pursuit of higher rate of students promotion to higher level of education

The most serious and contentious problem which confronts secondary education is the one-sided pursuit of student promotion to a higher level of schooling. This is not restricted to the senior secondary schools but also extends to junior secondary schools as well and even to primary schools. The graduates of senior secondary schools are all selected through various techniques of screening and elimination. In 1985, there were 19.99 million pupils who had completed primary education. The junior secondary schools enrolled 13.67 million pupils. Thus, the rate of promotion from primary schools to junior secondary schools was 68.4%. There

were 9.98 million pupils who had completed junior secondary schools and the senior secondary schools enrolled 2.257 million. This means that the rate of promotion from junior secondary schools to senior secondary schools was 26%. Generally the rate of promotion from senior secondary schools to higher education institutions was only 2%. From these figures it is clear how competitive the enrollment into higher education institutions is and how slender are the chances available to the graduates of senior secondary schools.<sup>[17]</sup> In terms of China's current economic resources and the demands which are made upon them it is not possible for many people to go to universities. However, the difficulties of employment for senior secondary school graduates and the high social status and secured state job as well as better material treatment of university graduates, inevitably attract people to seek entrance to higher education. No wonder that hundreds and thousands of people crowd onto one "Small Narrow Bridge" –the competition for enrollment to higher education. This certainly exerts great pressure on junior secondary schools and even primary schools and kindergartens. The promotion rate has become the sole criterion for judgement of the schools at all levels. The higher the promotion rate the better the prestige of the school.

A number of serious consequences result from the one-sided pursuit of a higher rate of promotion. First, it leads to concentration exclusively on a small minority of key schools, key classes and top students at the expense of the majority of ordinary schools, classes and students. Secondly, it emphasizes theoretical learning with neglect of other aspects such as students' physical and ideological development. Even in the area of mental education the structure of students' knowledge is incomplete. The students who sit for the higher education entrance examination with science as their major subject area learn nothing about history and geography while those who sit for the examination with arts and humanities as their major study have little knowledge of physics, chemistry and biology. The senior secondary schools begin specialisation for their students in the last year of senior secondary schooling, some even in the first year of senior secondary schooling. Third, the "Stuffing the Duckling" style of teaching and learning by rote memorization lowers the quality of students who enter higher education institutions because most of what they have learned is prepared only for the examination.

This one-sided pursuit of high rate of promotion to higher level of schooling first emerged in the 1960s when the economic resources of the state could not provide all senior secondary school graduates with places at universities. At that time the situation was not serious because there were fewer senior secondary school graduates and more chances available for their employment. However, due to the rapid growth of general secondary schools during the cultural revolution, there was a great increase in the number of senior secondary schools and every year the situation become more aggravated. From 1977 to 1981 the senior secondary schools graduates reached 5, 6, and 7 million, and inspite of expansion, the enrollment rate to higher education institutions was only 4, 5 or 6 %.

From late 1986 to early 1987 the Chinese authoritative journal of Educational Research published debates concerning how to overcome this one-sided pursuit of the promotion rate. Many suggestions were put forward, such as adjustment of the structure of secondary education in order to reduce the number of senior secondary school graduates, an increase in employment chances for senior secondary school graduates and the creation of a better higher education entrance examination as well as a change in the job assignment system of university graduates. But which of these suggestions will be relevant to the problem is still not certain and the matter remains under discussion.

### 9.23(2) Debates over Keypoint School System

Since the restoration of the keypoint school system in 1978 the controversies it involved have continued up to the present time. However, the period of most heated debates was during the years between 1978 and 1983. The reason why the keypoint system led to so much debate is the inherent inequality of this system. It concentrates limited resources on a small number of schools in order to develop talents to serve the implementation of the Four Modernizations. This small number of schools has advantages over other schools in the form of funding, better equipment and good quality of teachers. Moreover, the keypoint schools themselves are hierarchically organised with the best schools run by the state followed, in descending order of quality, the schools run by the provinces, the cities, the districts and the counties. The whole school system forms a pyramid. At the top stand the key schools from the state run ones downward to the provincial ones, city ones district

ones and the county ones .Then come the ordinary schools and finally the rural work–study schools. In a country like China whose ideology is based on the equal distribution of educational opportunity to every citizen, it goes without saying that the key school system leads to many controversies.

Between January, 1978 and Summer, 1980 the mass media favoured the key schools. It was stated that the successful operation of key schools was intended to accelerate the development and improvement of ordinary schools. In support of this view 20 primary and secondary schools were selected to be national key schools in 1978 responsible for both popularization and the raising of standards. The gap in quality between keypoint and ordinary schools was narrow during this period. Between Summer, 1980 and Autumn, 1981 the importance of key schools was confirmed and key schools run by the provinces, cities, districts and counties sprang up like mushrooms. The positive effects of key schools were noticeable during this period. Tracking of schooling provided solutions for many educational problems. Students in each track knew from the beginning exactly what would be expected of them and what kind of future they would have. No high expectations were created and the number of students who had no expectations of entering higher education was minimized. The supporters of the key school system during this period, appeared to have the best of the argument. They claimed that “key schools were necessary to compensate rapidly for the damage done to Chinese education during the cultural revolution”, “The success of the four modernizations depends on the production of a steady supply of outstanding students for universities.”, “Given the scarcity of resources it is not possible to raise standards significantly in all schools all at once. Hence the decision to concentrate resources in a few key schools where they are capable of providing maximum returns in the shortest time.”, “The key schools can serve to promote the development of education as a whole.”, “The system is necessary in order to train personnel as rapidly as possible”. Then from autumn 1981 to 1983 people began to be increasingly aware of the negative effects of the system such as the one–sided emphasis on promotion rates and the demoralization and poor performance of students in ordinary schools. The debate was reopened and those opposed to the key school system then argued that “Raising standards has been achieved at the expense of popularization”, “Urban areas and large cities are favoured over rural areas”, “Fast track from primary schools to universities leads to the creation of an academic elite divorced from the majority of the population”,

“It reinforces the existing division of labour between city and countryside and between manual and mental work,”. Since 1983 the debate over key schools has continued but no conclusion has been reached. The key school system will persist in until a final judgement about it is achieved.

### 9.2.3 Population Constraints on Education

[18]

China has the largest population in the world. According to the 1990 census there are over 1.16 billion people throughout the country. Twenty percent of them are illiterate. Family planning programmes of one child per family are curbing population growth in the cities, but population control is less successful in rural areas where the percentage of multiple births is high and where 80% of the population live. The reason for multiple births in rural areas is the traditional thinking which places high value on male children. In places where the conditions are poor and people have to live by manual labour, boys are needed to help in agriculture, for planting, harvesting and transporting crops. Boys are as important for survival as are tractors. Furthermore, the responsibility system has encouraged larger families in order to cultivate farmland. Nevertheless, the main reason for large families is the low educational level of the rural population and the backwardness of the rural economy. The percentage of multiple birth is highest among illiterates and semi-illiterates, lower among those with primary education and lowest among those with secondary education and tertiary education. (No official statistics available.) Thus, a vicious circle is formed—low educational level leads to growth of population, and the rapid growth of population will reduce educational opportunity and lead to backwardness of the economy.

The rapid growth of population has outstripped China's capacity to provide satisfactory levels of schooling for many of her children. This is the direct result of over population in spite of successful developments in many other economic fields. China's inability to expand universal junior secondary education especially in rural areas and the relatively low enrollment of college students are all linked to a large extent to the fact that China's population is too large and has risen too rapidly. Only 95% of children can go to primary schools, only 88% of them advance to junior secondary schools, and only half of them will go to senior secondary schools

. Furthermore, less than 5% of senior secondary school graduates can enter university. In addition to the government's inability to accumulate sufficient investment to provide adequate school facilities and teacher training, it is the large population problem which prevents nearly two thirds of China's children from obtaining complete or proper secondary schooling.

China has more difficulties than any other country in providing schooling for its citizens due to its population problem. Without population control programmes it would not be possible for her to develop modern education and enrich the nation. In order to implement family planning programmes more effectively it is necessary to strengthen demographic studies (population and environment studies). At present, there are only a few universities which offer demographic studies and there are no such studies in secondary and primary schools.

### 9.3 Prospects

[19]

The policy of modernization will be further pursued in the future. At the end of this century, primary education will be universal in the countryside; junior secondary schooling will be universal in towns and cities and senior secondary education will be extended in big cities. At the same time, the literacy campaign will seek to eradicate illiteracy among the young and so prevent the creation of more illiterates so as to raise the whole educational level of the population. The vocational and technical education will be further expanded and secondary education will be widely available with a roughly equal number of general secondary school students and secondary vocational or technical school students. All those entering work will have the opportunity of vocational training. In addition to formal and nonformal schooling, life-long education and social education from all kinds of resources will be emphasized in the future development of education.

Following the rapid growth in the 1980s the future development of higher education will be concentrated on improving quality and effectiveness. The number of universities and colleges is not expected to increase substantially but their work will be re-orientated to meet the needs of the nation. The enrollment and job

assignment system in higher education will become more flexible. The institutions of higher education will enrol not only government-subsidied students but also students sponsored by work units and self-financed students. Entrance will not be limited to a national unified examination but will be based on a variety of procedures. The system of centralized job assignment will be supplemented by consultation with employers, schools and graduates as well as enrollment contracts with certain work units. The higher education institutions will be encouraged to seek to serve more fully the society and secure financial support from local and non-government sources. The cooperation between higher education institutions will be closer and the individual universities will enjoy a greater autonomy. Short-term vocational courses and two-three year specialized colleges courses will become both more popular and more practical. Inservice and postgraduate education for higher education institution teachers will be necessary to improve both their academic qualifications and their teaching ability .

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