

中國近代教育史  
**THE HISTORY OF MODERN  
EDUCATION IN CHINA**

BY

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TO  
THE REV. FRANK A. KELLER, M. D.  
who sees  
and  
makes others see

## INTRODUCTION

The West must plan to live in the same world with the East. Our great social questions, like peace, progress, and coöperation, have world significance and require world solutions.

Some general modern histories of education omit an account of Oriental education on the ground that it has not contributed to Western culture. Such omission is unwise. As a matter of fact, both ancient Phœnicia and Egypt contributed to the Mediterranean civilizations of Palestine, Greece, and Rome. Besides, the Western student will find the study of Oriental education valuable in widening his perspective, furnishing enlightening comparisons, and deepening his sense of Western indebtedness to the East. Furthermore, the East can teach us much in matters of quiet, calm, and meditation.

Of all the nations of the world, China has paid the highest compliment to education. For some two thousand years, she has had a system of civil service whereby those successful in competitive examinations have become the rulers of the state.

At the present time, while the old Empire is becoming the new Republic, the old education is giving place to the new. The young Chinese are the leaders. They have learned Western science both in China and abroad. Young China is the hope of new China. This volume is one of the voices of young China.

It is generally recognized by scholars to-day that the knowledge of the present can be had only in the light of the past. In fact, the present is the past in a new setting and the past is actually in and influencing the present.

Here is a work that promises to show us what education in China is to-day in the light of the old régime and the recent past. Indeed, China is the sea which salts every stream flowing into it. But how has China reacted to the material impact of the West? What new spirit is influencing its economic, religious, and educational life? Has there been, in China, during the twentieth century, a genuine intellectual movement? How does the new education in China differ from the old? By what steps of progress has the new been established? What is the attitude of the Chinese Republic towards compulsory education? What is the true word to say in the midst of much confusion concerning the educational influence of the missionaries in China? And especially this, How extensive is education in China to-day? And what is the program for further educational progress? These are some of the questions the English reader will find answered with clearness, acumen, and ability in the following pages.

Here one may see education in China through Chinese eyes. Foreign writers cannot present the material so intimately and sympathetically as is here done, because most of the sources are official Chinese documents. Westerners may come nearer understanding the many vital currents in the stream of modern

Chinese education through reading this text. The diagrams have been carefully drawn; the pictures, copied from photographs, enrich the text; and the treatment, in some forty thousand words, is both comprehensive and detailed.

The author of this work, Dr. Theodore E. Hsiao, is a graduate of Yale-in-China, and has been a post-graduate student in America at Columbia, Princeton, and New York universities. He holds his master of arts from Columbia and received his degree of doctor of philosophy from New York University in October, 1924. It will be noted that Dr. Hsiao's literary style is practically flawless.

The work of the International Education Association makes it imperative that the leading modern nations of the world should understand the educational systems of each other with a view to coöperation in securing international good will and world peace. Dr. Hsiao has rendered all English readers a great service in making available in such readable form the salient facts about contemporary education in China. The republic of letters and the kingdom of morals and true religion have no national boundaries. Nations tend to lose the sense of isolation and division from each other whenever they begin to share the fruits of each other's culture and spirit. The call of our day is to a new declaration of international interdependence, fully consistent with national integrity and sovereignty.

Foreign students are coming to America in increasing number since the World War. There are now

## INTRODUCTION

some ten thousand such students in our American institutions of higher learning. They render us a service by helping us to understand their culture and civilization and they pay us a compliment by learning of our science and politics, commerce, and industry. It is our privilege as well as obligation to meet these students more than halfway in seeking to bring about world coöperation and world unity through the spread of common knowledge and the cultivation of mutual good will.

In this spirit, the undersigned esteems it a high honor to sponsor for English readers Dr. Hsiao's valuable contribution to our knowledge of modern education in China.

HERMAN HARRELL HORNE.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

## PREFACE

Before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees in the west of Asia, China had already developed a high degree of indigenous civilization in the east of Asia. As a race, the Chinese are as imaginative, artistic, and creative as the Greeks; as practical, concrete, and executive as the Romans; as patient, thorough, and free as the Germans. Nations rise and nations die, but she alone stands as a rock of all ages. Despite all these facts, the Western world seems to have a certain ignorance, indifference, and even prejudice regarding things Chinese. This is partly due to lack of contact with, and information about, China.

Two most comprehensive and scholarly textbooks in the history of education have found wide use in the West. They are Paul Monroe's "A Textbook in the History of Education" and Ellwood P. Cubberley's "The History of Education." Although Monroe has a special chapter about Oriental education, giving the Chinese type a somewhat prolonged consideration, nevertheless some of his generalizations are quite unsatisfactory to many Chinese scholars. Cubberley has practically ignored Chinese education. In 1914 there appeared an excellent treatise entitled "The Chinese System of Public Education," by Kuo Ping-wen. It contains a valuable interpretation of the larger movements of Chinese educational history up to that time.

The last two decades in China can be compared with the fourteenth century in Europe. This brief period

has witnessed the clear evidence of the rise of the modern spirit. There are radical changes in all phases of Chinese life. It is universally recognized, both by Chinese and Occidentals, that a change in the life, government, social ideals and religion of the Chinese can come only through some modification of their educational system. The present volume is an attempt to show how the Chinese educational system has been evolved during the last few decades and that it is still in the process of change. By no means does the author give an exhaustive history of the subject. He only seeks to gather a body of historical facts and scientific data, and to point out the most significant movements in the country which directly affect the people. As the history of education in China under the old régime is beyond the scope of this volume, he will confine that topic to one single chapter and give only enough facts to show its peculiar character. Then he will proceed to deal with other aspects of education in a more detailed manner. It is his hope that this work will stimulate further study in this as well as allied fields.

Hearty acknowledgments are due to Professor H. H. Horne for his helpful criticisms and suggestions on the manuscript. I am also greatly indebted to my parents for their generosity in disposing of part of their art collection for my travel and study abroad.

T. E. H.



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THE HISTORY OF MODERN EDUCATION  
IN CHINA

# THE HISTORY OF MODERN EDUCATION IN CHINA

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF MODERN EDUCATION IN CHINA

The history of modern education in China is a story of transformation. It begins with the traditional Confucian system of education, which was based on the study of the classics and the cultivation of moral character. This system was the foundation of Chinese society for centuries. However, in the late 19th century, China was faced with the challenge of modernization. The country was weak and divided, and it was clear that the traditional system was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a modern nation. This led to the introduction of Western education, which brought new ideas and methods to China. The first step was the establishment of modern schools, which taught subjects like science, mathematics, and foreign languages. These schools were often run by missionaries or foreign teachers. Over time, Chinese students began to attend these schools, and they brought back new ideas and knowledge to their home country. This led to the development of a new type of education, one that combined the best of the traditional and the modern. This new education was based on the principles of democracy and science, and it was designed to prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. The history of modern education in China is a story of progress and change. It is a story of a nation that has transformed itself from a traditional society to a modern one. The education system has played a key role in this transformation, and it will continue to play a key role in the future.

# THE HISTORY OF MODERN EDUCATION IN CHINA

## CHAPTER I

### EDUCATION UNDER THE OLD RÉGIME

*Origin and Beginning of Schools.* The origin of schools and the educational system in early times may be traced to various ceremonies associated with the religious worship of the people. These ceremonies were practiced before the hunt, the military expeditions, the harvest, the storing of food, and all other socially important events. Myths and legends, religious and intellectual beliefs, superstitions and the various traditions of the tribe, were all embodied in these ceremonies. Gradually there arose a demand for explanations of the phenomena of nature as well as for training in appropriate forms of conduct and industry. This growing complexity and difficulty of the paternal office led to a differentiation which resulted in the establishment of schools and of a teaching class. The constant growth of beliefs and ceremonies led to the development of written language, which, in turn, added one more item to the things to be taught.

The earliest records of educational institutions in China date as far back as the time of the two ancient

rulers, Yao and Shun (2357-2205 B.C.). During these reigns and in the two dynasties which immediately follow, namely, Hsia and Shang (2205-1122 B.C.), we see not only the origin of the civil service examination system, which played an important part in the history of Chinese education, but also the origin of state educational offices and the beginnings of schools and colleges. "The Book of History" gives credit to Shun for having created among the nine administrative offices of the realm at least three offices of an educational character. Between 2357 B.C. and 2206 B.C. there were already in existence two kinds of educational institutions, the *shang hsiang* and the *hsia hsiang*, the former being a college devoted to the "great learning," or higher education, and the latter a school for the "primary learning," or lower education. During the Hsia dynasty, these were known as *tung hsü*, or "eastern college," and *hsi hsü*, or "western college," and in the Shang dynasty as *yu hsü h*, or right school, and *tso hsüeh*, or "left school."<sup>1</sup> According to "The Great Commentary" ("Shang Shu Ta Ch'uan"), the custom under the Shang dynasty was for boys to enter the lower school (*hsiao hsüeh*) at fifteen, and the upper (*ta hsüeh*) at eighteen years of age. According to the "Li Chi," this dynasty also established a special school for music and dancing (*ku tsung*) held in a building close to the Imperial Palace.<sup>2</sup> The earliest books con-

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<sup>1</sup> Kuo, P.W., "The Chinese System of Public Education," Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> "Li Chi," Book X, "Ming T'ang Wei."

sisted of thin slabs of bamboo engraved with a pointed metal stylus, and collections of these formed the first libraries.

*Education Under the Chou Dynasty* (1122-255 B. C.). When the ancients founded a kingdom, their first care was education.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the peace of the people had been secured, there ensued the institution of schools.<sup>2</sup> There were two sets of schools in this dynasty, one of which was found in the capital of the king and in the capital cities of the feudal states, and the other in the feudal states at large. Those which come under the former category were five in number; namely, *shang hsiang*, *tung hsü*, *ku tsung*, *ch'êng chün*, and *p'i yung*. *Shang hsiang* was a school devoted to lower education which included reading and writing. *Tung hsü* was an institution devoted to higher education. *Ku tsung* was a musical gymnasium. *Ch'êng chün*, or "college of perfection," was also an institution of higher learning. *P'i yung* was a military academy where the sovereign met his minister of state in conference.

According to the "Li Chi" there was a school (*tien*) for every twenty-five families, a college (*hsiang*) for five hundred, or the department, an academy (*hsü*) for twenty-five hundred, or the county, and a university (*hsüeh*) for the whole kingdom.<sup>3</sup> The ordinary

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1 "Tzū Shih Ching Hua." c. 31, p. 11.

2 "Li Chi," Book III, 15.

3 "Li Chi," Book XVI, "Record on the Subject of Education," Sec. 4.

curriculum extended over seven or nine years; examinations took place every other year, and selected candidates from the ordinary colleges were transferred to the Imperial College. The competitors were exempt from forced labor in their own villages, and the students of the Imperial College were excused from all manual work.

The administration of education was in the hands of the regular administrative officers of the government. The state of Chou, which was the representative state of the dynasty, had six departments; namely, the Department of Heaven, the Department of Earth, the Department of Spring, the Department of Summer, the Department of Autumn, and the Department of Winter. The minister of the Department of Earth had charge of the supervision of public instruction, in addition to other duties attached to the office, such as commerce, agriculture, and police. He was charged with the duty of teaching the multitudes all moral and social duties, how to discharge their obligations to men, living and dead, and to spiritual beings.<sup>1</sup> He was required by the "Chou Li" to teach the people the six virtues, the six praiseworthy actions, and the six branches of knowledge, i. e., etiquette, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and arithmetic.

*Education Under the Ch'in Dynasty (255-209 B.C.).*<sup>2</sup>

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1 "Li Chi," III. IV. 1; Legge, J., "The Chinese Classics," i. 230, 231, 8 note.

2 The data in this section are derived from Kuo, P. W., "The Chinese System of Public Education," Chap. II.



Beginning with the eighth century before the Christian era, there ensued a long period of decadence, during which the bases of the feudal system of Chou, with their attendant institutions, were obliterated in the disorder caused by the general insubordination of the feudal princes. The imperial supremacy was no longer respected and education was totally neglected. During the sixth century before the Christian era, the memory of the ancient institutions was revived by Confucius, who attempted to restore them to his contemporaries. In the middle of the fourth century, Mencius renewed the exhortations of the master and demanded from the princes the reestablishment of schools. Both Confucius and Mencius were unsuccessful with the princes, but still the new schools increased in strength. In the middle of the third century before the Christian era, a prince of the western principedom subjugated all the other principalities and became emperor under the name Ch'in Shih Huang. He was so hostile to the new Confucian School that in the year 213 B. C. he issued orders to burn all the works of Confucius. In the following year, four hundred sixty literary men, convicted of the crime of having preserved the works of Confucius, were buried alive.

This period of decadence was at the same time a period of transition, and during its continuance a new body of knowledge, as contained in the works of Confucius and his disciples, came into existence to form the basis of the education of later generations and to mark the beginning of influences which made