

## The Humanist Vision: Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and Educational Reform in Republican China

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On July 10, 1912, approximately nine months after the outbreak of the *Hsin-hai* revolution which had finally overthrown the Manchu dynasty and ushered in a new republican age, a Provisional Educational Conference was convened in Nanking to consider the reform of Chinese education. In the opening speech to the conference, the new Minister of Education, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei, outlined a comprehensive program for the creation of a modern system of education which would conform to the new goals of the Chinese nation.

Ts'ai's reform proposals came on the heels of a major effort by the fading Manchu dynasty to transform the Chinese education system to cope with modern needs. Indeed, by the first decade of the twentieth century, educational reform had become a central issue in the running controversy over how to preserve China from external conquest or inner collapse. There was substantial agreement among many factions in China that a fundamental cause of China's humiliation in its dealings with the outside world stemmed from the lethargy and ignorance of the Chinese people. Revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen and Tsou Jung might differ with constitutional monarchists like K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and self-strengtheners like Chang Chih-tung and Li Hung-chang in many respects on ways to solve China's problems, but they were in substantial agreement on the premise that a reform of education was crucial to national revival.

The conservatives bastioned in the Manchu court, convinced that if the traditional system were to be tampered with, a moral disintegration of Chinese society would set in, had at first rejected proposals for educational reform propounded by K'ang Yu-wei and his partisans, but they too ultimately had a change of heart, and during the first decade of the twentieth century a new system was instituted, providing for changes in both administration and content. In charge of formulating the new program was the elder statesman Chang Chih-tung, long a believer in moderate reform to preserve the essence of China's traditional culture.

The educational system that Chang was charged to reform was still substantially unaffected by Western ideas and technology. True, a few new schools had been opened along the coast to train Chinese personnel in specialized fields like interpreting and naval science. But the school system as a whole did not reflect such innovations. There was no system of national public education. The accepted aim of education was still limited to earning an assignment in the

governmental bureaucracy. Training in China's privately-supported schools still emphasized knowledge of the Confucian Classics, rather than the modern social and physical sciences. Finally, at the apex of the pyramid was the Civil Service Examination System, the fearsome door opening (or closing) the way for ambitious students to a career in the civil service.

Chang's reforms, realized over a period of several years with little resistance from the aged Empress Dowager in Peking, stressed changes in several areas: the gradual creation of a national system of public education, beginning with schools at the elementary level in outlying areas and culminating in nationally-run universities in the large cities, replacing or incorporating, in the process, the old privately-owned schools of the traditional period; the creation of a Ministry of Education to provide centralized direction for the entire system; the elimination of the Civil Service Examination as a separate testing mechanism for entrance into the bureaucracy and the inclusion of examinations for government careers within the school system itself; broadening the school curriculum to include courses in the sciences and foreign languages; the elimination of the eight-legged essay as the basis for literary style; the establishment of normal and technical schools and the encouragement of study abroad programs to assimilate foreign knowledge, so necessary to the survival of China; consideration to be given to the development of a separate system of schools to provide education for the first time to girls; a broadened concept of the aims of education, in order to provide for the general enlightenment of the Chinese population, not simply to turn out candidates for the Civil Service Examination. As a reminder that the planners behind the new system were still loyal to Confucius, study of the Classics was maintained as the heart of the curriculum. Chang, perhaps somewhat defensively, justified the retention of the old books by pointing out that even the West found it necessary to keep Christianity in the schools.<sup>1</sup>

Chang had gone about as far as one could go on the philosophy of the self-strengtheners. He had opened the door to the new knowledge while, he hoped, firmly protecting the classical heart of the educational system from the disintegrating effects of cultural erosion. In 1906 the new Ministry of Education, in response to the criticisms of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, clarified the aims of the new system—loyalty to the emperor; respect for Confucius; training in public morality, the military spirit, and utilitarianism. Patterned after the school systems in Germany and Japan, Chinese education was to be directed at harnessing the energies and talents of Chinese youth in the interests of building a strong and unified China.

The new system was definitely a step into the future. But, as would soon become apparent, it was a modest step, a mere forecast of greater changes to come. If conservatives feared that it was going too far, and pointed to unruly behavior and sloppy dress by students in the new schools as evidence that the new system would only hasten the decline of Chinese culture, progressives like Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei were convinced that it did not go far enough, that the changes were a mere window-dressing to hide the unchanged philosophical premises beneath. On taking office with the new republican government in 1912, the new Minister of Education felt that there was considerable room for improvement.

### The Humanist Vision

By his training, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei was reasonably well prepared for his task of presiding over

<sup>1</sup> For Chang Chih-tung's reforms, see Tu Tso-chou, "Chin pai-nien lai Chung-kuo hsin chiao-yu chih fa-chan" [The Development of China's New Education in the Last 100 Years], in Tu *et al.* (eds.), *Chin pai-nien lai chih Chung-kuo chiao-yu* (Hong Kong: Lungmen, 1969); and William Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 206-231.

the remolding of the Chinese educational system. A product of the Chinese Civil Service Examination System, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei had earned the coveted degree of doctorate (*chin-shih*) in 1894 and had made an auspicious start in the direction of a traditional bureaucratic career by accepting a post in the prestigious Han-lin Academy in Peking. But within a few short years Ts'ai, like so many of his progressive contemporaries, lost his faith in the old system and became an advocate of radical change. A silent supporter of K'ang Yu-wei's reform proposals of 1898, Ts'ai reacted to the dynasty's refusal to countenance reform by resigning his government post and returning to his native province of Chekiang, briefly becoming supervisor of the East-West school there.<sup>2</sup> Shortly afterward he went to Shanghai and joined the young revolutionary movement clustered around a few Western-style schools in China's most commercial and Westernized city. Between 1901 and his departure for Europe in 1906 Ts'ai taught or held administrative responsibilities at a number of schools in the Shanghai area, the Nan-yang Kung-hsüeh-hsiao (South Seas Public School), the Ai-kuo Nü-hsüeh-hsiao (Patriotic Girls School) and the Ai-kuo Hsüeh-she (Patriotic Academy).<sup>3</sup> He also became an active member of the revolutionary movement in the area, and helped to form the quasi-revolutionary organization, the Chinese Educational Association (Chung-kuo Chiao-yu-hui), with the aim of utilizing modern educational methods in an effort to prepare Chinese youth for the revival of China.<sup>4</sup> During this formative period in his life, Ts'ai became one of the most prominent members of the revolutionary movement in Shanghai. Although not as active in the political field as some of his colleagues (and, by some accounts, not as effective), he was perhaps the best known of the revolutionaries in the area because of his high degree, and he developed the reputation as the educational expert within the radical movement.

Ts'ai's years in Shanghai were to be significant in the evolution of his career as a member of the Chinese progressive movement. By 1906 it became apparent to him that political activism was having little success in overthrowing the moribund Manchu dynasty. Then again, there is ample evidence that, although a sincere member of the revolutionary movement (and, after 1905, of Sun Yat-sun's Revolutionary Alliance formed in Tokyo), Ts'ai was more at home in the field of educational reform than in the somewhat more brutal world of politics. Abandoning his duties in Shanghai (although not his amicable relationship with his radical colleagues), Ts'ai went off to Germany to study for a university degree in Europe, and to see the brilliance of Western civilization at its source.

If Ts'ai's five years in Shanghai had cemented his relationship with the revolutionary movement and had given him the reputation as an educational specialist, his five years in Europe were to provide him with the theoretical foundations that would underlie his educational proposals in future years. In the process, his sojourn in Europe would also serve to sharpen his distinctiveness in the Chinese radical movement. For if Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei shared the general desire of revolutionaries for the establishment of a Chinese republic based on Western forms, his sense of priorities was somewhat different from that of the majority of his colleagues. Most progressives in early twentieth century China had come to admire Western science and democracy, and were inclined to approve of the adaptation of Western technological advances

<sup>2</sup> Ts'ai Shang-ssu, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang chuan-chi* [A Scholastic and Intellectual Biography of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei] (Shanghai: T'ang-ti ch'u-pan-she, 1950), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Sun Te-chung, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei chiao-yu hsüeh-shuo* [The Educational Thought of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei] (Taipei: Fu-hsing shu-chü, 1956), pp. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Details on the Educational Association in English are located in Mary B. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), passim.



and democratic institutions to the Chinese environment. But it is significant that most reform-minded Chinese saw Western institutions and values primarily in terms of their utility in resolving the Chinese national crisis. In their writings they did not totally ignore the personal benefits of Westernization, in terms of a higher degree of material prosperity and human dignity. But their primary concern was for the effect such reforms would have on China's ability to protect itself against imperialist aggression. Most accepted the prevailing Western assumption that mankind lived in a social Darwinist world of survival of the fittest, and that only strong societies, able to compete with their rivals, would be able to survive.<sup>5</sup>

To such advocates of a statist approach, the advantages of science and democracy were obvious: the strength and unity of Western nations appeared to be based on material prosperity and the democratic form of government. Science brought national wealth and power; democracy created educated and talented citizens, loyal to the state and unified in their devotion to national progress. The emphasis was clearly on the building of a strong China.

Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei clearly shared the admiration of his colleagues for Western science and democracy, and he certainly hoped that one consequence of a Westernization of Chinese institutions and values would be the revival of the Chinese nation. But for Ts'ai, the nation was not all; beyond the problem of national survival lay the deeper question of the spiritual quality of human life and the ability of man to live together on earth, regardless of national origins, culture or creed. If Western institutions were useful to China, it was not simply because of their effects on national wealth and power, but also because of the effect on the moral level of human life.

Such a view, of course, implied a view of the nature of the universe vastly different from that of the social Darwinists. And, indeed, Ts'ai's world-view departed in significant respects from that of many of his contemporaries. From his earliest years he had placed a strong emphasis on the ethical side of life. In his study of the Confucian Classics as a youth, he had consistently searched for the deeper moral truths in the philosophy of the masters, and had attached himself to a school of Confucianism which placed highest priority on ending poverty, disease and evil on earth. In his maturity, exposure to Western thought simply strengthened the humanist orientation of his thinking. Rejecting the social Darwinist universe and its statist implications, Ts'ai searched out humanist alternatives and became an advocate of the anarchist Peter Kropotkin's theory of Mutual Aid, by which the survival of living species was due not to competition, but to mutual cooperation. China must protect herself, to be sure. But she, like other nations, also had a higher responsibility: to raise the moral quality of all citizens in society, and to spread the concept of international harmony, a worldwide system of mutual aid based on brotherly love. The final goal of humanity was not the morally repugnant vision of mutually competitive and frequently warring nation states, but the gradual reduction of human prejudice and conflict and the creation of a utopian age of world peace (the *Ta T'ung*, or Great Unity).

In this process, science and democracy would play a paramount role. Science was indispensable in ridding human society of such assorted evils as disease, poverty and ignorance. Democracy would serve to bring out the best qualities of individual citizens. An optimist, Ts'ai followed the Mencian school in believing in the innate goodness and perfectibility of man, and held the conviction that a system based on the maximization of personal freedom was the best means to bring about the good in the individual.

<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon has been well documented in recent writings on modern China. See, in particular, Benjamin Schwartz's analytical treatment of Yen Fu's acceptance of social Darwinism in his *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

Ts'ai did have some compunctions about the relationship of material prosperity to the moral improvement of human society. He joined his contemporaries of East and West in viewing science as a vital key to producing a better society. To Ts'ai, poverty was not blessed, leeches were not pearls of God. But he perceived a danger in an over-reliance on science and its material consequences. If not accompanied by rigorous attention to the moral training of the individual—to promoting man's sense of altruism and selflessness, his willingness to put service to humanity above personal profit—increasing material prosperity would simply lead to avarice, economic inequality and more human conflict.<sup>6</sup>

Ts'ai had formulated an idealistic philosophy combining Western belief in human progress with the ancient Chinese vision of a future world of universal peace. It was not a unique vision in early twentieth-century China. Similar views had been expressed by such reformers as K'ang Yu-wei and T'an Ssu-t'ung; and Chinese anarchists, like Wu Chih-hui and Li Shih-tseng, shared Ts'ai's faith in the doctrine of Mutual Aid. But Ts'ai's acceptance of the humanist vision was particularly significant, for as the first Minister of Education in the new republic, and the most prominent educator during the first two decades of the Chinese republic, Ts'ai was to be in an enviable position to put his philosophy to work—in the remodeling of the Chinese educational system.

### Minister of Education

Ts'ai's program of educational reform set forth as Minister of Education in 1912 was strongly under the influence of the above ideas. His goal was no less than the complete transformation of the educational system of China—of its fundamental assumptions as well as its administrative organization. And in the process he would not only be opposing conservatives who resisted the trend toward Western influence over Chinese education, but toward the “realists” in his own revolutionary party who hoped to channel Chinese education into nationalist lines.

The first indication of Ts'ai's program came in an article published in the February 1912 issue of *Educational Review* (*Chiao-yu tsa-chih*).<sup>7</sup> In the article Ts'ai presented a five-point proposal designed to incorporate his ideas for Chinese education. The first three points were hardly controversial, and were in part designed to appeal to his more practical-minded colleagues: (a) national military education, (b) utilitarian education, and (c) ethical education. Military training and utilitarian education were obviously useful in strengthening the nation and in training citizens for useful occupations in society to master the mysteries of science and technology. Ethical education could be seen as a means to inculcate the concepts of loyalty and obedience to the laws of the land. He did reject, however, the monarchical concept of the Confucian five relationships (enjoining loyalty and obedience by minister to king, son to father, younger to elder brother, wife to husband, friend to friend) as a basis for ethical training, and proposed instead the French revolutionary trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity as more appropriate to a republican society.

<sup>6</sup> Such views, of course, resemble traditional ones in a number of respects, and it is evident that in advocating Western ideas, he was not totally abandoning his Confucian foundation. For a more detailed analysis of his philosophical views and their relationship to his ideas on social reform, see my “Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and the Confucian Heritage,” in *Modern Asian Studies*, Pt. 5, No. 3 (1971), pp. 207–226.

<sup>7</sup> Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei, “Tui-yu chiao-yu fang-ch'en chih i-chien” [My Opinions on the Aims of Education]. The work is available in *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei hsien-sheng ch'uan-chi* [The Complete Works of Mr. Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1968), pp. 452–459. This volume will hereafter be cited as CC.

The final two points of Ts'ai's proposal contained the heart of his program, however, and it was this that was the most controversial. Education should not simply foster material prosperity and national strength, but should aim at the satisfaction of man's ethico-spiritual needs, and strengthen his feeling of love for other human beings. Thus Chinese education should have its "transcendental" side. Here Ts'ai advocated two points, world-outlook education and aesthetics education. World-outlook education would be directed at promoting a familiarity with the cultures and religions of other human societies, in order to demonstrate the universal nature of the human experience. Aesthetics education would encourage the love of beauty, by means of which the student would be able to transcend his tendency toward greed and prejudice and hate.<sup>8</sup> If the first three points served the material side of society, the final two would lead toward the future *Ta T'ung*.

Ts'ai had been exposed to a variety of modern educational theories while abroad, to the French system of decentralized schools, to Pestalozzi's teaching methods, to Dewey's democratic education, and he had a number of other proposals relating to educational administrative reform. He was prepared to accept the existing Japanese three-stage, four-level system as appropriate to China's needs, but he was anxious to realize substantial decentralization of the system, with one basic decision-making apparatus at the district level, and a loose direction from the central Ministry of Education.<sup>9</sup> At the same time he was hopeful of eventually establishing universities in all provinces, and to place administrative control of all school systems within each province under the direction of university authorities. Peking University, formed by the old dynasty during its twilight attempt to survive through piecemeal reform, would naturally become China's greatest institute of learning, but he hoped that others could be soon formed, notably in Nanking, Hankow, Chengtu and Canton. It was his theory, contrary to many other educational theorists in China from Chang Chih-tung to Ts'ai's own assistant Fan Yuan-lien, that it was necessary to begin at the university, rather than at the elementary level. The basic obstacle in the way of universal education was the lack of trained teachers, and that lack could only be overcome by an expansion of facilities at the university level.<sup>10</sup> Once a sufficient number of teachers had been trained, obligatory education could be established. For adults without any exposure to education, he proposed the establishment of a new social education office in the Ministry to extend knowledge to the mass of the population by means of libraries, newspapers and magazines, lecture halls, and, most important, language reform. To bring women into the system, he proposed the expansion of female education in China, including the establishment of coeducational schools at the elementary level.<sup>11</sup> Finally, in a direct attack on the old ethics, he proposed the elimination of classics education in elementary and middle schools, and the development of new textbooks to reflect the new republican ideals.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ts'ai followed Kant in seeing art as a means of promoting the love of humanity. For a more detailed analysis of his views on aesthetics, see my article, "The Aesthetics Philosophy of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei," in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (October 1972), pp. 385-401.

<sup>9</sup> Tu Tso-chou, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> It is noteworthy that he once commented that the stimulation for the national and cultural revival of nineteenth-century Germany had come from her well-trained and dedicated elementary school teachers. See his letter to Wang Ching-wei, dated March 1917. In CC, p. 1062.

<sup>11</sup> For advances in female education, see Tu Tso-chou, pp. 12-13; Yu Ch'ing-t'ang, "San-shih-wu nien lai Chung-kuo chih nü-tzu chiao-yu" [Female Education over the Last 35 Years], in Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei *et al.* (eds.), *Wan Ch'ing san-shih-wu nien lai chih Chung-kuo chiao-yu* [Chinese Education in the Last 35 Years since the Late Ch'ing Period] (Hong Kong: Lungmen, 1969), pp. 175-214.

<sup>12</sup> Cyrus Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 80.

The new minister had set forth a program for a new educational system for republican China. To a degree, his proposals were not a significant departure from the existing system—the emphasis on public morality, on military training and utilitarian education, had been recognized and initiated by Chang Chih-tung; the trend toward obligatory education and female education had already begun in the last dynastic period; even in his stress on the role of aesthetics he was reflecting the traditional Confucian belief that art and music could play a positive part in the molding of the human personality. There were many revolutionary aspects to his proposals, however. In his emphasis on internationalism, decentralization, and the individual needs of the student, he was distinctly running counter both to established practice and current thinking. By decentralization and emphasis on greater individual attention, he would limit the power of the state to use education to further its own aims. By emphasizing world-outlook education, he would weaken national sentiment. Many, if not most, republicans could agree with monarchists in opposing these aspects of Ts'ai's program.

On taking over the Ministry in January 1912, he immediately issued temporary orders designed to incorporate steps in the comprehensive reform program he planned for China. Education in the Classics, the locus of traditional ethics, was forbidden at the elementary school level, to be replaced by courses in handicrafts and drawing. The teaching of Confucian ethics was now to be given in readers, not in the original classical version. Elementary education was to become coeducational, and texts at all levels were to be “republicanized.”<sup>13</sup> To obtain sufficient support for the more controversial aspects of his program, he convened an Emergency Central Educational Conference of educators in July of 1912. In a speech opening the conference, he stressed the fact that education under a republic should attempt to develop the specific abilities of the individual student, and not merely to satisfy the wishes of the government.<sup>14</sup> Once again he emphasized the need to complement military and utilitarian education with the transcendental education he had earlier outlined.

The conference was receptive to many of Ts'ai's ideas, indicative of the growing desire for reform in academic circles. The structural and curricular changes were adopted with minor changes, as were the provisions relating to coeducational schools and the establishment of an office of social education. In line with his desires, education in the Classics was eliminated in all lower and middle level schools.<sup>15</sup>

But there was considerable resistance at the conference and in the government as a whole to his basic idea of promoting internationalism and stressing individual development. Many of his colleagues conceived of education more as an instrument to mobilize the population for social goals determined by the state than as a means of developing individual character. The government program which was eventually adopted and promulgated in September reflected a distinct departure from his original proposals. The political aspects of his program, relating to military, utilitarian and ethical education, were included in the new statement of educational aims, but his new morality (the reference to liberty, equality and fraternity) was rejected and the traditional five relationships retained. Aesthetics education was included, although in a

<sup>13</sup> Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei, “Pu-t'ung chiao-yu chan-hsing pan-fa” [Temporary Regulations for Ordinary Education], CC, pp. 1043–1044.

<sup>14</sup> Ts'ai, “Tui chiao-yu tsung-chih-an chih shuo-ming” [The Explanation for the Educational Program], CC, pp. 703–704. Ts'ai had already spoken publicly in favor of China's adoption of Esperanto as a means of international communication, and would continue to press for language reform throughout his life. See his “Tsai Shih-chieh-yu-hsüeh-hui chih yen-shuo” [Speech at the World Language Conference], CC, pp. 699–702.

<sup>15</sup> *Wan Ch'ing* . . . , p. 15.

rather perfunctory way, and world-outlook education was entirely left out.<sup>16</sup> Internationalism would have to await another day.

### Chancellor of Peking University

Ts'ai's rebuff at the hands of the government probably contributed to his decision in the summer of 1912 to resign from the cabinet and return to Europe. But his retreat from the forefront of educational reform was by no means permanent. His ideas had caught favor in many quarters in the progressive community, and in late 1916 he received an invitation to become chancellor of Peking University. With President Yuan Shih-k'ai, no friend of Ts'ai's and a conservative in educational matters, having died earlier in the year, there was hope that the trend toward educational reform could be resumed. Peking University was the first modern university in China, established as a result of reform proposals at the end of the nineteenth century, but the new university had made little progress under a succession of undistinguished chancellors in meeting the requirements for a modern center of higher education. In 1916, when Ts'ai was invited to become chancellor, it had achieved an unenviable reputation. Students were generally indifferent to scholarship and concentrated their efforts on receiving a diploma, the necessary step to becoming a government official. Instructors, affected by the lack of interest in the student body, developed a lackadaisical attitude toward teaching duties. Students were accused of spending more time drinking, gambling and consorting with prostitutes than at their studies.<sup>17</sup>

Ts'ai's appointment occurred at a momentous period in the history of modern China. A new generation familiar with Western ideas was slowly emerging, despite the limited changes achieved in the educational system. This increased penetration of ideas from abroad coincided with rising frustration at the conditions in China, when progressives calling for social reform often found themselves side by side with nationalists concerned at China's feeble response to Japanese infringements on Chinese sovereignty. The juncture of demands for social reform and nationalist fervor helped to produce a highly volatile situation and weaken the already shaky warlord government in Peking.

In this period of frenetic intellectual activity the appointment of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei to the position of chancellor of Peking University was providential. The progressive movement based its demands broadly on the liberal humanism of Western Europe and the United States, and this, too, was the wellspring from which flowed much of Ts'ai's own philosophy. The reform movement rising in China would receive sympathetic treatment from the new chancellor who, by hiring a number of reformers to the faculty, gave the progressives a home and a mouthpiece for their attacks on traditional society.

By taking the post at Peking University, Ts'ai was now to undertake from a new vantage point the reform of the Chinese educational system. On assuming his duties in January 1917, he immediately made it clear that the university would assume a new role in the affairs of the nation. His opening speech as chancellor set forth some of his views regarding the future of China's foremost educational institution.<sup>18</sup> No longer would the university act as a haven for

<sup>16</sup> See the diary of the conference in Shu Hsin-ch'eng, *Chung-kuo chin-tai chiao-yu-shih tzu-liao* [Research Materials on the History of Education in Modern China] (3 vols. Peking, 1961), I, pp. 296-310.

<sup>17</sup> Ts'ai, "Wo tsai Pei-ching Ta-hsüeh ti ching-li" [My Experience at Peking University], CC, pp. 629-630.

<sup>18</sup> Ts'ai, "Chiu-jen Pei-ching Ta-hsüeh hsiao-chang chih yen-shuo-tz'u" [A Speech on Assuming the Chancellorship of Peking University], CC, pp. 721-722.



aspirants to government careers; in the future it would be primarily an institution to carry on study and research, and secondly the center of an effort to improve the moral and intellectual tone of the nation at large. The first priority was internal reform and the creation among the student body and faculty of a new interest in scholarship. He gradually streamlined the administration of the university to permit greater participation in school decisions by the faculty and students, and reorganized the curriculum to stress the dual nature of arts and science and encourage a spirit of learning and research.<sup>19</sup> To build up an interest in scholarship, he organized a series of speaking clubs devoted to the discussion of such varied aspects of learning as music, art, political science and journalism. To give concrete form to his attempt to raise ethical standards, he established a Society for the Promotion of Virtue (Chin-te-hui), a step which he hoped would have a salutary effect throughout Chinese society.

But Ts'ai's ambitions were not limited to organizational reform and the moral regeneration of the students and faculty. He also wanted to transform the university into an institution designed to provide the intellectual leadership for the new China. In line with his consistent view that the masses must be committed to the idea of reform before true modernization could take place, he hoped to create of the university a great institute of learning and the training ground of an educated elite which would spread knowledge and progress throughout the nation. The basic aim of the university would be to provide a system which would encourage the fullest development of the individual character and talent in all students, and would result in producing a growing number of Chinese scholars renowned in all fields of endeavor. Ts'ai was now increasingly certain that a nation's reputation was built more on the strength of its intellectual and cultural attainments than on its military prowess or political influence. Such intellectual excellence could only be attained in an atmosphere favoring the unfettered search for truth and knowledge. With that in mind, he consciously attempted to bring to the university faculty representatives of a wide variety of conflicting views. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, editor of the radical journal *New Youth* and a founding member, in later years, of the Communist Party, became Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Philosopher Hu Shih, American trained and a disciple of John Dewey, came to be Professor of Philosophy. In early republican China, where no idea was sacred and the rising younger generation was passionately devoted to the discussion of new ideas, the university became a forum of cultural and intellectual interchange.

Under Ts'ai's benign direction, Peking University had thus been forged into an instrument of feverish intellectual activity in the young republic. The provocative style of the new chancellor stimulated the rise of a new political and intellectual consciousness among the students at the university and neighboring educational institutions. Quiet-spoken, affable and accessible, Ts'ai symbolized receptivity to youth, and to the new knowledge pouring in from the West. It is not surprising that the university became the vibrant center of the reform movement in China, and that Ts'ai became one of the foremost advocates of social and educational reform in the new republic. To some conservatives, Ts'ai was considered the most dangerous man in China.

### John Dewey and Educational Reform

It was in these circumstances that the American philosopher and educator John Dewey came to China. Dewey's arrival and speaking tour could not have come at a more opportune time

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the administrative reorganization of the university, see CC, pp. 1066-1067.

for Chinese education. Under the impact of agitation from progressives, education was moving gradually in the direction of a more Westernized form. With the Classics eliminated as a subject of study, young Chinese were now being exposed to an entirely different set of values.

The new texts put into use in the immediate post-revolutionary period emphasized not only patriotism and national consciousness, but were full of praise for Western civilization, for internationalism, and the doctrine of progress, and were critical of China's lethargy and lack of public spirit.<sup>20</sup>

Still, there was a long way to go. Only a small percentage of Chinese school-age children were actually in school. Nor was sentiment in the government in Peking, and among warlords in the provinces, strongly in favor of educational reform. The log-jam began to break in 1918. Educational conferences, convened under the leadership of such reform-minded educators as Ts'ai, Chiang Meng-lin, Fan Yuan-lien, Ho Ping-sung and T'ao Meng-ho, demanded a further remodeling of the educational system. Ts'ai himself continued to urge greater attention to modern educational techniques developed in the West.<sup>21</sup>

Dewey's visit was a spur to the reformers. Many Chinese educators, such as Hu Shih and Chiang Meng-lin, had been educated in the United States under his influence. Many others, including Ts'ai himself, had come to admire his ideas.<sup>22</sup>

Spurred by the visit of Dewey to China from 1919 to 1921, educational reform became a major issue in the last years of the first decade of the new republic. Ts'ai and his fellow educators utilized the numerous conferences of representatives of local educational associations to make proposals for the reform of the educational system: to abolish the existing educational standard and replace it by a simple statement that education should aim to cultivate the wholesome personality and develop a republican spirit; to eliminate military training in schools and replace it by physical drill; to replace the old courses on personal ethics (*hsiu-shen-k'o*) with courses on civic training.<sup>23</sup>

In 1922 the reformers were finally rewarded with the promulgation by the Peking Ministry of Education of a new system of education. The influence of Dewey, and of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei, was marked. The American credit system, the three-level approach for elementary and secondary education, was adopted, and more attention was to be given to vocational education and mass literacy. Emphasis was to be placed on the development of the individual, not on the adaptation of the individual to the needs of the state. Course materials were to emphasize the responsibilities of citizenship and humanitarianism rather than to foster a strong nationalist spirit and a resentment of foreigners. For that purpose, religion and political influence, both anathema to Ts'ai, were to be minimized. The ultimate aim of the program was to foster democracy, individuality and the creation of a modern progressive society. Although no specific educational standard was declared, five general principles were set forth: (a) democracy, (b) the needs of society, (c) individual character, (d) the strengthening of the national economy, and (e) local initiative.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Chiu Sam Tsang, *Nationalism in School Education in China* (Hong Kong: South China Morning Post, 1933), pp. 97-109.

<sup>21</sup> His most prominent articles were "Ou-chan hou chih chiao-yu wen-t'i" [Problems of Education after the First World War] and "Hsin chiao-yu yu chiu chiao-yu chih ch'i-tien" [The Differences between the New and the Old Education]. They are located in CC, pp. 775-779 and pp. 737-740.

<sup>22</sup> For Ts'ai's reaction to Dewey, see his "Tu-wei po-shih liu-shih sheng-jih wan-ts'an-hui chih yen-shuo" [A Speech Given at the Evening Banquet on the Occasion of the Sixtieth Birthday of Doctor Dewey], CC, p. 782.

<sup>23</sup> For example, see Tu Tso-chou, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> For more details of the program, see Robert Sakai, *Politics and Education in Modern China* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1953), p. 144.

The new reforms, though sweeping in content, did not have a great impact on schools in China. There were few provinces under the control of the Peking regime, and, because military requirements were given a higher priority in the warlord government, lack of revenue kept the educational system in a permanent state of financial crisis.<sup>25</sup> But at least to the Deweyites, education in China was moving in the right direction. There was room for cautious optimism.

During the early 1920s, Ts'ai continued to press for educational reforms from his position as chancellor of Peking University. He stringently opposed Christian missionary schools for their religious influence on Chinese students, and he was an active participant in the anti-Christian movement of 1922.<sup>26</sup> He also continued to oppose central government interference in the educational system. In a famous article written in 1922, "The Independence of Education" (Chiao-yu tu-li), he claimed that politics "is the concern for immediate profit, on a short-term basis," while education thinks in terms of long-term benefit.<sup>27</sup> Political parties attempt to create conformity and eliminate individuality, and are transient organizations which cannot provide a firm foundation for education.<sup>28</sup>

### Thermidore

As it turned out, 1922 was to mark the peak of the liberal tide in Chinese education. In the South, the Canton government under Kuomintang control had its own ideas about education, and in February 1926 had created an Educational Administrative Committee to provide leadership for education at all levels.<sup>29</sup> A basic element in the Kuomintang program was party control over education during Sun's famous second stage of political tutelage, as China moved toward constitutionalism. Many party figures were highly critical of the educational liberals, of the Americanization of the educational system, and in particular of the emphasis on internationalism and passive resistance in the new textbooks.<sup>30</sup> A xenophobic anti-imperialism had been on the rise in China, particularly since the May 30 incident in 1925. Criticism of the "old men" around Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and Peking University, and against their stress in humanitarianism, decentralization and educational independence, grew in Kuomintang party circles.<sup>31</sup> In September 1925, for example, the *Chung-hua Educational Review* published an article by Ch'en Ch'i-t'ien critical of the post-war idealism and internationalism symbolized by the 1922 reforms, and calling for more emphasis on patriotism and on the culture of China in the educational system.<sup>32</sup> At about the same time an article in another magazine criticized the educators around Ts'ai and demanded a national system of education under strong party control.<sup>33</sup> Philosophical support for this position was often provided by the ideas of Fichte and Hegel, and it was maintained that nationalism was not necessarily contradictory to democracy and the development of a modern society.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See Ts'ai's complaint in *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei hsuan chi* [Selected Works of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei] (6 vols. Taipei: Book World, 1967), Vol. 1, pp. 20-24.

<sup>26</sup> Ts'ai, "Chiao-yu tu-li-i" [The Independence of Education], CC, pp. 523-524.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 523.

<sup>29</sup> Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei *et al.*, *Wan Ch'ing* . . . , p. 107.

<sup>30</sup> Chiu Sam Tsang, pp. 109-116.

<sup>31</sup> Leon Wieger, *Chine Moderne*, Vol. VI, pp. 82-84.

<sup>32</sup> Cyrus Peake, p. 125.

<sup>33</sup> Article by Shun-sheng (pseudonym) in *Chueh-wu tsa-chih* [Awakening Magazine], cited in Wieger, VI, pp. 139-140.

<sup>34</sup> Peake, p. 127.

Despite this opposition, Ts'ai and other reformers were briefly successful in persuading the Kuomintang leadership of the feasibility and desirability of their decentralization plan and in 1927, during the height of the Northern Expedition, the Kuomintang leadership, despite earlier plans for party-controlled education, approved a new administrative system for education based on the university regional system in France. The country was divided into basically independent university areas, with the president of each institution responsible for the management of education in the area under his jurisdiction, thus establishing a regional rather than a centralized system of education. The new system was called the University Council (Ta-hsüeh-yuan), replacing the old Ministry of Education. Ts'ai now resigned as chancellor of Peking University and became chairman of the council. Because central control was still limited, only three university areas (*ta-hsüeh-ch'ü*) were established, in Peking, Kiangsu and Chekiang.<sup>35</sup>

During his brief period of renewed ascendancy in educational affairs, Ts'ai returned to other educational topics which had occupied his attention in previous years. In the declaration announcing the establishment of the University Council in January 1928, he listed as the three basic goals of the new system: (1) to carry out scientific research and universalize the scientific method, (2) to cultivate the habit of labor, and (3) to increase interest in art.<sup>36</sup> His declaration indicated that the new council would take specific action to forward these goals, all three of which had been cornerstones of his earlier proposals for cultural revivals as chancellor of Peking University. In order to raise the dignity of manual labor, so long despised by the literati in China, intellectuals were to be encouraged to engage in physical labor whenever possible. The declaration stated that a Laborers' University (Lao-tung Ta-hsüeh), comprising both secondary and university levels, would be established, in which students would engage in physical labor as well as their studies. Night classes would be set up for rural and urban laborers. In the field of art, so far a neglected part of Ts'ai's own program for educational reform, a music academy and art schools were planned, and an all-China art education system was proposed.

The new University Council system was to be short-lived, however. The rising nationalist opposition, whose views conflicted sharply with those of the liberal educators, was anxious to subordinate education to political needs. For many elements in the Kuomintang, such as party stalwart Ch'en Kuo-fu, students and education in general could and should be important instruments for expanding Kuomintang political influence and achieving social reforms in China.<sup>37</sup> The conflict was a very concrete one; Ch'en wanted strong centralized direction of the educational system, under strict party control, in order that education could be used as a means for propagating the party policy and destroying its enemies. Students should be organized in mass organizations to harness their idealism for spreading the political message of the Kuomintang. For Ts'ai and the liberals, these proposals were anathema. Education should be protected from government and party direction, or it would become a mere tool in political struggles. Students should be encouraged to devote their time entirely to education, not to demonstrate and operate as an arm of the party. China's problems required solutions that only an educated elite could provide, Ts'ai believed, and it would be an incredible waste to

<sup>35</sup> Ts'ai, "Wo tsai chiao-yu-chieh ti ching-yen" [My Experience in Educational Circles], CC, pp. 681-683.

<sup>36</sup> Ts'ai, "Ta-hsüeh-yuan kung-pao fa-k'an-tz'u" [Preface to the Bulletin of the University Council], in Sun Te-chung (ed.), *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei i-wen lei-ch'ao* [A Posthumous Selection of the Writings of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei] (Taipei: Fu-hsing shu-chü, 1961), pp. 354-355.

<sup>37</sup> For a more extensive treatment of this issue, see John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

use these educational resources for agitational purposes.<sup>38</sup> Opposition came to a head at the Fifth Plenum of the Central Executive Committee, where delegate Ching Heng-i advocated the restoration of the educational ministry system. There were a variety of criticisms raised against the University Council system: that it accepted scholarship and university education at the expense of basic education at lower levels; that it created insuperable administrative problems; that it was run by an irresponsible clique of educators; that it resulted in an unequal distribution of financial resources.<sup>39</sup>

The results of the struggle were unfortunate, from Ts'ai's point of view. Pressure to place education under the centralized control of government and party was too strong to resist, and within a year the government leaders decided to abolish the University Council and restore the Education Ministry, putting education back in a position where the party, not the educators, could dictate policy. Ts'ai objected to the decision, but had few supporters, and ultimately had to acquiesce in the change. As a gesture to placate the old educator, the government accepted one aspect of the University Council system, the newly-established academic research institute, the Academia Sinica (Chung-yang Yen-chiu-yuan), which had been set up in late 1927 with Ts'ai as president and which was designed as a high-level institute to encourage the development of research in the natural and social sciences in China, and which Ts'ai would head for the remainder of his active life.

With the University Council abolished, and a new Ministry created in late 1928, Ts'ai found the current running against his emphasis on scholarship, on educational independence, and in the direction of state and party control. The main result of the changes of 1928 had been to dismantle many of the reforms which he had so painstakingly advocated during the previous decade. The new educational program, eventually put into effect in April 1929, had as its aims the realization of Sun's Three People's Principles (nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood) and the utilization, in order to achieve national unity and a sense of identity, of traditional ethical concepts such as filial piety, loyalty, sincerity and righteousness. Electives were to be eliminated, religious schools were regulated, and textbooks were to stress nationalism, political consciousness, anti-imperialism and social freedom, rather than individualist democracy.<sup>40</sup>

On one issue, however, Ts'ai's views were ultimately victorious. Communist activity in the student movement was on the increase, and the Kuomintang leadership, concerned over communist infiltration of student organizations, began to discourage student activism and interference in politics. For the wrong reason, from Ts'ai's point of view, students were now encouraged to concentrate on their studies. For the most part, however, the new trend in education was a defeat for the ideas he had propagated for so many years, a rejection of humanitarianism, individualism and educational independence. Although during the final decade of his life he continued to speak out on educational matters—continuing to promote the concept of mass education and language reform—his influence was clearly on the wane. Financial resources, teachers and schools were simply not available in sufficient quantities and only slightly over 20 percent of all school-age children were actually in school.<sup>41</sup> Japanese

<sup>38</sup> For example, see Ts'ai, "Ch'ing t'ung-ling hsieh-sheng pu te kan-she hsiao-cheng chih t'i-an" [A Proposal that Directions be Circulated that Students Should No Longer Interfere in School Administration], CC, p. 832.

<sup>39</sup> Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei *et al.*, *Wan Ch'ing* . . . , p. 113.

<sup>40</sup> Chiu Sam Tsang, p. 116.

<sup>41</sup> Ts'ai, "Yu Ye Ch'u-t's'ang teng lien-shu wei t'i-ch'u shih-shih i-wu chiao-yu piao-pen chien chih pan-fa-an yuan-wen" [A Joint Proposal with Ye Ch'u-t's'ang and Others on the Question of Realizing Obligatory Education], in *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei hsuan chi*, III, p. 163. The Second All-China Educational Conference in 1928 had called for the realization of universal education within 20 years.

aggression and the rise of militant fascism in Europe made internationalism and hopes for the *Ta Tung* to come seem ludicrous. As for his concern for a humanist education, unemployment conditions for educated Chinese in the 1930s led the government to stress practical subjects and discourage the entrance of students into such fields as law, literature and art.

### The Legacy of Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei

The period during which Ts'ai was active in educational affairs was one in which vast changes took place in the Chinese educational system, with momentous effects on the nature of society itself. As a result of his brief stint as Minister in 1912 trends barely discernible during the late Ch'ing period—development of vocational education, female education, universal education—were put into more concrete form. Later, with his active support further changes were instituted, culminating in the crowning success of the liberals, the educational program of 1922. The 1922 program should be seen not simply as the monument to Dewey's influence in China, but to Ts'ai's as well. Equally important, perhaps, were his reforms at Peking University, which turned the institution into a scholastic institute competitive in talent and quality of education with the better universities abroad, a conduit for the assimilation of the vast resources of world knowledge by a new Chinese educated elite.

Concentration on such specific contributions, however, should not obscure his role as an educator in the broadest sense. China, in the early republic, needed more than anything else, a focus for the frustrations and ideals inspired by her humiliation at the hands of the West, and the failure of her revolution in 1911. Ts'ai, on taking charge of Peking University, provided such a focus. In his hiring practice he brought to the capital the most illustrious figures of China's budding cultural revival. By his receptivity to new thought and his encouragement of the educated youth of China to expand the frontier of knowledge, he provided the moral leadership necessary for a renewed and strengthened sense of destiny and determination. In countless articles and speeches Ts'ai stimulated debate over the destinies of the nation. It is no exaggeration to say that Peking University, under his direction, became the stimulus of a reviving society. Without the leadership of the university, the New Culture movement would have lacked the focus it needed to spark demands for change in China. And without the intensity and fervor of the New Culture period, it is hard to imagine the political and social changes to come. From the halls of the university came not only the intellectual leadership of republican China, but also the founding elite of the communist movement—its successor. Ts'ai's reforms have, in this sense, a prime importance in the unfolding of the Chinese political and social revolution.

Still, the defeat suffered by Ts'ai and his liberal colleagues in the late 1920s was destined to be a lasting one. The educational philosophies of the Nanking republic after 1927 and of its communist successor in Peking have not been in the liberal mold. Government control and an emphasis on national goals are strongly characteristic of the educational system, both on the mainland and in Taiwan. In the light of retrospect, Ts'ai's failure to move educational trends into strongly humanist channels is not hard to understand. Twentieth century China has been beset with mammoth social problems and suffered deeply from internal division. In these circumstances, most reformers have naturally relied on the unifying force of nationalism and centralized political control to mobilize the population to realize essential national goals. Ts'ai's desire to foster a "One World" spirit among Chinese youth was seen as likely to lead to an unnecessary weakening of the Chinese sense of national identity at a crucial period in

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her history. Perhaps, too, Ts'ai tended to overemphasize advanced scholarship at the expense of basic education at the elementary level.

What was Ts'ai's legacy to Chinese education? On the face of it, his views, like Dewey's, were washed away in the deepening political struggle in mid-century. Even his persistent wish that man should not forget the quality of life—the beauty of the environment and the spiritual development of mankind—in his inexorable drive to improve his material existence, has seemingly had little meaning in modern China, where material problems remain paramount. But his message, curiously, was not lost on all of his young listeners. For at least one young man, working in the library at Peking University in 1919, in later life would have to agree with one aspect of Ts'ai's teaching—that physical modernization, by itself, was not the mark of a great society. Chairman Mao may not agree with Ts'ai on the means to the final utopia, but he evidently shares Ts'ai's view that true social progress lies in the heart of man, not solely in his works. Such, at any rate, now appears to be the deeper meaning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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# 蔡元培的人文主義與中華民國的教育改革

(中文摘要)

戴維翰

中國與西方在十九世紀直接衝突以後，中國舊社會的各方面，包括傳統教育制度，都逐漸起了變化。從張之洞的教育改革建議以至科舉制之廢除，中國的教育無論在組織或本質方面都逐步進入了分解的過程。辛亥革命以後，中國教育在民國初期會有一段時間大量接受歐美自由民主思潮的影響。迨北伐成功之後，國民政府時代的教育方針則又與之有異，而是以民族主義為前提，以滿足國家需要為目的。這頗與傳統的儒家教育觀點相類似。

一九一九年，美國教育家杜威曾經訪華演講。杜威以及他的中國門人如蔣夢麟、胡適等，在中國教育界的確起了不可磨滅的作用。但是杜氏和他的門人並不是當時唯一主張中國教育改革的學派。另外有一位極力推行改革的教育家就是蔡元培(1868—1940)。蔡氏本人兼擅中國和歐西學問；杜威的教育論理在中國流傳以前，蔡元培已經致力於建立一個着重自由、人文、和以發展個人為主旨的教育制度。蔡氏的教育論固然有一部分和杜威的思想相吻合，但他的理論根源卻是多方的。要之，蔡氏認為人類社會的最主要因素是應強調其精神的本質，而不應專依物質力量來建設現代化的富強國家。

一九一二年，蔡元培被任為中華民國的第一屆教育部長。在他的任內，蔡氏試求推行以自由政策為綱領的教育制度。但因袁世凱和其同黨人對之仇視，當年夏天蔡氏便辭去教育部長之職，重訪歐洲，至一九一六年始返國就任北京大學校長之職。北大在中國高等教育界佔有領導地位，蔡先生也是當時新文化運動及教育改革方面的一位主要人物。在他與杜威派的知識分子合作之下，北洋政府於一九二二年頒施了新的教育政策，着重於平民普及教育，並以培養個人特長、發揮以仁為主的教育為宗旨。



北伐以後，國民政府施行新的教育方針，視教育為建立中央集權政體和富強有力國家的工具。這種方針可說是基於傳統式的「天下一統」概念上的。蔡元培的教育主張雖然曾經暫得成效，但是到一九三〇以後的十年內，他的影響卻隨着他的教育制度的解散而逐漸消失了。

蔡元培的教育思想是否已經在二十世紀中葉的社會動盪裡完全被淹沒了呢？我認為它並非消滅無踪。最近從中國傳來的消息很明白的告訴我們，當代中國的掙扎並不僅是物質建設和提高國際地位的問題。毛主席和他的同志們雖然與蔡元培在教育思想上有根本的差異，但他們似乎也共有一個大前提，就是：要社會前進，主要當靠人的思想和態度，不只靠他的行動。這也就是無產階級文化大革命更深的一層意義。

