

The Search for MODERN CHINA

A DOCUMENTARY COLLECTION



Pei-kai Cheng & Michael Lestz
with
JONATHAN D. SPENCE

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FOR OUR PARENTS

HSU-TUNG CHENG AND SHU-CHEN YIN CHENG
GERALD LESTZ, EDITH ALLPORT LESTZ, AND MARGARET GORDON LESTZ

Preface

It is a daunting task to represent four hundred years of Chinese history through documents. The process of sifting through mountains of paper to discover characteristic and illuminating pages is a challenge that repeatedly tests one's sense of historical evidence and notions of relevance. To build this anthology a great wall of paper needed to be reduced to a manageable stack of documents illustrating concerns of central importance in the complex story told through this book.

One complication for us as anthologizers was that many of the documents we thought were vital for illustrating aspects of social life, political and military problems, ethical conceptions and practice, and the inner dynamics of everyday life were not available in English. To give satisfactory breadth to the documents volume, we were obliged to unearth and translate many documents that had become available only in recent years. Accordingly, more than one-third of the documents in this volume are new translations.

Another cardinal concern for this anthology was to match the documents to the chapters of Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China*, Second Edition. When we started collecting documents, both of us had recently finished our graduate work at Yale. We had been teaching assistants in Jonathan Spence's huge undergraduate course on modern China and wrote dissertations under his direction. These experiences gave us a sense of the Spence approach to the history of Qing, Republican, and post-1949 China that was invaluable as we weighed the use of documents to reinforce his text.

Since our anthology was conceived as a companion work to Spence's survey, any reader of both works will notice intentional parallelism and cross-references that unite the two books. But like the matching calligraphic panels of a hanging couplet (*duilian*), the two works are original and independent in an understood framework of relatedness. Although the chapters in both books have identical

titles, the anthology does not simply repeat the historical narrative in notes and documents; rather, it comments on the text and develops themes of its own in a way designed to extend the scope of historical inquiry.

One theme followed throughout this volume in many separate documents is the question of how the state defined ideal or model political behavior in its subjects or citizens. Throughout China's political history since ancient times, ruling elites have attempted to place the stamp of state orthodoxy on the ruled. Ruling groups have sought to channel and control the conduct of the ruled in both public and private settings and devised explicit standards of behavior. To do this, they borrowed from Confucian and Legalist statecraft but, as can be seen in many documents included here, a focus on right thinking and conduct was incorporated into the political practice of many different groups in ways that reflected their ideological and social credos and the tumultuous changes produced by dynastic decline, the founding of new states, imperialism, and revolution.

The Sacred Edict of the Kangxi emperor, the Ten Commandments of Hong Xiuquan who led the Taiping rebellion, the rules proposed by the New Life Promotion Society in 1934, Liu Shaoqi's speech "How To Be a Good Communist" during the war with Japan, and propaganda to encourage emulation of Lei Feng in the early 1960s all distinguished good, orderly, valuable, and healthy behavior from harmful or even hateful behavior. While this process of splitting orthodox and heterodox as a means of control was hardly unique to China's rulers, the documents compiled around this theme permit readers to glimpse a recurrent feature of China's traditional political culture. Such documents help a student of China's past to understand how the line between approved and seditious has been laid down at many moments and in an eerily similar way during the centuries since the founding of the Qing dynasty.

A related theme that we have traced with a number of documents is that of commitment to transcendent values and the willingness to endure martyrdom for a higher cause. In a society in which right and wrong were rigidly defined in a variety of contexts, identification with high ideals that defied moral or behavioral orthodoxies often resulted in acts of self-destructive courage that proved an individual's devotion to a belief system. The account of the death of Ge Xian, leader of the Suzhou silk weavers' riot in the late Ming; the description of the desperate defense of Jiangyin by the Ming loyalist Yen; descriptions of the death of "chaste women" in village society of the nineteenth century; Zou Rong's explosive attack on the Manchu rulers of China; the last speech of Wen Yiduo in Kunming; and the declaration of the student hunger-strikers in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 capture the moralistic bravado that so often animated key actors in the history of modern China.

Women's history is another focal theme in this text. The struggle for women's rights and equality with men continues today throughout all of "greater China." A number of the documents assembled here provide a sense of the

hardship suffered by women in their private lives and as subjects and citizens in various sociopolitical settings in the modern era. To do full justice to this theme would require another document anthology of similar length, but we have tried, nonetheless, to sketch some facets of the picture.

Each document is preceded by a short headnote that creates a sense of the historical context that produced it. In preparing these notes we avoided the temptation of writing an extensive *explication de texte* and tried, instead, simply to provide some guideposts that teachers and students might use if more work was to be done outside of class or as part of a project related to a particular document. The documents that are translated here for the first time or in new translations were translated as literally as possible. We did not attempt to embellish the style of the original documents or improve upon their internal system of logic and organizations. Instead, our intent as translators was to permit the reader to encounter each document in a form that would be immediately intelligible and yet so close to the first text that no reader of Chinese would be puzzled by the relationship of our English to the original language of the document.

Readers of this anthology will note that *pinyin* is the dominant system of transliteration in the book as it is in *The Search for Modern China*. Documents containing names according to the Wade-Giles system were left unaltered; however, when we encountered idiosyncratic systems of romanization in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century documents we converted them, insofar as it was possible to do so, into *pinyin* for the convenience of those who will use the book.

Finally, readers of this book will notice that we have often used selections from novels, short story collections, or poetry anthologies. In deciding to select pieces of fiction to illuminate historical concerns—which are usually described in the headnote—we were guided by the Chinese adage that “history and literature cannot be divided” (*wenshi bufen*).

Acknowledgments

Our deepest debt of gratitude goes to our teacher, Jonathan Spence, who drew us into this project and worked with us in a profoundly satisfying partnership to create a collection of documents to complement *The Search for Modern China*. Both in suggesting documents we might use and assisting in the shaping of the text, Jonathan played a critical role in the making of this book. Whatever elegance of line it may display is owing in no small way to his contribution.

As the book evolved, no one could have been more supportive than our editor Steven Forman and we are also deeply thankful to him for his assistance. He, too, provided us with sound advice as we formed the architecture of the book and suggested ways of tailoring the manuscript to match it to the needs of our readers. In the final stages of the book's composition his work as an editor helped give this collection of documents an inner consistency we were striving for all along. We would also like to thank our manuscript editor at W. W. Norton, Katharine Nicholson Ings, for a thorough and attentive reading of the drafts of the manuscript and Kristin Sheerin for steering us through copyright law and obtaining the permissions for documents published elsewhere.

We were put on course toward finding individual documents by Shen Jin (formerly of the Shanghai Municipal Library and now rare book librarian in the Yenching Library at Harvard) and Trinity College librarians Jeff Kaimowitz (director of Trinity's Watkinson Library) and Pat Bunker (of the Trinity Library reference department). We thank them warmly for their support. We also acknowledge with gratitude the help of many other librarians at Yale's Sterling Library and elsewhere who helped us obtain materials now fitted into this text.

In addition, we are grateful to colleagues and friends, including Andrew Hsieh (Grinnell College), Parks Coble (University of Nebraska), Sherman Cochran (Cornell University), Lai Tse-han (Academia Sinica), Vera Schwarcz

(Wesleyan University), William Alford (Harvard Law School), and others who suggested documents or read and commented on parts of the text. Early in the project, Madeleine Zelin (Columbia University) and Michael Gasster (Rutgers University) provided a valuable critique of selected chapters of the book. Their comments, together with those of several anonymous readers who provided tough and searching judgments of our selections and the structure of the document collection as it was emerging, helped us immensely as we went forward. We also acknowledge faculty colleagues at Trinity College and Pace University who were enthusiastic about this project and helped us in large and small ways during the time we worked on it.

Finally, we would like to thank Michelle Iacino and Martha O'Rourke, who helped with the typing and preparation of the manuscript, and Gigi St. Peter, who facilitated the passage of successive drafts and versions of the galleys from Trinity and Pace to W. W. Norton.

ML
Trinity College
Hartford

PKC
Pace University
Manhattan

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