

Western Impact and Social Mobility in China

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positive relationship between scientific productivity and academic competition may be noted. According to the present explanation, this relationship is due to the impetus provided by competition for entering promising but undeveloped fields of research. This, however, suggests that the growth of discoveries in any field may be limited by the capacity for expansion of the institutional framework (jobs and facilities), a suggestion which seems to be worth further exploration.<sup>46</sup>

Another question concerns the *quality* of the impetus given to science by competition. The present hypothesis suggests that competition increases the gross amount of discoveries of all kinds through the thorough exploitation of potentially fruitful fields of research. It says nothing about the conditions conducive to the creation of fundamentally new ideas, and it is quite possible

<sup>46</sup> This is the subject matter of A. Zloczower, "Career Opportunities and Scientific Growth in 19th Century Germany with Special Reference to the Development of Physiology," unpublished M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, 1960.

that the social conditions that stimulate basic innovations differ from those that facilitate the exploitation of fruitful ideas already discovered.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, nothing has been said about the conditions that maintain scientific competition. Political decentralization gave rise to competition in Germany, and political decentralization enhanced by private financing and administration of higher education led to competition in the United States. It is not argued, however, that competition is the only possible outcome of any state of decentralization, or that competition, once established, is self-maintaining. Decentralization may lead to collusion or mutual isolation as well as to competition; and competition may be replaced by either of these alternatives. Determination of the general conditions that ensure competition, therefore, is another problem which needs further study.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Joseph Ben-David, "Roles and Innovations in Medicine," *American Journal of Sociology*, 65 (May, 1960), pp. 557-568.

## WESTERN IMPACT AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN CHINA \*

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*The high degree of social mobility in traditional China was achieved through the instrumentality of the civil service examinations. Under Western impact, the examinations were abolished and a modern school system was established, with study abroad as its de facto culminating stage. Whereas the cost of education was low in the old days, it became inordinately high under the new system. Study abroad in particular was the privilege of a small group of men from official, professional, and mercantile families. Because the Western-educated men had far better opportunity for advancement than had the Chinese-trained, the change from the old system resulted in greatly decreased social mobility and in a change in the channel of mobility. Both factors have powerfully affected the broad trend of social and political changes in China.*

**M**OST scholars agree that there was a high degree of social mobility in traditional China. The chief means of upward mobility were the civil service examinations, which were virtually open to

\* This paper summarizes one aspect of my work on the impact on China of Chinese educated abroad. All of the computation is my own; it is not possible to present all the statistical abstracts or to give full documentation. The project was made possible by the generous encouragement of F. A. Hayek

all. Education was relatively inexpensive, and once a scholar passed the examination

and the Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago. Many other scholars have helped me with their criticisms and suggestions, especially Earl H. Pritchard whose countless hours at the task saved me from many errors. For stylistic improvement I owe much to George Frogen and Philip Secor. None of these men is responsible for any defects of the paper, an abridged version of which was read at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, 1960.

at the provincial or national level, he joined the privileged group and assumed a leadership role in society. Downward mobility resulted from the failure of men to perpetuate the literary tradition of their family and inability to pass the examinations.

Statistical evidence attests to the fluidity of social status. An analysis by Kracke of 931 individuals who passed the metropolitan examinations in 1148 and 1256 reveals that close to 60 per cent lacked a family tradition of civil service (defined as the holding of office by father, grandfather, or great-grandfather).<sup>1</sup> Research by P'an Kuang-tan and Fei Hsiao-t'ung on 915 degree-holders in the late Manchu dynasty shows that more than 41 per cent came from rural areas and well over 30 per cent had no family tradition of civil service.<sup>2</sup> A detailed study by Chung-li Chang indicates that at least 35 per cent of the gentry in the nineteenth century were "new-comers," that is, neither their fathers nor grandfathers had held gentry status.<sup>3</sup> Using an entirely different method, Hsu made a study of 7,359 prominent individuals mentioned in the gazetteers of four widely separated districts in China, and found that roughly 50 per cent of these men came from unknown origins and that roughly 80 per cent of their descendants beyond the grandson generation were also unknown. Hsu therefore concluded that a high degree of social mobility existed in China during the last thousand years.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Ho studied some 10,000 advanced and 20,000 intermediate successful candidates of civil service examinations during the Ming and the Ch'ing (1368-1911), concluding that "probably more careers ran 'from rags to riches' in Ming and Ch'ing China than in modern Western societies."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Kracke, Jr., "Family vs. Merit in Chinese Civil Service Examinations Under the Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 10 (September, 1947), pp. 103-121.

<sup>2</sup> "Civil Service Examinations and Social Mobility," *Social Science*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1-21 (in Chinese).

<sup>3</sup> *The Chinese Gentry*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955, pp. 214-216.

<sup>4</sup> Francis L. K. Hsu, "Social Mobility in China," *American Sociological Review*, 14 (November, 1949), pp. 764-771.

<sup>5</sup> Ping-ti Ho, "Aspects of Social Mobility in China, 1368-1911," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1 (June, 1959), pp. 330-359.

Using these findings as a point of departure, one may ask how modern China in the first half of the twentieth century has fared with respect to social mobility. This paper seeks to show that under Western impact China had far less social mobility than before. This is established by an examination of the following circumstances: First, with the abolition of the civil service examinations in 1905, the old channel of social mobility no longer existed. An institution, serving as something of a substitute, arose, namely, the new educational system, with study abroad as its highest stage in fact if not in name. Second, the men educated abroad, particularly those who studied in the United States, had substantial advantages in gaining employment over those who had only Chinese college degrees. Third, the class origin of the "returned students" is also discussed. The paper concludes with some observations on the possible implications of these findings for a general understanding of Chinese society.

#### THE NEW SOCIAL LADDER

The modern educational system in China, patterned on Japanese and Western models, was established in 1902, and the old civil service examinations were abolished in 1905. From then on graduation from a school or college carried the same significance for a Chinese as passing a civil service examination had had in earlier times. In order to promote modern education, the Chinese government purposely made it a means to fame and power. As early as 1904, the Manchu court authorized awards for school graduates at various levels. The following are some sample provisions:<sup>6</sup>

	Official Degree	Substantive Appointment
College graduates	<i>Chin-shih</i> (Ph.D.)	Positions in the Han-lin Academy
Graduates of professional and technical schools	<i>Chü-jen</i> (M.A.)	<i>Hsien</i> (county) magistrate
Graduates of higher primary schools	<i>Sheng-yuan</i> (B.A.)	None

<sup>6</sup> Shu Hsin-ch'eng, *Documentary Materials in Chinese Educational History*, Shanghai: Chung-hwa, 1928, Vol. 4, pp. 63-74 (in Chinese).

These regulations were later amended to include and to give emphasis to study abroad. Between 1905 and 1911, metropolitan examinations patterned on the old system but open only to the "returned students" were held annually, and successful candidates rapidly climbed the mandarin's nine-rung ladder.

The official effort to promote modern education had two immediate consequences: First, education became associated in the public mind with the diploma and the diploma with official and other types of advancement. Second, study abroad was the decisive stage of education. A trip abroad and the possession of a foreign degree were the aspiration of all Chinese students. Among the foreign degrees, the Euro-American carried highest prestige, the Japanese less so, though the latter were ranked above Chinese degrees. The prestige of the "returned student" was such that a person often made a trip abroad even when he had no intention of studying for a degree; the mere fact that he had been abroad often enabled him to pass as a *bona fide* foreign-trained man.

While accurate statistics are lacking, the following estimates give some idea of the relative numbers of Chinese trained in various countries: <sup>7</sup>

Japan (1896-1937)	37,000
U.S.A. (1854-1929) appx.	6,700
U.S.A. (1854-1953)	20,906
Great Britain (1876-1953)	2,200
France (1876-1937)	6,000
Germany (1876-1937)	3,000
Other countries	3,000
College graduates in China (1912-1946)	185,729

<sup>7</sup> The figures for Chinese students in the United States are taken from *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years*, New York: China Institute in America, 1954, p. 32. The figure for Chinese college graduates appears in the *Chinese Statistical Yearbook*, 1947, p. 324 (in Chinese). All other figures are my own estimates based on incomplete but actual records in various sources. The figure for Chinese in Japan includes only those persons who had studied in Japan for four years or more; if all students who went to Japan are counted, the figure is at least 100,000. No similar restriction is adopted in the computation of the other groups.

PROMINENCE OF THE FOREIGN-  
EDUCATED MEN

Two groups of materials are available to show the privileged position of the foreign-educated in China. The first of these consists largely of life-histories and various historical documents which cannot easily be summarized. These will be elaborated here only in two instances. The first concerns the earliest Chinese students who came to this country in 1871-1874 and who returned to China in 1881.<sup>8</sup> These were young boys of whom, at the time of their recall, only two or three of a total of 120, had graduated from college. China's reception of them was chilly at first, but after the turn of the century, when Western influences mounted these men rapidly gained prominence. Of the 120, 22 died young, seven were killed in action in the wars of 1885 and 1894, five became expatriates and settled in the United States, two worked for the United States consular service, four for British concerns in China, two were men of means, and the careers of two are unknown. The remaining 76 entered government service, of whom eight reached the rank of cabinet minister or its equivalent, eight others achieved some other sort of national fame, and nearly all the rest reached a senior rank, mostly as district head of the telegraph service or as head of a national railroad.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The most complete published work on these early Chinese government students is T. E. LaFargue, *China's First Hundred*, Pullman: State College of Washington, 1942. However, I have supplemented this source with materials lent to me by Mrs. Gertrude Tong of Washington, D. C., to whom I am indebted. Mrs. Tong is a daughter of the late Mr. Yung Kwai, one of the early students.

<sup>9</sup> At the time this group of 120 students was sent to the United States, few well-to-do Chinese were anxious to go abroad; these 120 students all came from poor families. When in 1881 the educational mission to America was judged a failure by Chinese scholar-bureaucrats, one cause of the failure was seen to lie in the initial recruitment of students from such families. Thus a well-known reformist-official, Huang Tsun-hsien, wrote a poem of which we quote the following stanza (as translated by William Hung, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 18 [June, 1955], p. 53):

The ignorant country lads, having seen little before,  
Are easily swayed by such strange luxuries.  
When a letter comes from home, telling of poverty  
And asking "How are you now doing?"

Another indication of the status of persons educated abroad is the salary scale of the Commercial Press, a large publishing company and one of the few major business concerns in China. There were five different salary levels for the editorial staff: a Chinese college graduate with some experience received 80 dollars a month and used a desk three feet by one and one-half feet in size; a graduate of a Japanese college, 100–120 dollars and a desk of three by two feet; a graduate of a Japanese imperial university, 150 dollars and a four by two and one-half foot desk with book shelves, a crystal ink stand, and a rattan chair; a graduate of a Western college, 200 dollars and the same physical perquisites as in the previous category; finally, a graduate of Harvard, Yale, Oxford, or Cambridge received 250 dollars and used a custom-made desk and a guest chair in addition to the other perquisites. According to eye-witness reports, this scale was rigidly applied regardless of the personal ability of the employee.<sup>10</sup> The practice probably began in the early years of the Republic and persisted until 1927, when a more flexible policy was adopted by the firm. While few other concerns had so rigid a practice, high regard for Western-trained men seems to have been general.

The second group of materials comes from two sources, the 1925 edition of *Who's Who in China* (Shanghai: *China Weekly Review*), which contains a special section on 584 students who had returned from America, and the alumni register of Tsinghua University of 1937, which lists 1,152 re-

ipients of full scholarships between 1909 and 1929. On the basis of information contained in *Who's Who*, the 584 persons were classified into seven categories. The "prominent" category includes college presidents, heads of major railroads, department chiefs in ministries, bureau directors in provincial governments, managers of large banks, executives of business concerns operating on a national scale, and professors who were recognized authorities in their fields in China. The "good" category includes headmasters of reputable high schools, managers of smaller banks, section chiefs in ministries, full-fledged engineers, college professors, accountants, lawyers, and physicians—except in those cases where individual status justifies a higher classification. The third category, "fair," includes civil servants below the rank of section chief, assistant managers of smaller banks, tellers in major banks, college instructors, and engineer assistants.<sup>11</sup> People whose positions were ranked lower than the third level—in terms of remuneration, security, and prestige—are classified as "poor." In addition, there are the "housewives," "unemployed," and "unknown."

The source we use gives neither the length of the listee's study in America nor the year of his return to China. However, it appears that when the data were compiled in 1925, the listees had returned to China between one and nine years earlier, with an average of six years. During this period, a large number of them reached positions of responsibility, as can be seen from the following figures:

	No.	Per cent
Prominent	19	3.9
Good	353	71.6
Fair	41	8.3
Poor	2	.4
Unemployed	78	15.8
Sub-total	493	100.0
Housewives	13	
Exact position unknown	78	
Total	584	

Of the two men in the "poor" category, one held a mediocre position in the Chinese

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The answer is "I eat two chickens a day;  
I recall not how you burnt the door to cook  
the hen for a parting feast.  
You say you have no more cereals;  
Well, why not just eat meat?"

(Chickens and meat are luxury food in China and far more expensive than cereals. The last two lines also contain an allusion to a Chinese emperor who became famous for his imbecility in suggesting that people suffering from a famine of cereals should eat meat.) The reluctance of the well-to-do to go abroad gradually diminished and almost disappeared after 1895. The situation eventually became such that only the wealthy went abroad to study while the poor, though equally keen, had little opportunity to do so.

<sup>10</sup> Tao Hsi-tsheng, "A Story of the Desk," *Tzu Yu Tan*, Formosa, Vol. 4, No. 9, p. 8 (in Chinese). Unless otherwise specified, all dollars are in Chinese currency.

<sup>11</sup> The positions listed may appear somewhat incongruous by American standards, but they seem to have been roughly comparable in China.

TABLE 1. PROMINENCE OF AMERICAN-TRAINED CHINESE IN CHINA IN 1937  
BY INITIAL YEAR OF STUDY IN AMERICA

	Initial Year							
	1909-11	1912-14	1915-17	1918-20	1921-23	1924-26	1927-29	1909-29
Prominent	15.2%	16.3%	16.3%	12.0%	6.8%	5.1%	3.1%	9.9%
Good	48.2	51.4	48.6	57.1	59.9	47.2	47.3	52.0
Fair	11.0	13.8	20.7	18.8	22.2	31.5	34.9	22.3
Poor							2.3	.3
Unemployed	25.6	18.7	14.4	12.0	11.1	16.2	12.4	15.5
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Sub-total in number	164	80	111	191	207	197	129	1,079
Deceased	16	13	6	11	13	9	5	73
Total in number	180	93	117	202	220	206	134	1,152

diplomatic service abroad. (Because positions abroad were attractive to many Chinese, it often happened that a person preferred a low position overseas to a high one at home. Whether or not the present case was in this category is unknown.)

The high rate of unemployment may be explained in two ways: the Western-educated men usually came from wealthy families and chose not to work; though some such men desired to work, they held out for "good" jobs and refused those below their own expectations. The latter possibility was a frequent occurrence in China,<sup>12</sup> and was more often a manifestation of frustrated ambition than an indication of the society's low regard for these men.

The composition of the 1,152 men listed in the Tsinghua alumni register is not entirely parallel to that of the 1925 group. The latter includes female students but no deceased persons, while the Tsinghua register includes the deceased but no females. The two groups overlap, however, and both seem to be representative of the American-trained in China. Information available in the Tsinghua data enabled the tabulation of the group by the initial year of study in America. The data presented in Table 1 suggests a correlation between seniority and degree of success.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., *Chinese Students' Monthly*, Vol. 13, pp. 20-28.

<sup>13</sup> The average age of the 1909-1911 group was a little under 50 in 1937, and the average number of degrees held by its members was 1.4. The 1915-1917 group averaged six years younger and held 1.5 degrees per individual.

The percentages of the "poor" and the "unemployed" were almost unchanged between 1925 and 1937. During the same period, however, the "prominent" and the "fair" increased at the expense of the "good." Two explanations are possible. First, as the number of college graduates and "returned students" increased over the years, the American-trained were faced with more competition and had less opportunity to start with a good job. Second, as their working experience increased, the American-trained had increasingly to stand on their own performance rather than on their initial formal qualifications. Consequently, a polarization took place: the men of ability rose while those of less capacity tended to drift downwards. The small percentage of the "poor" in 1937 indicates that the American-trained continued to enjoy favorable treatment in employment, but at a lower level than before.

Another way to study the problem is to examine the proportions of foreign-educated men among the top leaders in various walks of life in China. For this purpose, four specific fields were examined. Listing in *Who's Who* was taken as a criterion of *general prominence*. *Political importance* was assumed to be indicated by the occupancy of certain offices in central and provincial governments. It was assumed that faculty membership in two universities and Fellowship in the Academia Sinica signify *academic leadership*. For *business prominence*, bankers, industrialists, and general merchants, taken from lists in the most authoritative sources available, were used. Where little

TABLE 2. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF LISTEES IN *WHO'S WHO* BY COUNTRY OF STUDY AND SELECTED YEARS

Country of Study	1916	1923	1932	1939
China only				
Classical education <sup>1</sup>	35.0%	27.3%	7.8%	5.8%
Modern schools	13.4	15.4	10.8	13.5
Militarists <sup>2</sup>	2.1	4.8	12.6	9.7
Sub-total	50.5	47.5	31.2	29.0
Abroad				
Japan	33.7	29.5	20.3	15.4
U.S.A.	9.5	12.9	31.3	36.2
England	1.6	2.0	3.2	6.4
Other countries	4.7	8.2	14.0	13.0
Sub-total	49.5	52.5	68.8	71.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total, numbers <sup>3</sup>	380	689	591	638

<sup>1</sup> Classical education refers to persons with no formal schooling, but who either held an old civil service examination degree, or were renowned classical scholars, or were known to have pursued classical studies.

<sup>2</sup> A militarist is defined as one whose official position was derived largely from his hold on the army. Such persons generally had little formal education but often acquired some kind of formal academic qualifications after they had reached prominence. There being no way to determine the illiterate militarists despite the academic qualifications listed, all of them are placed in a special group.

<sup>3</sup> These numbers exclude the educationally unknown, of whom there are 144, 188, 87, and 56 in 1916, 1923, 1932, and 1939, respectively.

biographical data accompanied the names in the listings, supplementary information was sought from other sources.

*General prominence.*—The *Who's Who* contained in *The China Yearbook*, edited by the British journalist H. G. W. Woodhead, is the only such listing issued consecutively from 1912 to 1939, and therefore was used. (The findings derived from this source are cross-checked with two other listings below.) The sample years selected for examination are 1916, 1923, 1932, and 1939, each falling in a different political epoch but otherwise chosen at random. The findings, as displayed in Table 2, point not only to the high percentage of the foreign-educated cited in *Who's Who* but more importantly to the steady increase of this percentage through the years. Furthermore, this increase was confined to men trained in America and Europe.

In order to cross-check the data, the *Who's Who* published by *The China Weekly Review* in 1925–1927 and 1931 and that published by Liang Yu Book Company (in Chinese) were used, and the results are shown in Table 3. Comparisons of Tables 2 and 3 indicate the essential similarities of all three *Who's Whos*. Despite the enormous expansion of the Chinese school sys-

tem between 1912 and 1939, when the aggregate number of Chinese college graduates increased by some 250-fold,<sup>14</sup> in 1931–1932 there were fewer Chinese-trained than foreign-educated among the men listed in *Who's Who* in China. Among the “returned

<sup>14</sup> *Chinese Statistical Yearbook*, 1947, pp. 314 ff. (in Chinese).

TABLE 3. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF LISTEES IN TWO OTHER *WHO'S WHOS* BY COUNTRY OF STUDY AND SELECTED YEARS

Country of Study	<i>China Weekly Edition</i>		<i>Liang Yu Edition</i>
	1925–27	1931	1931
China only			
Classical education	—	—	11.9%
Modern schools	—	—	9.6
Militarists	—	—	19.3
Sub-total	38.0%	37.0%	40.8
Abroad			
Japan	17.3	14.4	18.0
U.S.A.	29.1	35.7	28.4
England	5.2	5.5	4.3
Other countries	10.4	7.4	8.5
Sub-total	62.0	63.0	59.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sub-total, numbers	519	827	3,320
Unknown	41	133	779
Total, numbers	560	960	4,099

students," those educated in America easily led the field, while those trained in Japan trailed at a distance. Since there were then probably five times as many Japanese-trained as American-trained in China, the individual advantage enjoyed by the latter was considerable.

The three *Who's Whos* do show some differences in the percentage of the Chinese-trained for the years 1931-1932: 40.8 per cent in the Liang Yu, 37.0 per cent in the *China Weekly*, and 31.2 per cent in the Woodhead editions. The discrepancy suggests bias on the part of the two latter listings in favor of the foreign-educated in China. However, further examination shows that the numerical strength of the Chinese-trained in the Liang Yu listing is derived from the inclusion of a large number of militarists most of whom had little formal education. As to those educated in Chinese schools, the percentage is actually higher in the Woodhead than in the Liang Yu listing—10.8 against 9.6. Because the coverage of the Liang Yu edition is far more comprehensive than that of the Woodhead, some difference in percentages is to be expected. The very small difference actually found seems to indicate that the Woodhead edition is an adequate indicator of general prominence in China.

Comparing the 1927 and 1931 issues of the *China Weekly* edition, the gain of the American-trained group and the decline of both the Chinese- and Japanese-trained groups between these two years are notable (see Table 3). A similar trend between

1923 and 1932 is also shown by the Woodhead edition.

*Government leaders.*—These men of political prominence may be divided into two categories: (1) the central government group, which includes, under the old Peking regime, the President and the cabinet members, and, under the Kuomintang, the Chairman of the national government, the heads of the five *Yuan*, and the ministers in the Executive Yuan—roughly the equivalent of the cabinet; and (2) the provincial group, which includes only the heads of provinces.

As shown in Table 4, the percentages of the foreign-educated among the central government leaders increased noticeably between 1923 and 1932, the period during which political power shifted from the Peking government to the Kuomintang regime. After 1932, as high as 71 to 80 per cent of the leading government officials were foreign-educated. While the distribution of various foreign-educated groups followed no fixed pattern, the political opportunities of the Western-educated were better than those of the Japanese-trained men in proportion to their respective numbers in China. The success of the Japanese-trained in becoming government officials appears to have been associated with the status of the diplomatic relations between China and Japan: the more Japan was a factor in Chinese politics at any given time, the more men with such training there were in the central government in the following period.

Among the provincial leaders, the percent-

TABLE 4. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF CHINESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BY COUNTRY OF STUDY AND SELECTED YEARS <sup>1</sup>

	1915	1923	1932	1937	1943	1947
China only	58.0%	42.0%	22.0%	25.0%	20.0%	25.0%
Abroad	42.0	58.0	78.0	75.0	80.0	71.0
Japan	8.4	41.8	30.0	37.5	40.0	20.6
U.S.A.	16.8	—	16.4	18.8	24.8	20.6
Europe	8.4	8.1	30.0	12.7	15.2	21.3
Any combination of the above	8.4	8.1	5.6	6.0	—	8.5
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total, numbers <sup>2</sup>	12	12	18	16	20	24

<sup>1</sup> The lists of government leaders are taken from *The China Yearbook*, 1916, 1923, 1931-1932, and 1939; *China Handbook*, 1937-1945; and *Wu-han Daily News Yearbook*, 1947 (in Chinese).

<sup>2</sup> The small numbers of cases, clearly, do not justify the percentages shown in the main body of this table, but the latter are presented so as to afford an economic description.

TABLE 5. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF CHINESE PROVINCIAL HEADS BY SELECTED YEARS \*

	1916		1923		1932		1938		1943		1947		Total
	Civil-ians	Militarists	C.	M.									
China	7	5	2	8	1	16	—	14	—	16	1	21	91
Japan	—	3	—	3	—	4	1	7	1	6	—	6	31
Western countries	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	6
Soviet Russia	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	3
No formal education	—	2	—	5	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	11
Unknown	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Total	8	13	3	16	3	24	1	21	1	24	4	28	146

\* Compiled from the same sources as cited in Table 4.

ages of the foreign-educated were much lower. During the six selected years between 1916 and 1947, there were 151 provincial heads. Of the 146 about whom data are available, only three were Russian-trained and six Western-trained (see Table 5). The Russian-trained were professional revolutionaries who in almost all respects were quite distinct from the Western-educated individuals. Only three of the six Western-trained men were appointed after 1932, and none of the three was a normal case. The single official in 1932 was serving directly under a military overlord; the other two were appointed to office in Manchuria in 1947 for special political reasons and probably never exercised power. If these three cases are considered as exceptions, then the trend of provincial leaders appears to have run counter to the trend shown by the central government leaders: not only were few provincial heads Western-trained, but their number decreased and ultimately disappeared between 1916 and 1947.

Two factors may have accounted for the dichotomy of central and provincial leaders. First, after 1916 the provinces in China fell increasingly under the control of militarists, some of whom were Japanese-trained, but most of whom had little formal education. Second, the Western-educated men in China congregated in the largest coastal cities, with only a handful in the provinces: there were few civilian provincial heads and even fewer Western-educated ones. Thus, there was an increasing tendency for the Western-educated leaders and the militarists to become mutually exclusive groups, one dominating the central government and one the provinces.

*Academic elite.*—Higher education in China was almost the exclusive domain of Western-educated men. From 1920 onward, and particularly after 1927, top administrative posts, ranging from the Minister of Education to directors of provincial education and college presidents, were always occupied by men trained in the West. The predominance of the same group in college faculties was equally pronounced.

In the University of Amoy—a small, privately endowed institution—there were 81 Chinese faculty members in 1927–1928, of whom the American-trained accounted for 67 per cent of the full professors and 58 per cent of the associate professors; the Western-educated teachers in general made up 86 and 83 per cent, respectively, of the same ranks.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, there were no Western-trained persons among the lecturers (assistant professors) and instructors. A Western degree seemed to be sufficient in this case to assure its holder a senior faculty rank. In 1937, on the faculty of Tsinghua University, a nationally famous center of learning, there were 94 Chinese full professors who had studied in the following countries: the United States (69), both the United States and Europe (5), Germany (7), France (4), England (3), Japan (3),

<sup>15</sup> During the Kuomintang era, the government recognized three kinds of higher educational establishments: universities (with three or more faculties), colleges, and technical schools. In 1934, scholars trained abroad accounted for about 56 per cent of university teachers, over 51 per cent of college teachers, and almost 41 per cent of technical school faculties. The better known institutions generally had more foreign-educated men on their faculties, and institutional prestige depended to some extent on the presence of such men.

Hongkong (1), China only (1), unknown (1). The only man trained solely in China was a professor of Chinese, who later spent a year in Europe on a study tour.

The educational background of the Fellows of the Academia Sinica in 1948 shows a pattern similar to that of the college faculties. The 81 Fellows were distributed among three divisions: Physical Sciences (28), Biological Sciences (25), and Humanities (28). Seventy-five of the 81 Fellows were trained in the West, and 52 in the United States. All six of the Chinese-trained taught in the Humanities: four had received classical education and only two were products of the modern Chinese educational system.

*Business leaders.*—The survey includes 29 leading bankers,<sup>16</sup> 564 merchants,<sup>17</sup> and 40 industrialists. The first two groups are selected from the official *Chinese Economic Yearbook*, 1933–1934, and the last group from a series of articles on “Contemporary Chinese Industrialists” written by a well-known Chinese journalist in 1944–1948.<sup>18</sup>

The 564 merchants were mostly officers of the Chamber of Commerce located in various parts of China. Ten of them had been educated abroad: four in Japan, three in the United States, two in England, and one in Germany. Of these ten, however, all but one were bankers “by profession.” There were practically no foreign-educated men among the other merchants. This finding seems to confirm the popular notion in China

that in commerce “book knowledge” is far less useful than practical experience.<sup>19</sup>

The predominance of governmentally controlled industries in China is reflected in the fact that most of the industrialists were state officials rather than private entrepreneurs. The 40 cases studied may be divided into four sub-groups: engineers, politicians, private industrialists, and businessmen-in-government—each type showing a different educational pattern. Of the 30 engineers, the educational background of 18 is known and all of these men were trained abroad, 13 in the United States, three in Europe, and two in Japan. They all began as engineers but soon became executives of governmental industries. This pattern possibly indicates the high prestige of technical training and the lack of a sharp division between technology and industrial management in China. The three political heads of governmental industries who make up the second sub-group were educated abroad but had neither business training nor private business interests. Of the three private industrialists, none was Western-trained and only one was Japanese-trained. All four Chinese-trained of the 40 industrialists were businessmen in private life. The educational level of Chinese merchants seems to have differed markedly from that of the officials.

The four businessmen-in-government included one Western-educated, one Japanese-educated, and two Chinese-trained men, a distribution that appears to reflect their marginal role between the officials and the merchants. Interestingly, this is also about the pattern shown by the 29 top bankers: Chinese-trained (12), Japanese-trained (6), American-trained (4), European-trained (4), no formal education—old-style bank apprentices (3).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The banking resources were highly concentrated. In 1937, the Chinese national government had a three-quarter share in the capital of ten banks which held 61 per cent of the combined resources of all banks (Frank M. Tamagna, *Banking and Finance in China*, New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942, pp. 185–186). Fourteen banks controlled four-fifths of the total assets of all commercial banks (*ibid.*, p. 161). In addition, most large commercial banks in China were founded and dominated by single individuals. Hence the highly important bankers were few.

<sup>17</sup> Under the Kuomintang, commerce was classified into 17 types, ranging from “business of purchase and sale” to “room renting,” “publishing,” “warehousing,” and “manufacturing and finishing” (*The China Manual*, 1944, pp. 404–405)—“merchant” has a very broad meaning.

<sup>18</sup> Hsu Ying, “Contemporary Chinese Industrialists,” *New China*, Vols. 2, 3, 5, and 6 (in Chinese).

<sup>19</sup> Except in modern banking, import-export, and a few other new fields, trade in China was conducted largely according to the traditional practices, which had to be learned through apprenticeship. Formal schooling presumably did not give merchants the training they needed.

<sup>20</sup> There were two kinds of banks in China, native and modern. The former had been in existence for centuries. The native bankers all began their careers as apprentices and had no formal schooling. Leading native bankers were sometimes employed by modern banks, but native banks never employed a person who had not begun as an apprentice.

The bankers were merchants but they had a good deal to do with the government and depended heavily upon official connections. Their diverse educational backgrounds do not seem to be accidental. Because the central government officials were highly educated in the formal sense, it may be hypothesized that those who had to deal with them also tended to be formally educated. Whether or not this was due to similar class origins of many of the bankers, businessmen-in-government, and governmental officials need not be discussed here. The significant finding is that highly-educated men dominated the central government and even the businessmen who were close to the central government showed more educational qualifications than did those who had little to do with it.

FOREIGN-TRAINED *versus*  
CHINESE-TRAINED

Our survey shows that the Western-educated leaders in China enjoyed a decisive advantage in some fields of employment—notably higher education, central government, and industries under the latter's control. Almost no Western-educated men were among the provincial leaders. Nor were they engaged in commerce of the conventional type.

The advantage of the Western-trained men stands out more sharply when they are compared to the Chinese-trained, who experienced considerable difficulty in finding employment. As early as 1917, Ts'ai Yuanpei, a leading educator, warned that the lack of employment opportunity for the college graduate constituted a crisis for Chinese education. The problem became endemic: by 1935 John Stuart Leighton estimated that of the 7,000 college graduates every year, only 2,000 could find jobs.<sup>21</sup> Despite strenuous governmental efforts to remedy the situation, the problem remained unsolved until 1949. The advantage of the Western-trained is highly significant in the analysis of the life chances of different segments of society.

tice. This is the reason that the native bankers are not included in this survey.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in George Hinman, "Jobless Graduates," *Chinese Recorder* (August, 1935), pp. 470-473.

SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE WESTERN-  
TRAINED MEN

A notable feature of the movement to study abroad is the steady decline of the proportion of the holders of scholarships and fellowships among Chinese who were following such a program. Thus, of the 15,000 Chinese students in Japan in 1906, 53 per cent held scholarships;<sup>22</sup> of the 3,840 there in 1920, 32 per cent were in that category;<sup>23</sup> and of the 2,491 who went from China to Japan between 1929 and 1935, a mere three per cent were so classified.<sup>24</sup> Among the Chinese students in the United States, the proportional decline of Chinese governmental scholars was equally great (in 1905, 61 per cent of these students held scholarships; in 1908, 44 per cent; 1910, 32 per cent; 1914, 52 per cent; 1918, 42 per cent; 1921, 49 per cent; 1924, 44 per cent; 1925, 20 per cent; between 1929 and 1935, 19 per cent; and in 1942, only three per cent<sup>25</sup>). As grants from non-governmental sources were insignificant,<sup>26</sup> the decline of governmental support meant in effect the increase of self-supporting students, that is, students from wealthy families in

<sup>22</sup> J. A. Wallace, "Chinese Students in Tokio and the Revolution," *North American Student* (June, 1913), p. 171.

<sup>23</sup> Shu Hsin-ch'eng, *History of Chinese Studying Abroad in Modern Times*, Shanghai: Chung-hwa, 1927, p. 148 (in Chinese).

<sup>24</sup> *Higher Educational Statistics for the 23rd Year of the Republic*, Nanking: Chinese Ministry of Education, 1937, pp. 284-285 (in Chinese).

<sup>25</sup> Percentages computed from the following sources: 1905, from John Fryer, *Admission of Chinese to American Colleges*, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1909, pp. 179-180; 1908, *Chinese Students Monthly* (January, 1909), p. 187; 1910, *World Chinese Students Journal* (March, 1912), pp. 738-739; 1914, *Chinese Students Monthly* (February, 1914), p. 345; 1918, *Directory of Chinese Students, 1918*; 1921, *Who's Who of Chinese Students in the United States*; 1924, Shu Hsin-ch'eng, *op. cit.*, p. 136; 1925, *Chinese Students Monthly* (May, 1925), pp. 32-33; 1929-1935, *Higher Educational Statistics for the 23rd Year of the Republic*, pp. 284-285 (in Chinese); 1942, *China Institute Bulletin* (January, 1942), pp. 1-3.

<sup>26</sup> After 1942, many grants were awarded to Chinese students by the United States and Chinese governments, but these were to students already in this country for wartime relief and had little effect upon the composition of their social backgrounds.

China. Although the average expenditure incurred by these students is not known, it is safe to assume that they did not spend less than the stipends paid by the Chinese government to the fellowship-holders. Furthermore, since the stipends did not include travel and medical expenses, they almost certainly were below the actual per student cost. The monthly stipends (in Chinese dollars) paid by the Chinese government to students abroad in the three years, 1909, 1924, and 1933, were about as follows: for students in Japan, 480 dollars in 1909, 646 dollars in 1924, and 840 dollars in 1933; for students in the United States, 2,035 dollars, 2,025 dollars, and 3,280 dollars in the same years, respectively; and for students in England, 2,150, 2,160, and 4,104 dollars, respectively.<sup>27</sup>

These sums were beyond the ability of most Chinese to pay. The largest social group in China—some 75 per cent of the population—were the farmers,<sup>28</sup> whose incomes came from their land-holdings, which according to a 1936 report covering 16 provinces, were as follows:<sup>29</sup>

Size of Holdings (in Units of <i>mou</i> or 1/6 acre)	Percentage of Total Households
10 and under	59.6
10–29.9	29.4
30–49.9	6.2
50–99.9	3.5
100 and over	1.3
Total	100.0

<sup>27</sup> Standard stipends paid by the Chinese government to students in Japan were 400 Yen in 1909 and 840 Yen in 1924 and 1933. Stipends paid to students in the United States were 960 American dollars in 1909 and 1,080 American dollars in 1924 and 1933. Stipends paid to students in England were 192 pounds in 1909 and 240 pounds in 1924 and 1933. To facilitate comparison, these sums were converted into Chinese currency at the average exchange rates prevailing in the respective years. As the rates fluctuated, so the sums in Chinese currency changed.

<sup>28</sup> The term “farmers” is used here in a general sense. It includes both landlords and peasants, but excludes those who had important diversified financial interests.

<sup>29</sup> Report of National Land Commission, quoted in Shu-ching Lee, *Social Implications of Farm Tenancy in China*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1950, p. 114.

In central China in the 1930s, only farmers having 30 *mou* of land could afford to send two children to primary school.<sup>30</sup> Another report in 1935 notes that “only a family having about 50 *mou* could afford to send one child to the higher primary school,” and only a family having over 200 *mou* could spare 150 dollars per year to send a son to a secondary school.<sup>31</sup> In 1930, the expenditure of an average college student in Shanghai was about 500 dollars per year.<sup>32</sup> An investigation made by the China International Famine Relief Commission in the 1920s reported that only .2 to 1.6 per cent of China’s agricultural population received annual incomes of between 2,000 and 5,000 dollars per family, and only .2 to .4 per cent had annual incomes of over 5,000 dollars.<sup>33</sup> As a large number of people depended for support upon the extended Chinese family, it is doubtful that a family with 5,000 dollars a year could have sent a son to the United States without outside help. For all practical purposes the farmers in China had no opportunity to study abroad.

The second largest group in China were the factory workers, who were variously estimated to number between two and five millions between 1927 and 1947. Between 1917 and 1931, some 82 surveys were made of their living conditions, and the range of their yearly income was found to lie between 100 and 400 dollars per family.<sup>34</sup> In one study, the yearly educational outlay per family was reported to be 77 cents;<sup>35</sup> in another, 1.45 dollars.<sup>36</sup> It may be safely concluded that, barring such special cases

<sup>30</sup> Ho Jih-pin, “Chinese Education,” *Chinese Educational World*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 10–11 (in Chinese).

<sup>31</sup> *Agrarian China*, London: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1939, p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> Chou Yung, “The Reconstruction of Chinese Education,” *Chinese Educational World*, Vol. 18, No. 12 (in Chinese).

<sup>33</sup> J. B. Taylor, “A Study of Rural Economy in China,” *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* (April, 1924), p. 251.

<sup>34</sup> L. K. Tao, *The Standard of Living Among Chinese Workers*, Shanghai: Chinese Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931, pp. 4–5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>36</sup> *The Living Standard of Workers in Shanghai*, Shanghai: Shanghai Municipal Government, 1934, p. 75 (in Chinese).

as those involving patronage of a missionary, no Chinese student in the West came from a working-class family.

The social origins of Chinese students in America are suggested by the occupations (in 1924) of the heads of the families of Tsinghua students—all of whom, for two decades, went to the United States after their graduation. Of these 389 family heads, over 32 per cent were governmental employees, almost 31 per cent were educators, 13 per cent were lawyers or members of other professions, more than 20 per cent were industrialists, and only 3.7 per cent (14 cases) were farmers.<sup>37</sup> In 1947, questionnaires were sent to some 2,300 Chinese students in this country. Of the 714 replies received, 660 were by students from China, whose fathers' occupations were distributed as follows:<sup>38</sup>

Businessman	30.3%
Professionals	27.4
Government Workers	17.0
Farmers	6.2
Landlords	5.3
Clergymen	3.8
Technicians	1.2
Others	5.9
Unknown	2.9
Total (660 cases)	100.0

In neither survey were the terms precisely defined, and in the second case the respondents were free to choose their own description.<sup>39</sup> For the reasons indicated above, we suspect that the "farmers" and "landlords" (in the 1947 listing) were people who owned land but who had diversified financial resources. With absentee landlordism a widespread phenomenon in China, many city-dwellers could be called "farmers" or "landlords" but no true farmer could be called a merchant or industrialist. At any rate, both surveys indicate the predominance of three groups—businessmen, professionals, and government employees—among the fathers of students abroad, and in this respect are consistent with our analysis.

<sup>37</sup> Tsao Yung-hsiang, "The Way to Improve Tsinghua," *Tsinghua Weekly*, 10th Anniversary Special Issue, p. 67 (in Chinese).

<sup>38</sup> Sun Jen E-tu, "A Poll of Chinese Students in the United States," *Eastern Miscellany*, Vol. 44, No. 9, pp. 11–18 (in Chinese).

<sup>39</sup> I am indebted to Mrs. Sun for this information.

#### SOME LARGER IMPLICATIONS

The replacement of the civil service examinations by a new educational system in China had ominous social implications. Whereas under the old scheme a scholar with limited financial resources had a good chance to succeed, under the new one the opportunity to receive higher education was virtually limited to a small group of men from official, professional, and mercantile families. This limitation was particularly severe because under Western impact study abroad came to be regarded as the highest stage of the educational process, and such study involved heavy expenses that most people could not afford. The farmers, the largest occupational group and hitherto a major source from which scholars were recruited, now had practically no chance of receiving even an intermediate formal education. The only way a peasant could rise into officialdom was within a channel of violence—banditry or soldiery.<sup>40</sup> Aside from the uncertainty involved, this route did not lead to the same summit, for as noted above the provinces were ruled by the militarists while central governmental posts were filled by the educated class. The traditional pattern of high mobility between the scholars and the peasants disappeared.

The relation between merchants and scholars is of special interest. The former had little education themselves, but a large

<sup>40</sup> Theoretically, peasants could first become merchants and then rise into officialdom, but time, education, and geography almost eliminated this possibility. It would take a peasant many years to achieve success in business and then he had to receive an education—involving mastery of the literary language and refinement of manners—before he could aspire to an official status. Furthermore, only the most successful business men could become officials, and such business careers were limited to the largest cities. In China, where transportation was difficult, this meant that only peasants who lived near to one or two of the major seaports could aspire to such a business career. In Shanghai, the merchants from Ningpo, an inland city about 100 miles to the south, were well known for their business acumen; although possibly some of these merchants were of peasant stock, very few of them entered officialdom. The pattern is probably more significant for generational mobility: some peasants may have migrated to the city and, after achieving some success in business, may have sent their sons to college and eventually to foreign countries to study.

proportion of the Chinese students abroad came from business families. This indicates a new pattern of social mobility. Sons of businessmen who were educated abroad had the prestige of "returned students" but possessed little knowledge of their fathers' businesses and were therefore more apt to become officials, professors, or perhaps lawyers, than merchants—the scanty statistical evidence available justifies this hypothesis. Thus, a study of the members of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee from 1924 to 1929 reveals that merchants' sons accounted for between 31 and 64 per cent (at different times) of those on whom information was obtainable.<sup>41</sup> This pattern

is hardly conceivable without the new educational system in China.

One further hypothesis may be advanced. The recruitment of the educated elite from wealthy urban classes also had important social implications. On the one hand, the rural areas, which the scholar class had ruled for centuries, now had no adequate leadership and the power structure disintegrated. On the other hand, since the central government was staffed largely by the educated class, the urban orientation of the latter was necessarily reflected in national policies. The needs of the rural masses were neglected and political instability ensued. In this way political changes in China were closely related to social changes.

<sup>41</sup> Robert C. North, *Kuomintang and Chinese*

*Communist Elites*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952, p. 65.

## SPONSORED AND CONTEST MOBILITY AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM \*

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*Several important differences between the American and English systems of social control and of education reflect a divergence between the folk norms governing modes of upward mobility in the two countries. Under the American norm of contest mobility, elite status is the prize in an open contest, with every effort made to keep lagging contestants in the race until the climax. Sponsored mobility, the English norm, involves controlled selection in which the elite or their agents choose recruits early and carefully induct them into elite status. Differences between the American secondary school and the British system, in the value placed upon education, the content of education, the system of examinations, the attitude toward students working, the kind of financial subsidy available to university students, and the relation of social class to clique formation may be explained on the basis of this distinction.*

THIS paper suggests a framework for relating certain differences between American and English systems of education to the prevailing norms of upward mobility in each country. Others have noted the tendency of educational systems to support prevailing schemes of stratification, but this discussion concerns specifically the manner in which the *accepted mode of upward mobility* shapes the school system

directly and indirectly through its effects on the values which implement social control.

Two ideal-typical normative patterns of upward mobility are described and their ramifications in the general patterns of stratification and social control are suggested. In addition to showing relationships among a number of differences between American and English schooling, the ideal-types have broader implications than those developed in this paper: they suggest a major dimension of stratification which might be profitably incorporated into a variety of studies in social class; and they readily can be applied in further comparisons between other countries.

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