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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

by

Jiang Liu

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Women's Education in the People's Republic of China" submitted by Jiang Liu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the changing role of women in education since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 up to the present. This is accomplished by an analysis of policies towards women and education during this period. These policies legally granted equal status to women in social, economic, cultural, educational, and domestic life in China.

An examination of the participation of women in Chinese society and especially their participation in education shows that Chinese women have made some progress, however, their total equality in social, economic, and educational fields has not been achieved. A gap between government claims and women's reality still remains.

This study also examines the history of women in China and looks at more recent events and the social structures in China; it explores the factors that contribute to the continuing inequality of women.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

China is in the process of a societal transformation, perhaps the most important one in Chinese history— the transition from a traditional society to a modern one. Although China's modernization efforts began in the mid-nineteenth century,[1] in such a large and populous country modernization is a lengthy and arduous task, it is a goal not easily gained in the relatively short span of a century and despite the major changes that have already occured, modernization will not be achieved until well into the twenty-first century. China is a country that has at times been difficult for the rest of the world to understand, the twentieth century has been marked by momentous changes that have often made China the focus of world attention.

The entire nation is now engaged in a new drive on an unprecedented scale to accelerate modernization processes. Women's issues, and one of these is the education of women, are gaining importance both for women themselves and for the nation. In the thirty-seven years since the establishment of the People's Republic,

[1] Chinese feudal society lasted from circa 476 B.C. to 1840- the date of the First Opium War— when the feudal state was turned into a semi-feudal, semi-colonial nation. The transition stage in the social order lasted from 1840 until the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

Chinese women have made considerable progress when compared with the pre-1949 period, but there can be no doubt that much of what is desirable for the life, status, and true equality of Chinese women remains undone. This has become increasingly clear since the recent adoption of an open policy that has resulted in a widened perspective which calls more than ever for a review of women's issues and the problems of female education.

In ancient China, the very term **women's issues** as we understand it today, was non-existent, nor were there any institutions for girls' education, for both were products of the historic changes in the social order in the mid-nineteenth century. The impact of foreign (western) culture, and the role of the early reformists on women's issues and specifically on women's education cannot be underestimated. The May Fourth Movement of 1919 illustrates the two different trends— liberalism and Marxism— that began to influence the women's movement in China, but the traditional ways of life did not simply disappear in the new light. It is no exaggeration to say that traditionalism is a key barrier to women's emancipation that remains even to today. Liberal thinking and Marxist ideology though differing on many points, have the common objective of attacking those deeply embedded traditional attitudes and practices that stand in the way of China's progress, and particularly women's progress.

Since the inception of the People's Republic of China, Marxism has been a predominant ideological influence, albeit one that has

been modified with reference to the local conditions. Before going on to examine the progress of women over the past thirty-seven years, it is useful to examine Marxist views on women that underpin the changes in China since 1949.

While Marx and Engels do not write specifically on women, in Engels' well-known treatise on **The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,** there are a number of penetrating studies with relevance to women's concerns. Both Marx and Engels attach great importance to women's liberation as an essential component of universal social emancipation. They often quote the French utopian socialist Fourier, "In any given society, the degree of women's emancipation is the natural measure of the general liberation."[2]

For Marx and Engels, the general revolution cannot succeed without the participation of women and their ultimate liberation, and as a corollary-- it is impossible to have a true revolution if women fight apart from the context of the great universal social movement. For Marx and Engels the relationship between women's liberation and the proletarian revolutionary cause is inextricably bound. For Marxists, the two are dialectically associated. In this often quoted passage, Engels summarizes the chief Marxist tenet on women:

[2] Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Tran. Edward Aveling, (London: George Allen & Univin Ltd., 1944), p. 17-18.

> "The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry which not only permits of the participation of women in production in large number, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domistic work also into a public industry." [3]

Some contemporary feminists charge that Marxist theory on women's issues is inadequate, because Marxists subordinate sexual inequality to class struggle.[4] These writers point out that sexual inequality does not simply disappear when class oppression ends and they cite the Chinese and the Soviet cases as examples of this failure in Marxist theory. Contemporary feminists also dismiss the old argument that holds women's inferiority as stemming from their biologically weaker constitution; they believe that patriarchy is universal in human society.[5] Engels' assertion that the family as an economic unit will disappear from the scene in the future is taken as a proof of their own view that the family is the cause of sex inequality.

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[3] Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York: International Publishers, 1972), p. 221.

[4] See Kate Millet, Sexual Politics (New York: Boubluday & Company Inc., 1970); see Charnie Guettel, Marxism and Feminism (Toronto: Hunter Rose Co., 1974); see Phyllis Andors, The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); see Judith Stacey, Patriarchy and the Socialist Revolution in China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[5] Ibid.

Following in this view Kate Millet says:

> "...patriarchy is a governing ideology without peer; it is probable that no other system has ever exercised such complete control over its subjects... patriarchy has a still more tenacious and powerful hold (than class) through its successful habit of passing itself as nature." 6

> "It must be clearly understood that the arena of sexual revolution is within the human consciousness even more preeminently than it is within human institutions; so deeply embedded is patriarchy that the character structure it creates in both sexes is perhaps even more a habit of mind and a way of life than a political system." 7

Critiques such as Millet's suggest that while class transformation is a necessary condition for women's emancipation, it is not a sufficient one. Only when their own efforts are combined with those of the entire nation will women be released from the bondage of traditionalism and feudal patriarchy. Their task is arduous as women in particular are confronted with manifold challenges from the constraints of the social structure to the double burden of work and household duties, from male chauvinism to female belief in their own inferiority. The issues heralded by the May Fourth Movement-- "Down with Confucius"— have yet to be resolved. Today's modernization has produced a strange hybrid— the 'scientific Marxist', who calls for the promotion of science and democracy, and the resultant emancipation of women. Yet, women's emancipation is

6 Millet, p. 24.

7 Ibid. p. 89.

never automatic, it is impossible to achieve without a complete overhaul and a transformation in the people's psyche.

The problem of reconciling Marx and Engels ideas about the equality with modern feminism, parallels the difficulty of reconciling western ideology and practice with an eastern culture. From the very first efforts to modernize China the unresolved concern has been over what to adopt, and, as with current open policy, what is absorbed. Liberal conceptions of freedom and equality are mixed with orthodox doctrine and pragmatic modernization plans, making the clash between outdated traditionalism and modernity all the more severe.

Womens' problems (both in content and solution) vary from country to country. It is not only the theoretical systems that matter but the background of a nation— its social structure, ideological traditions, and history, is important and decisive. Marxism emphasizes the material base of society on which the superstructure is built. As significant as education is to women's equality and their struggle for liberation, it can develop only within the perimeters of the general social situation and women's status.

China is a tradition-bound nation. Whatever progress it proclaims and principles it asserts for women, a thousand-years of tradition continues to haunt her people. Socialist modernization is ongoing and far from complete, therefore, this study of the women's problems and female education will follow this evolving

line to try and judge how far the development pursues a road compatible with Marxist principles, and to what extent the old ways continue to be manifest. This study will examine two questions: first, how Marxist theory has been applied and 'customized' to China's circumstances; secondly, why social change and revolution has not translated into equality for women, in particular for female education.

After the introductory chapter, Chapter II gives a description of how traditional partriarchy has shaped women's subordinationt prior to 1949. Then a discussion of the women's movement in the national liberation and revolution process follows. This chapter provides the background for the change in women's position, especially in female education in the People's Republic of China. Chapter III deals with women's socio-economic and familial status since 1949, as well as some western insights and perspectives on women's problems in China. The observations, research, and comments from outsiders are useful when studying Chinese women's issues, yet almost none of these consider female education directly. Chapters IV through VI examine the changes in women's education since 1949 within the socio-economic context. Since no systematic information and empirical studies on female education in China have been carried out, the data and materials are obtained from various sources-- Chinese education yearbooks (1949-1983), China's women's federation reports, newspapers and magazines both from Chinese and western sources.

CHAPTER II

CHINESE WOMEN IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The road to emancipation since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 has been tortuous. Although the status of Chinese women and their access to education has been much improved, to many observers and especially to Chinese women themselves, sexual equality is far from complete.

In a country with a revolutionary tradition and with a socialist system since 1949, why have women not attained equality with men? Does the origin of this inequality lie in the patriarchal structure of China? What historical processes have so affected social standards? What social, economic, political, cultural and ideological causes account for the longevity of unequal sex-roles?

The Ancient Period

Perhaps an appropriate place to start this account is with one of the ideological fathers of modern China. In his work, **The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, Engels theorizes that women were equal in the era of primitive society, and that this primitive but egalitarian society was a matriarchy. But, says Engels, women began to lose their freedom and equality with the initiation of private property, or more explicitly, the oppression of women through class exploitation.[8]

[8] Engels, p. 129.

Archeological excavations give some evidence in support of Engels' view that a matriarchal system existed on the Chinese continent, patriarchy replaced it at least 5,000 years ago. This change was characterized by the emergence of inheritance of property through male lineage. As a result the eons long subordination and secondariness of women to men began.

Patriarchy in China has lasted from this early primitive period through the era when society was dominated by slave-owners during the three ancient states of Xia, Shang, and Zhou (about 2,100 B.C. to 771 B.C.), and into the feudal Imperial dynasty (Manchu dynasty 1644-1911).

Chinese civilization made patriarchy into a very sophisticated phenomenon. Politically and socio-culturally, Chinese feudalism was different from its European counterparts of the Middle Ages. Chinese feudalism is unique in that a higherly centralized and bureaucratized government supported by the feudal landlord system, ruled over the people in a large country and for such a long time.

Women in particular were heavily oppressed by these authorities: political authorities, clan authorites, theocratic authorities, all of whom were patriarchal authorities.[9] The position

[9] In the "Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan", Mao Zedong writes "A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) political authority; (2) clan authority; and (3) religions authority... As to women, apart from being dominated by these three systems, they are further dominated by men. These four kinds of authority— political, clan, theocratic authority and the authority of the husband— represent the whole ideology and institution of feudalism and patriarchy, and are the four enormous cords that have bound the Chinese people and particularly the peasants." Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Vol. 1, (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd. 1954), p. 45.

of females was tied both to this oppressive feudal structure and to traditonal Chinese philosophy which reinforced or legitimized women's lowly plight. According to traditional Chinese philosophy the world was made up of two complimentary elements: yang (the male) which stood for all things positive, bright, strong and active; and yin (the female) for all things negative, dark, weak and passive. In the feudal patriarchal society, a girl had to obey her father, a married woman her husband, and a widow her son. Obedience was absolute and unquestioned. Female infanticide, child brides, prostitution, footbinding and concubinage were legitimized. The maltreatment of female children began at birth.

The Feudal Period

The social structure based on slave ownership is considered to have been replaced by feudalism by 476 B.C.. Chinese feudalism reached its pinnacle in the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). During the Han dynasty the notorious "san gang", which literaly means "ropes" and refers to the social ethical code that defines the relationships between the ruler and his minister, between father and son, and between husband and wife developed. In each relationship, the latter must obey the former. "Wu chang" which means the cardinal feudal virtues, functioned as the official criteria for behaviour. In subsequent dynasties books were edited for girls education, such as **Nu Jie** (Precepts for Women), **Nu Er Jing** (Classic for Girls), **Lie Nu Zhuan** (Biographies of Sacrificed Women), and **Jia Fan** (Domestic Models). Through these books women

were instilled with "filial, piety, fraternal submission" and the idea that "men were superior and women were inferior."[10]

Even when there was a period of national prosperity, such as during the Tang dynasty (618-907), the lot of China's women did not improve. After the Tang dynasty, feudalism began to decline, yet, throughout the Song (960-1279), Ming (1368-1644), and the last Qing (1644-1911), the worst and most savage treatment of women was manifested. The custom of foot-binding which started in approximately the tenth century (Tang dynasty) was seen as a mark of gentility by the ruling class. Millions of women experienced the barbarous and painful process of footbinding that could end in permanent crippling. An old Chinese proverb goes, "Feet are bound, not to make them beautiful as a curved bow, but to restrain women when they go out of doors."[11]

Under the system of patriarchy the sexual division of labour was reinforced, with men doing outside work and women concentrating on household tasks. According to Confucius,

> "If women are entrusted with work involving contact with the outside, they will cause disorder and confusion in the Empire; harm will bring on the Imperial Court, and Sun and Moon...The Book of Odes denounces a clever woman who overthrows a state... Women must not be allowed to participate in the affairs of the government." [12]

10 Ida Belle Lewis, The Education of Girls in China (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1919), p. 7-8.

11 Katie Curtin, Women in China (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975), p. 10.

12 R. H. Van Gulik, "Sexual Life in Ancient China", Women in China, p. 86-87.

Women's participation and concern with matters outside the household was abhorred as the greatest of all evils and was cited as the cause of the downfall of the dynasties.

According to an old saw, "Only the untalented women are virtuous."[13] Women were deprived of the right to education, even in the rich or well-to-do families. It was believed that knowledge in women would only create trouble. Thus it was unnecessary and even harmful for a woman to be well educated. Women were totally cut off from opportunities for independence in political, economic and social activities.

Marriage was not based on love, but rather arranged through match-makers. Wedlock was "definitely decided... not by individual inclination, but by family interest."[14] Early betrothal and marriage were preferred, and the groom's family initiated the transaction. After marriage the residence pattern was patrilocal in a culture that practised clan and surname exogamy; a woman moved at the time of her marriage to the home of her husband's family. A rich man could have as many wives and concubines as he liked and could afford. Women were not allowed to remarry and widows were encouraged to commit suicide to maintain faithfulness after the death of their husbands. Filial piety was identified as the foundation

[13] Margery Wolf and Roxan Witke, eds. Women in the Chinese Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 5.

[14] Engels, p. 14.

of vitue and the root [illegible]ivilization.

Feudalism in China declared that the purpose of taking a wife and begetting children was to "worship in the ancestral temple and continue the family line."[16] A woman could only gain certain status in family and society by being a breeder of male offspring to perpetuate the family name. If she could not fulfil this obligation, she would be disgraced, cast out of her husband's family and socially ostracized.

"A married woman is like a pony bought to be ridden or whipped at the master's pleasure."[17] Women were regarded as lower beings, household slaves, even as draught animals and men's appendages without legal right and independent personality.

Cheng I of the Song Dynasty wrote,

> "It is a trifle to have the suicide of a woman refusing to eat, but it is an event of the utmost significance when a woman losses her chastity." 18

This became a maxim followed by the whole society until it was attacked during the democratic movement of 1911.

Confucianism is the main target of attack in **Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China.** In it, Judith Stacey links Confucianism to the traditional Chinese family's practice of carrying

15 Xia Jing, p. 3.

16 Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke eds. Women in China, p. 2.

17 Curtin, p. 11.

18 Cultural Relics (Beijing: People's Press, 1974), p. 7.

on the male line (patrilineality) and bringing in women-folk from the outside into the villages of the menfolk in exogamous marriages (patrilocality).[19] The position of Chinese women as described in these pages is not unique to China. Hence, Stacey's analysis notwithstanding. Confucianism may have provided a unique Chinese justification of it, but can not be its cause.

As Phyllis Andors points out that in the traditional system all the legitimate female roles were familial ones.

> "In China the family was the crucial unit of production, consumption and socialization. It was a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal institution which embodied a strict sexual and generational division of labour... Hence female subordination was a central feature of familial system." 20

Delia Davin writing about the "sadistic feudal society with its evil practices of concubinge, prostitution, foot-binding, encouragement of women's suicide in defence of chastity and perpetual widowhood," says that these misfortunes for Chinese women were intensified by the strength of patriarchal ideology and its religious expression, the ancestor cult, to which women could contribute only as bearers of sons.[21]

19 Judith Stacey, Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China (Berkerly: University of California Press, 1983).

20 Phyllis Andors, "Women Liberation in China: A Continuing Struggle", China Notes No. 2 & 3, 1984, p. 287.

21 Delia Davin, Women-Work: Women And The Party in Revolutionary China (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 5.

Similarly, Kay Anne Johnson in **Women Family and Peasant Revolution in China** sees the kinship system as strongly imbedded in Chinese society and culture. "Marriage, family and kinship practice have defined and shaped women's place in Chinese society more than any single set of factors."[22]

The reasons for such a static and slow to change society were manifold. China from the beginning had a continental culture shut-off from the outside world. Economically, there were only small-scale agriculture and handicraft industries, under the despotic rule of the dynasties, with little opportunity for commodity exchange. Under feudal ideology personal identity was devalued, especially so for women; underdevelopment and sex inequality came with traditionalism. The strong-hold of age old traditions was hard to break.

The Crumbling of Feudalism

By the eighteenth century, feudalism began to unravel. Feudal dogma was being questioned, ridiculed and criticized. The cause of women's liberation attracted the attention of ever greater number of people. From the eighteenth century through to the eve of the First Opium War (1840), there were many people, including Cao Xueqin (1715-1763), the author of the novel **The Dream of the Red Chamber** who created symbols of rebellion against feudal dogmatism. The

[22] Johnson, p. 3.

novelist Li Ru-zhen (1763-1830) wrote in **Flower in the Mirror** the story of 100 gifted women, who did extremely well in the examination and became officials. The book not only challenged the prevailing mentality which despised women, but also elevated the position of women to equal that of men. At that time China did not yet have a class or society that could accept this kind of progressive thought, so it remained as a latent stream that surfaced sporadically.

From the eighteenth century on there are accounts of peasant uprisings where female equality was among the demands. In the Taiping Peasant Uprising (1850-1864), edicts were issued in which the sale of brides, footbinding and prostitution were forbidden; widows were permitted to remarry, women could join the women's army; girls could attend school, take examinations and become officials. By the time the capital was established in Nanjing there were forty women's armies each with 2,500 soldiers. But the Taiping leaders extolled the Confucian principle that women should obey men, and concubinage was practised.

> "In spite of the contradiction and inconsistencies of the Taiping in practice, the utopian ideals and military exploites of the women members passed into the folklore of the villages and the experience of the Taipings clearly indicated that women formed one of a number of oppressed groups in the social structure which could potentially contribute to a movement to improve both their sexual and class position." 23

23 Elizabeth Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China (London: Rontledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 41.

By the nineteenth century, the Manchu dynasty showed all the symptoms of social decline, and was severely handicapped by the internal problems of famine, court corruption, and uprisings. The Empire dynasty (1644-1911) was forced open in the mid-nineteenth century by foreign gunboats and merchants. Though it was a painful experience for China's people with innumberable sacrifices, it marked the dawn of modern Chinese history. A western wind was blowing to the east. The Manchu dynasty in order to survive had to consider "reforms"— one of which was the abolition of Civil Service and Court Examination.[24] A series of "new systems" were adopted by the Manchu hierachy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This included a modern system of education which was started in 1897 and which brought with it a trace of hope for women's education. The upsurge of women's appeal for education and emancipation had started.

The Beginning of Schools for Girls

Missionaries in China pioneered the establishment of schools and colleges for girls. The first of these was the Southeast Comprehensive School for Girls in Ningpo, Zhejiang province, set up

[24] The Civil Service and Court Examination System can be traced back to the Sui-Tang period (960-1279) when the candidates (males only) for official positions were recruited by competitive examination. To succeed in the examination, the candidates had to recite all the Confucian classics, central to which was a patriarchal philosophy. This rigorous examination system was finally abolished in 1905.

by the British missionary Miss Aldersey in 1844. Others followed, for example, the Episcopal Mission in Shanghai in 1852, the American Board in Fuzhou in 1853, and the Presbyterian Board in Guangzhou in 1853.

In 1858 a treaty with the American, English and French governments allowed the propagation of their faiths and the setting up of missionary schools in China. Gradually more missionary schools for girls were opened by American and British missionaries, the Germans, Norwegians, Swedish and Swiss followed.[25] There were four-year lower primary schools, three-year higher primary schools and four-year middle schools. There were also women's colleges: North China Women's College in Beijing, Ginling Women's College in Nanjing, Women's College in Fuzhou and Guangzhou Christian College. Women in these colleges were mostly trained as nurses and teachers.

The course of study in the missionary schools followed the curriculum of the West. Girls were taught Christian morals and doctrine. Bible study was given special emphasis so as "to bring girls more closely in touch with Christian doctrine and perchance to win them to a belief in Christianity". Home economics was emphasized and obligatory.[26]

[25] See Lewis, The Education of Girls in China; Margaret E. Burton, The Education of Women in China (New York: Flemming H. Revell, 1911); Mary Raleigh Anderson, Protestant Mission School for Girls in South China (Mobile, AL: Heite-starke, 1943).

[26] Lewis, p. 20.

It is difficult to evaluate the impact of missionary schools for girls in China, since all the source materials avialable were written by missionaries. However, the missionaries can be credited with opening the first girl schools (1844) and with emphasizing that women must share in educational opportunities. Still only a very small percentage of Chinese girls could attend the missionary schools.

Chinese efforts to establish women's schools date back to the late nineteenth century. Reformers advocated women's education in newspapers and magazines. "As the citizens are getting weaker, and the nation is degenerating, we begin to realize the importance of women's education... If the women of the country do not make demands or help themselves; even if many men give them right, they cannot obtain them."[27] They believed that the oppression of women was due to the lack of knowledge on the part of women, thus if women were educated, the oppression would disappear.

At the same time, Chinese private institutions for girls were being set up. The first one was established in Shanghai in 1897 with an enrolment of 16 girls. By 1906, there were five girls' schools with 250 girls.[28] Chinese women who had lived in

27 Bobby Siu, The Fifty Years of Struggle: The Development of the Women's Movement in China 1900-1949 (Hong Kong: Revomen Publication Company, 1975), p. 31.

28 Esther S. Lee Yao, Chinese Women: Past and Present (Mesquite: Ide House Inc., 1983), p. 139.

seclusion and inferiority for centuries, were also going to other countries to pursue their education. In 1902, 8 women went by private sponsorship to study in Japan.[29]

There were revolutionary feminists, such as Qiou Jin (1875-1907). She was among those who went to Japan to study and returned to establish girls' schools in China and later to publish a women's newspaper. In one of her articles **A Respectful Address to My Two Hundred Million Women Compatriots in China**, Qiou Jin attacked footbinding, the lack of freedom in marriage and the social custom which prevented women from remarrying or from receiving education. She rejected the idea that men should be respected and women subjected, that virtuous women were those without talents. In an effort to promote the education of women in 1905, she founded a short intensive training course in Japan for women teachers and encouraged Chinese women to come and attend.[30]

Qiou Jin and her comrades pointed to the concept of women's education as a means of strengthening the nation. The subordination of women was seen as political issue. Thus, the direction of solving the women's problem lay in the changing of the social structure. There was no hope for women's emancipation except by a revolution to overthrow the Manchu dynasty.

29 Helen Foster Snow, Women in Modern China (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967), p. 174.

30 Croll, p. 66.

In response to the threat of imperialism, and the growing pressure from Chinese intellectual interests to bring about reform, the Manchu bureaucrats reluctantly moved to establish women's schools in 1907. A new school of western languages to train interpreters had been set up by in Beijing in 1862, and later on some technical schools were established, but girls were not allowed to attend until 1907. At that time, two imperial decrees were issued to establish primary schools for girls and a teachers' training school for young women.[31]

The new education system was expected to solidify the country behind the concept of loyalty to the emperor. Education was still based on the classical traditions and according to a Confucian framework. Girls' schools were designed to promote methods that would enable women to contribute to family livelihood and family education. Girls education seldom went beyond such books as **Biographies of Women**, **Code for Women**, and **Domestic Models**.[32]

Although the women's movement before 1911 was elitist, it was also radical because it seriously challenged the dominant system of feudal social relations. The motives and activities of these progressive feminists influenced the later women's liberation movement in China.

[31] Lewis, p. 28-29.

[32] Yao, p. 149.

The rise of the Chinese feminist movement (due to both internal and external factors) at the turn of the century has been a focus for many western scholars. According to Andors, even before the turbulent decades of the early twentieth century, the ideal standards for female behaviour had begun to crumble. The combination of dynastic decay and imperialist depredation with incipient industialization had weakened the subsistence agrarian economy in many parts of China and thus pressured the traditional family structure upon which the Confucian value system rested.

The emergence of an urban industrial sector which provided employment opportunities for women, and the increasing number of educational institutions in cities that provided a limited number of opportunities for women from the middle and upper classes for schooling, are considered to be historically very important to the changing status of women. The later emergence of a women's movement was a product of both kinds of experience: the factory and the school. The role of missionaries's and their efforts to establish the early girls schools reinforced these internal factors.

The missionaries were "enthusiastic to reorient Chinese women's traditional beliefs through the educational process as well as to introduce Christianity to them... The opportunities provided by them offered different perspectives to Chinese girls."[33]

[33] Yao, p. 150.

It is evident that revolutionary thinking was present even prior to the 1911 Bourgeois Democratic Revolution with women's issues focusing on education, but the May Fourth Movement of 1919 is regarded as the real beginning of the Chinese feminist movement in the modern sense. Born in times of international war and national crisis, it was characterized by a desire for economic independence and political and social modernization. By providing a critique of traditional institutions and values, the movement created a context in which women's place in Chinese society could be questioned and challenged.

Despite this, as Andors points out, the situation in the countryside was different. Educational opportunities did not exist, and alternative employment opportunities were also nonexistent, and while war and famine disrupted families and villages, on the whole the rural areas presented a less dynamic and more intransigent situation for women.[34]

The Republican Period

Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) led the fight for the first republic in 1911. The abolition of footbinding, child-brides, female infanticide, arranged marriage, and concubinage were regarded as the goals of revolution. Sun was soon squeezed out of the government by the feudal warlords, however, a few enlighted members

[34] Andors, China Note, 1984, p. 3.

remained and some progress in education for women was made in the early twentieth century. On the whole the atmosphere was retrogressive, and reactionary forces dominated, the country was under seige by local warlords and the landlord class. Feminism lost its original vitality. The first tide of the women's movement was on the ebb. The right of education for women was limited to the four years of co-educational primary schooling.

The tide resurged in 1919 in the context of the May Fourth Movement, generally known as the modern Chinese Renaissance, both culturally and sociologically, though the revolution itself came later. The movement started with students' demonstration in Beijing protesting the concessions of Chinese sovereignty to Japan. Later the movement ushered in nationwide efforts to modernize China. The slogan was "Down with Confucius", "Up with Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy", which among other things promoted the emancipaton of mind, especially for a women's movement, and women's education.[35]

In this period under the influence of western liberalism and a variety of socialist and Marxist ideas, several women's organizations involving students and other urban women were set up. . Some demanded female suffrage, some advocated social and legal reforms, and still others turned to organizing the female working class. A number of working women joined unions and others participated in

35 Chou Tse-tung, The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 1967), p. 300-313.

strikes. Wages gave women some economic independence and enhanced their status within the family. The traditional Confucian system and women's place in Chinese society were challenged by the urban experience in the early decades of the twentieth century.

During this period women were permitted to attend university or college. Beijing University accepted nine women students in 1920 and other universities followed gradually.[36] Women were taught to be independent citizens. Ideas from western writers were discussed. Women's struggle against arranged marriage, and for an education often obtained public support. The number of women students, however, remained low due to traditional patriarchal and feudal structure and the poor financial situation of the nation.

This renaissance took place in the context of the world situation after World War I, and the enormous impact it had on the nation persists even to today. The women's movement widened its perspectives. Some women expected at the least— to live with dignity and as equals. They made age-old traditions their target and wanted to wipe out all the barriers in their way to emancipation. A temporary coalition of the Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Communist Party (CPC) in the early twenties adopted common policies that included the recognition of sex equality which won over great numbers of urban and rural women. Women's organizations and unions were set up. Education for women was expanded. Compared with 1906,

36 Beijing Review, March 9, 1986. p. 4.

when there were 848,220 students in private and government schools and only 306 were girls (0.04% of the total), by 1922, there were 417,820 girls among 6,615,772 students (6.3%).[37]

The subsequent National Revolution (1924-1927) under the KMT and the CPC alliance saw a number of women from the CPC and KMT working together for revolution and equality. Many women wore grey uniforms and had short hair-cuts, and participated enthusiastically in the revolution. They organized schools to train women in propaganda techniques and sent them to other areas to teach women about women's rights and urge them to organize into unions.

From the beginning, the CPC's policy towards women was premised in the belief that "the liberation of women will be assisted through the general liberation of the proletariat. When the proletariat gains political power, women will be liberated... Our movement is the key step to the goal of women's liberation. Within the system of private property, the real liberation of women is impossible."[38] Women's problems were seen by the CPC as an automatic result of the socio-political transformation. The revolution had to rely on the masses of worker peasant men and women, as well as on large numbers of intellectual youth (both male and female) from the urban areas. One year after the founding of the CPC in 1922 a Woman's Department was established to help organize and lead women in revolutionary

37 Snow, p. 176.

38 Sui, p. 151.

activites. At its Second Congress, the CPC proclaimed the objective of "the unlimited right to vote for all workers and peasants, regardless of sex; protection for female and child labour, and the abolition of all legislation restricting women."[39] Women communists criticized women's rights groups as being reforming elitists and as bourgeois who lacked strong organization, failed to relate to women workers and the poor masses, and ignored the need for revolution. These feminists were also criticized for concentrating on sexual politics and incorrectly identifying men as the oppressor, rather than concentrating on the entire social system as the root cause of the proleterian oppression and exploitation.

In the early 1920s, the CPC Women's Department focussed on organizing female labour. In many cities, the majority of industrial workers were women, due to the predominance of light industry. In the 1920's labour unions were growing and women workers were becoming active. In Shanghai, 24 silk factories including 20,000 women workers participated in strikes demanding increases in salaries, reduction in working hours, improvement in working conditions, and the right to unionize. Between 1922 and 1925, 100,000 women were organized under the Women's Department.[40]

From 1924 to 1927 when the CPC and KMT joined in alliance, various women's organizations were set up among workers and students.

39 Johnson, p. 43.

40 Snow, p. 247.

By 1927, when the KMT and CPC had unified China into a single national republic, women in the cities and women in the rural areas were beginning to be organized within the revolutionary movement.

A manifesto was issued at the First National Party Congress in 1924, "In law, in commerce, in education and in society, the principle of equality between the sexes shall be recognized."[41] Between 1925 and 1927 the combined forces of the Nationalist (KMT) and Communist (CPC) waged a successful northern campaign against the local warlords, but Chiang Kai-chek's coup d'etat in 1927 against the Communist movement marked a drastic change in the situation. Women's organizations were destroyed and tens of thousands of workers and peasants were brutally executed, including 1,000 women activitists. "Some two or three hundred women were executed... for simply being caught with short haircuts, a symbol of empancipation."[42] Women's associations were eradicated in 1927. In the same year, the split between the KMT and the CPC led to different courses in the development of the women's movement.

After 1927, the CPC's first experience in governing was through peasant mobilization and developing rural bases. In the revolutionary bases (first in Jiangxi and then in Yanan), peasants were organized and various policies were instituted. Land reform was considered an important means to realizing the party's political

41 Sui, p. 64.

42 Curtin, p. 28.

and economic goals. Through land reform the CPC intended first of all to destroy the class of rural landlords; secondly, to improve the economic conditions of peasants by redistributing of the wealth of the landlord; thirdly, through land distribution to give peasants more incentive to produce crops. With land reform, women expected to be provided with legal rights to land, property, freedom of marriage, economic independence, and education. Women were also mobilized to join the CPC's war effort against the Japanese invaders and the KMT armies, as well as in economic activities. Through the unions women were organized to sew and provide food for the army, and to look after wounded soldiers, etc.. As more men joined the army, women began to do traditionally male tasks, such as driving horses and plowing, women also received millitary training. These activities changed the public image and more importantly the self-image of women. It showed that women were a significant revolutionary force, in sharp contrast with the traditional image of women as useless in public matters.[43]

To enable women to better participate in political and economic activities, literacy classes were held with texts such as "Women Work" or "Talk with Women". Women were encouraged to attend schools. Efforts were made to explain the proposed policies such as "extinguish the feudal forces", "struggle for the freedom of marriage", "cut the hair short and unbind the feet", "oppose the three

43 Davin, p. 50.

commands of obedience and four virtues". Women in the bases gradually gained the rights of land, property, and freedom of marriage. However, in a still largely tradition-bound and male dominated countryside, many policies aimed at improving the lot of women, or for generating greater equality met with strong resistance ans were not fully implemented.[44] The dominance of feudal-patriarchal values, the kinship system and a backward rural economy prevented women from fully benefitting from the new policies. "Yet the new policies and new roles forced on women by the wartime situation remained valuable experience in the post-1949 period."[45]

Between 1927 to 1949, the KMT government was preoccupied with militarization. Military expenditure, along with loan and indemnity services, accounted for 67% to 85% of the total expenditure of the KMT, leaving little for education. The KMT's emphasis on military spending contributed to a great famine that affected over 30 million people in eight provinces. Between 1937 and 1949, 10 to 15 million peasants died of starvation and it was not uncommon for three or four members of a family of seven to starve to death.[46]

44 See William Hinton, Fanshen (New York: Vinge, 1966); see Crook I. & D., Revolution in a Chinese Village: Ten Mile Inne (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1959); see Jack Belden, China Shake the World (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

45 Davin, p. 12.

46 Sui, Women of China: Imperialism and Women's Resistance 1900-1949 (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 64.

In the decade before the war against the Japanese (1937-1945), the KMT government initiated the "New Life Movement" which propogated feudal patriarchy including the principle of loyalty and filial piety to the leader, the worship of Confucius and the reading of classics. The KMT strictly controlled its feminist organizations and their activities were primarily limited to a few upper-class women.[47] It was another ebb tide for the women's movement, yet progressive and enlighted elements continued to fight hard for women's rights among the population. Although women's causes were widely propagated, especially in the urban areas, the great majority of women, especially those of peasant origin, had no access to work or education.

A survey of 16,786 villages in 168 areas and 38,256 peasants in 22 provinces in China done by John Lossing Beck in 1933 noted that, "only 30% of the males and 1% of the females had attended schools long enough to learn to read a common letter."[48] Some people believed that the problem of women's subordination sprang from the social constraints which were imposed on individual ability. Men were seen as the enemy of women, therefore women had to fight against men.

47 Davin, p. 22.

48 Man Rim Soon, "The Status of Women in China: Yesterday and Today", Asain Studies, Vol. XX, 1982, p. 4.

In 1930, Chinese writer Lu Xun wrote bitterly, "In contemporary society, not only do women become the puppets of men, but among themselves and men among themselves make each other into puppets...." The women's problem was not a predicament that could be solved by a few women having access to education.[49]

In summary, the women's movement in modern China underwent a series of ebbs and surges: the earliest wave of brilliant pioneers in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century was a result of the reformist and national revolutionary movement at the time. Though few in number, the initial development presented the first challenge against the feudal partriarchal system oppressive to women. The second upsurge in the eventful years following the May Fourth Movement in 1919, widened the scope of the women's movement by injecting western social political ideas. The movements in the 1920s and 1930s showed that the upgrading of women's status depended on the elimination of feudalist and imperialist encroachment and intervention. The struggle to get educational equality, economic independence and political participation was important, but the consequences of these struggles were limited. A few educated women in the cities did not mean that the status of the majority of women had been upgraded. Most women remained in their usual subordinate

[49] Lu Xun. "What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?" Selected Writings of Lu Xun ed. by Gladys Yang (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 150.

positions. As late as the 1940s, more than 80% of Chinese women were still under the yoke of landlords and factory owners. Working class women sold their labour to get a few cents and were ill-treated physically and mentally. Without the destruction of the entire feudal patriarchal structure, the fate of Chinese women would have remained unchanged.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

The emergence of China on the world stage as a socialist country in 1949 was marked by a significant change in the position of Chinese women. This change was catalysed by Marxist principles that social emancipation could not be acheived without the participation and the ultimate emancipation of all; by the CPC's past experience of relying on and effectively mobilizing the mass of women; and finally by the need to mobilize half of the population for the urgent task of national reconstruction.

The Status of Women: Political, Legal, Economic and Familial

The CPC and the government of the PRC stressed that the emancipation of women could not be attained without the participation of the female sex into public production.[50] Various measures were taken and a number of policies were implemented with the intention of placing women in a position of equal status with men in both the public and domestic spheres.

First of all, women were organized, national women's unions and federations were set up. Due to the government's policy of giving everyone a job with low pay, all women even those who were

50 Women in Transition (Beijing: China Women's Education, 1985), p. 12.

semi-literate and illiterate were given jobs. This was unprecedented in China, and ran counter to centuries of tradition and restriction of women to the household. As the Chinese Women's Federation stated:

> "The mobilization of women to participate in production is the most important link in the chain that protects women's own vital interests... it is necessary to promote the political status of women, their cultural level and to improve their livelihood, thereby leading the way to emancipation." 51

A large proportion of women entered into the labor force and began to participate in occupations which had hitherto been male preserves. This provided women with economic independence. In addition, their status in the family was elevated as they began to contribute more to family finances. There was a change in the attitude of society toward a woman who worked. Women were no longer confined by traditional roles.

From 1949 to 1959, female workers in the total labor force rose from 7.5% to 13.4%.[52] The Chinese government noted the importance of the role of women in ubrban industry. Policies like "anything a man can do, a woman also can do," and "equal pay for equal work" were adopted. Land reform was followed, giving women in rural regions access to land and equal right to participate in the labor force and in the political sphere. In 1950, the government proclaimed a law, which specifically granted women freedom of

51 Document of the Women's Movement in China (Beijing: All China Democratic Women's Federation, 1949), p. 15.

52 Employment for Women in China, p. 6.

marriage and divorce, and gave them the right to own and inherit property, all of this was a concerted attack on the feudal-patriarchal family and social system. The possibility of full participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life of society began to open to women, instead of being chattels of their husbands' families. Practices like footbinding, child brides, female infanticide, prostitution and polygamy were abolished. Men and women were made legal equals. In the 1950s, women took on a greater role in decision-making bodies. In Beijing, the proportion of female deputies of the district People's Congress doubled in four years from 13% in 1949 to 26.7% in 1954.[53]

Chinese women were freed from the poverty, political and economic insecurity and inequalities which had plagued the majority of them within the feudal order. There were improvements in the provision of basic needs for most of the population. However, even with these initial improvements, Chinese women were far from equal. In 1956, Deng Ying-chao, Vice-Chairman of the Women's Federation spoke out against the inadequacies of the training program for women cadres or leaders and certain discriminatory practices which still remained within the society.[54]

53 Cheng Chu-yuan, Scientific and Engineering Manpower in Communist China 1949-1963 (Washington D.C.: National Science Foundation, 1965), p. 145.

54 Document of Women's Movement in China, p. 125.

Changes in the position of women have developed unevenly reflecting the shifts and occasional convulsions in Chinese political and social institutions. The uneven effects of state policies are evident in the following years known as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960). During this period, all land was collectivized in the people's communes. Compared to women in the cities who had achieved equal pay with men, rural women received lower workpoints than men in the communes. For example, a man could get 10 points per day while a women could not get more than 7 to 8 points, even though women worked just as much as men. The state policy of equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex was guaranteed in the urban areas through a centralized wage system, but this policy was not carried out in the rural areas.

In the Great Leap more women were put to work, especially in the countryside where men were recruited to major constructions. That women should take on heavy farm work was justified by the policy-makers:

> "Women should shoulder agricultural production. Men's labour power is needed to open mines, expand machine-building industry, power plants, cement plants. These all call for new labor inputs. Generally speaking, these departments of industry employ mainly men labourers and provide only a few types of work that can be undertaken by women workers... Household chores, such as looking after children, sewing, and others, should generally be done by women." 55

55 E. Croll, Women in the Rural Development: the People's Republic of China (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1979), p. 26-27.

Women were asked to shoulder double burdens— to maintain their high performance both in and outside the home. At that time, there were few suggestions that husbands should share the household chores with their wives. As more and more women participated in production outside the home, they were left without enough time to take part in social and educational activities.

In 1962, the Women's Federation said:

> "Now that the broad masses of women have taken part in productive labour, can one say that there is no more work to be carried out among women?... For instance, though the broad mass of women are taking part in production, they still have many social problems in production, living and thought. The thought that women are inferior and dependent is present to greater or lesser degree among the women themselves, and in society the vestiges of feudal thought that women are contemptible cannot be thoroughly diminished within a short time... For this reason, it is not true to say that, there is no more work to be carried out among women, on the contrary, the work in this respect must be reinforced." 56

Explanations for the continuing secondariness of women are far more complex than this definition of the problem in almost exclusively ideological terms would suggest. It could be argued much more substantively that the underdevelopment of socio-economic structures had a more direct effect, and the lot of women was not merely a surviving remnant of the past feudal age. This does not mean that cultural constraints did not exist or that their removal was not pertinent to the elimination of womens' problems, but rather

56 Documents of the Women's Movement in China (Beijing: Women's Federation, 1963), p. 5.

that equal if not greater consideration needs to be allocated to those structures which inhibit the further redefinition of the role and status of women.

The years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) with their rampant ultra-leftism brought unprecedented difficulty for the entire nation. Feudal patriarchal ideology continued despite the official claim of "sexual equality." Women's unions and federations condemned as "revisionist products," were suspended. The interests of the mass of women were ignored. The sexual divison of labour was seen as appropriate. Peasant women still received lower work points than men. It was claimed that a differential in physical strength and skill made for low rates of pay among women. The socio-economic upheaval destroyed any possible improvement of the women's position. Alarming cases such as the kidnapping of women and forced marriages occurred. In the name of revolutionary purity an extraordinary degree of control was exerted over people's everyday life, from books read to clothes worn. Schooling as a whole, particularly higher education was drastically curtailed. Educational opportunities for all of China's youth, including women, were greatly reduced. Youth unemployment was chronic, especially among females who made up the majority of the youth who had neither education nor jobs. By 1979 there were 30 million unemployed young people, of whom 60% to 70% were women.[57]

57 Survey of World Broadcasts, September 21, 1979.

The post Cultural Revolution years, from 1976 on, are known as the modernization period, and has remarkable implications for women, both in opportunities and challenges. Modernization efforts demand both the active participation of more women, and large numbers of well-trained female personnel. Chinese women look to modernization of the country to promote and accelerate their goal of emancipation by completely redefining their domestic and social roles to improve their status and lives. Women are faced with new ways and prospects as well as difficulties.

The current reforms in China's modernization drive began with agriculture and have had some preliminary success in altering the situation in the countryside. The agricultural reforms have been improving the country's economic situation by introducing a number of new rural policies, notably the **System of Household Responsiblity Contract** in place of the collective labour system under the commune, as a result the rural economy has been diversified.[58]

Under the Contract System, peasants sign a contract with the production brigade for a task, such as, growing crops, breeding livestock, operating machines and building houses. Based on pre-agreed cost and target, the individual's or a household's remuneration is calculated in terms of work-points. Payment is made when the contract is over-fulfilled. Penalties are extracted for under-fulfillment.

58 "Discussion on the System of Responsibility for Output Quotas by Production Teams in Rural People's Commune", Economic Research, October 20, 1980.

Since the principle of "to each according to work" has been adopted, payment is linked to fulfillment of quotas irrespective of sex. Now, women in industry, the service sector, or sideline production may receive equal pay more often than in the past. For example, because women are encouraged to work in sideline production, such as raising domestic livestock, production of handicrafts, cultivating vegetables, etc., some women can even earn more than men, and some earn more than they would in a production brigade.

Another policy which may improve the position of women is the development of the service trade sector by allowing individual enterprise, which in turn will facilitates the transfer of surplus rural manpower from farm work into the towns. The statistics in 1982 indicate that there were 76,000,000 peasant women (about 20% of the rural labour force), of whom 40 to 70% were women working in township enterprises.[59]

The new rural policy entails some risks. Under the policy of "Let-some-get-rich-first," the discrepancy between the rich and the poor is wider, because of the principle of "the more work, the greater the reward." Rich families can earn much more than the poor ones. Under the new policy, women work with family members at the behest of the household head instead of going to work with other peasants in the brigade. The dark side is that women may once again be confined within the household. If the household

59 "Women's Work in China's Countryside", New China News Analysis.

exercises control over production, and payments are made to the head (in most cases male) of the household, the opportunities for women to become economically independent may become very limited. Left to itself, this policy could have the unwelcome side-effect of reinforcing women's subordination within the family.

In the urban areas, the current economic reforms, in particular, the open policy program of developing industries and service trades have increased the number and range of jobs for women. In the urban areas, 90% of women under the age of 55 are in the labour force.[60] (The rest are retired, disabled or elderly women).

According to the 1982 national census, the participation rate of people in the urban labour force was 90.92% of the working age population (i.e., 15 to 60 for men and 15 to 55 for women), among whom 56.3% was male and 43.7% was female.[61] Statistics indicate that in 1949 when the PRC was founded, there were about 600,000 women workers in the urban areas (7.5% of the total labour force). By 1983 there were 42,000,000 women in employment who constituted 36.5% of the total labour force.[62]

60 Employment for Women in China (Beijing: All China Women's Federation, 1985), p. 6.

61 "Occupation of the Employed Population", Beijing Review (May 14, 1984), p. 24-25.

62 Women in Transition (Beijing: Women's Federation, 1984), p. 8.

Table 1 shows the female participation rate in employment for each age group in 1982. The proportion in the 20 to 24 age group was 90.4%, the 25 to 29 group 88.8%, the 30 to 34 age group 88.8%, and the 35 to 54 age group 74.7%. The younger the age group, the higher its proportion in employed labour force. The disparities between the proportion of male and female is smallest in the younger age groups. Indeed in the 15 to 19 age group, female participation rate is 7.3% points higher than that of male, probably because females have fewer opportunites to attend middle school. Among 20 to 24 year olds, the male participation rate is 5.8% points higher than the female participation rate, which indicates that males have more opportunities than females to be employed. This differential increases so that by age 35 to 54 the male participation rate is 22.2% points higher than that of women.

The rapid development of the economy and establishment of new industries have expanded women's employment. In textiles, medicine, and teaching about half are women. Women have begun to enter into new spheres, for instance, in the 1983 official report of the electronic industry, over 40% of the 1.3 million workers were women.[63] In the oil industry, 30% of the total work force were women. The high representation of women in the labor force is evident in figures from the 1982 census. 43.4% of workers in the services trades were women and 40.3% women were in industry. In education,

63 Women in China, (November 1984), p. 1.

TABLE 1

1982 CENSUS ON URBAN LABOUR FORCE BY SEX (%)

Age	Male	Female
15 - 19	70.5	77.8
20 - 24	96.2	90.4
25 - 29	98.6	88.8
30 - 34	98.8	88.8
35 - 54	96.9	74.7

Source: WOMEN OF CHINA, July 1985. p. 19.

health service and social welfare 39.3% of practitioners were women. The proportion of women is smaller but still substantial in conservation and meteorology (36.1%), in scientific research (34.8%), and in finance and insurance (32.1%). In managerial departments, government agencies and people's organizations, women only constitute 18% of the total employment (See Table 2).

Yet women are still drawn overwhelmingly into areas which are less skilled and lower paid. The 1982 statistics show that 83% of all women who worked were manual labourers. Among the total population for every 100 women workers, 77 were engaged in agriculture, 13 were industrial workers, and 4 were in trades and services. In high status occupations such as managers, or government office workers, only 5.5% were female.[64]

In 1980, the government convened a work conference on labour employment. A three-tiered labour employment policy was adopted, that would find jobs through recommendation by labour departments, through organized small collectives, and through the encouragment of small establishments run by individuals. "The iron rice bowl" is not the only economic system.[65] Under the three-tiered labour

[63] 1982 Population Statistics, Beijing Review, Vol. 27, No. 20, p. 25.

[64] People's Daily, September 7, 1986.

[65] Under the "iron rice bowl" system, once a person is employed, they are employed for life. They earn the same rate of pay as everyone else, no matter their performance. There is no punishment for errors or reward for enterprise. This system is a disincentive to creativity and an incentive to corruption, and current economic modernization reforms are aimed at revamping this system.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN THE TYPES OF WORK, 1983

Types of Work	Percentage
Industry	40.3
Construction, Resoures	23.6
Agriculture, Forestry Water Conservancy, Meteorology	36.1
Transport, Posts & Telecommunications	22.9
Commerce, Catering Trade Service Trade, Supply & Marketing of Material	43.4
Civil Public Utilities	39.2
Scientific Research	34.8
Culture, Education, Public Health, Social Welfare	39.3
Finance, Insurance	32.1
Government Agencies, People's Organizations, Managerial Departments	18.0

Source: EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN CHINA, p. 6.

employment policy, collectively-owned and individual enterprises have developed. Chinese statistics indicate that the number of workers in state enterprises has droped from 37% of the total work force in 1980 to 33% in 1984. The figure for workers in collectively owned undertakings has risen from 43% to 50%, and in individual business from 6% to 11%.[66] Over the past few years nearly 30 million young people were employed, among them about 60% were girls.[67]

The economic boom demands women's participaton in new industries such as electronics, synthetic fibres, automation, and electrical appliances. As well, advances in such departments as energy resources, material sciences, and space technology, made the government aware of the urgency for women to catch up to [illegible] their general educational and technological levels. [illegible] out of 17 million staff and workers enroled in the adult education courses, more than 6 million were women.[68]

Today, Chinese women are being trained as engineers, airplane pilots, police-women, oil-well operators and so on, all of which were traditionally filled by men. In 1982, there were 5.35 million women leaders, thirty times more than 1951, and there were 150 million women workers, sixty times more than in 1952.[69]

66 Women in China (March 1986), p. 13.

67 People's Daily, December 20, 1986.

68 Education for Women in China, p. 6.

69 "Old Concepts Hinder Women's Real Emancipation", Beijing Review, No. 36, (September 5, 1983), p. 26.

Still in 1983, in the industrial sector, females formed less than half of the workers employed in the state sector compared to the collective and service sectors in which the overwhelming majority of workers were women. In science, engineering, and other technical occupations only a third of the four million workers were women. A third of all government workers were women, but in the higher echelons of government and in senior managerial positions women were scarce. In education, 3,587,000 women were employed in 1986, among them 40,000 professors, associate, assistant professors and lecturers at the college level (1.1%), 971,000 teachers at the general secondary level (24.5%), 192,000 at the specialized secondary level (2.5%), 2,272,000 at the primary level (63.3%), and the rest were at the pre-school level and in other areas such as special education.[70]

However, despite women's widening involvement in social, economic and political activities, they are still confronted by the reality of discrimination. For example at the highest level of the political apparatus the proportion of women is very low: one in the State Council, two ministers, seven vice-ministers, one president of a People's Court, and two leading bank presidents (5%). Of the 210 members of the central Committee of the Party, only 5% (11) are filled by women and of the 253 posts in the chairpersons committee

[70] People's Daily, September 7, 1986.

of the Fifth National People's Congress (Fifth Plenary Session), women only made up 15% (39) of the total memebership.[71] Similarly, in the provincial, municipal and autonomous regions standing Committee of the People's Congresses, 23 women (6.6%) ranked as chairwomen, and 23 women (5.6%) were chairwomen in the provincial, city and autonomous region People's Political Consultative Conferences.[72] In general, the more powerful the political institution, the less likely are women to be represented within it. At the top levels of political power, women are most often assigned to women's interests, such as women's federation, education, health and light industry. Despite the stated commitment to encourage women's full political participation, the time and effort required to hold high office is incompatible with the other demands placed on women by family, domestic work and employment, progress in this regard is slow and as yet still very limited.

Domestic duties still fall more heavily on women's shoulders than on men's. Statistics show that women spend on the average four hours a day on housework, while men spend less than two hours.[73] In a survey of 97 teaching and research staff women in six universities and scientific institutions in Shanghai, reports that 81% replied that the most exhausting household labour is cooking three

71 "The fifth National Women's Congress", Beijing Review, No. 38, (September 9, 1984), p. 6.

72 Women in China (March 1986), p. 16.

73 Women in China (February 1985), p. 1.

meals a day, and the public food service sector is usually of poor quality, inaccessible, and too expensive for the average family to afford.[74] In the rural areas, cooking, looking after children, raising livestocks and attending family vegetable plots make substantial demand on women's time and energy.

The problem of women's double burden has been dissussed in the Chinese media. Some reports have noted the discrimination against women. The reasons given are that women are not as good as men in work ability and creativity, so women should return to the home and take care of the house chores; that women should be given a longer maternity and nursing leave, receiving part of their wages for a period of time. The idea of "sacrficing women for the sake of men" has been strongly criticized. It is argued that sending women back to the kitchen cannot solve the problem of domestic chores, and it would have a negative affect on women's liberation, that the government should socialize the domestic labour by developing more service trades instead of sacrificing women for men.[75] To solve the problem the government encourages the production of refrigerators, washing-machines, electric cookers, etc.. Some female labourers from the countryside have been recruited to help with household cleaning, washing, cooking, and taking care of preschool children. But the number is limited due to crowded housing

74 China's Reconstructs (March 1985), p. 22.

75 Beijing Daily, June 8, 1985.

facilities and the low average family income in China. The inadequacy of child-care remains a big problem for women who want to concentrate on their careers. The official statistics show that in 1981 there were only 130,000 kindergardens with 1,000,000 children.[76] The shortage of kindergardens is acute, and the quality of teachers in the pre-schools is low. The problem of household chores will not be solved in the short term, not as long as the national economy lags behind and social services remain inadequate.

Women are often discriminated against in admission to colleges, and also in the assignment of jobs after graduation. Some departments openly refuse to accept women graduates. Women's economic prospects are still poor, and their education level is still low.

The primary purpose of Chinese Marriage Law is to abolish arbitrary and compulsory marriage and with it the tradition of male supremacy. It has been over three decades since the promulgation of the first Marriage Law by the PRC in 1950, and arranged marriages and the practise of dowries where women are like commodities to be exchanged still persists. The still common attitude of having additional female labour and the reproduction of family lineage continues to cause patriarchal marriages.

When divorce was legally promulgated in the 1950s, the cases of divorce rose sharply. According to statistics from the China's Supreme Court, the average number of divorce cases between 1950

76 Guangming Daily, Feburary. 14, 1982.

and 1980 was 400,000. In 1953, following the wide publicity of the Marriage Law, divorce cases soared a record of 1.17 million.[77] During the Cultural Revolution, courts refused to accept divorce cases on the ground that legal divorce was a "capitalist evil". In 1980 the new Marriage Law was promulgated, the courts handled 340,000 divorce cases, that resulted in about 200,000 divorces. In Beijing, the 1981 divorce case was 27.2% higher than in 1980 and 64.6% more than 1979.[78] Some 70% of all divorce suits are filed by women. In many places, especially in the rural areas, however, women who file for divorce are not accepted. The continued abuse and mistreatment of women by the patriarchal family indicates that attitudes and practices rooted in pre-revolutionary China have not yet disppeared.[79]

The View From Outside

The bulk of writing by western feminist sinologists focuses on the change in female status since 1949, as the founding of the PRC marked a new era of social transformation in China which has had a strong impact on the redefinition of women's role. Their methodology is one that I would call a dialectic dichotomy.

77 Andors, p. 33.

78 Women in Transition, p. 34.

79 China's Reconstruts, Vol. 25, No.3, (March 1986), p. 41.

China according to Elizabeth Croll, is "one of the most rapidly changing of societies which consciously experimented within a number of social, economic and politial forms of organization in the quest of socialism and modernization."[80] Croll maintains that an appraisal should justifiably recognize both the tremendous changes in women's roles and status, and the persistence of certain problems which have inhibited the redefinition of women's productive and reproductive roles.

Almost all western writers note the improved socio-economic and educational status of Chinese women since 1949, and point to the incomplete task of women's equality in China. Margery Wolf in **Women in the Chinese Society** says it is obvious to even the most critical observers that the status of Chinese women has improved dramatically since 1949.[81] Ann Harley, a Canadian, writes about her impressions during a visit as a member of the Canadian Education Association study tour to China: "Within a generation, Chinese women have moved from being slaves in a traditional peasant society to modern thinking participants in a society heading rapidly toward industrialization. It is truly a remarkable social transformation for a developing country."[82]

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80 Elizabeth Croll, Chinese Women Since Mao (London: Zed Press, 1983), p. 2.

81 Margrete Wolfe, Women in China, p. 5.

82 Ann Harley, "Women Hold Up Half the Sky", Convergence, 1974.

Judith Stacey who is often very critical in her analysis, says that she and others are "sympathetic to the goals of socialist transformation but opposed to uncritical apologetics." She does not deny the tremendous gains already realized in the new China which has changed the status of millions of women and given them new roles and opportunities in Chinese society.[83]

In an article **Women and Revolution** J. W. Salaff says that the destruction of the political power of the old regime in China required an attack on the inherited forms of authority in the family, community, educational system, and government. While the destruction of traditional social organizations freed both men and women: Women and young people benefited more. Women have been particularly oppressed under the feudal legal and economic restrictions of the old system, and one key to the revolutionary political transformation of China was the change in authority relationships which kept women in bondage. In their traditional position, women were repositories of old social values; the institutions which most oppressed women— the clan and the family, were the elementary units of traditional authority in the society as a whole.[84]

Elizabeth Croll in her recent book **Chinese Women Since Mao** summarizes the changes and improvements in the lives of women in China in the first years of the PRC.

83 Stacey, p. 258.

84 Janet Weitzneer Salaff and Judith Merkle, "Women and Revolution: The Lesson of the Soviet Union and China", in Women in China ed. Marilyn B. Young, (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1973), p. 145.

> "It was evident that observers in China perceived their situation and the conditions in which they performed their productive and reproductive activities to have been much altered and improved by the Communist government. Chinese women rightly drew attention to the contrast between the customs and practices common in China prior to 1949 which had penalized daughters, wives, mothers and employees and the new laws which emphasized their equality. They justifiably contrasted the poverty, political and economic insecurity and lasting inequalities which had affected the majority of women in the early 20th century with the present more adequate and equal provision of basic needs for most of the population. In terms of achieving basic literacy, wider access to education, a more stable family food bowl and securing basic health provisions, China had attracted substantial international attention during the first 30 years and women have benefited from these basic measures. Women in China had also expanded their economic and political roles in society and in particular they had entered into a new range of employment opportunities in both the cities and the countryside. In the first 20 years most women between 16 and 60 years were employed either full-time, part-time or seasonally and earned their own cash income however small. In the 1970's, women frequently contrasted the premises of the Confusian ideology and folk-sayings of the past which had commonly disparaged women with the present campaigns to criticize and substitute such an ideology. Finally, they drew attention to the numbers of women in political decision-making bodies especially at local levels and the institutional and political presence of the Women's Federation in overseeing the implementation of policies and programs designed to improve the position of women." 85

Croll sees the government of the People's Republic since its inception in 1949 as trying to redefine the role and status of women to be equal to that of men in China. Croll discusses four strategic political programmes designed by the CPC: to legislate for equality; to introduce women into social production; to introduce

85 Croll, p. 5.

a new ideology of equality, and to organize women to forward their economic, social and political interests. "This comprehensive strategy was responsible for many achievements in meeting basic needs and improving the postion of women and it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the benefits for women frequently fell short of official goals and expectations."[86]

After criticizing the first thirty years of the PRC, Croll is of the conviction that by 1978 (the eve of the new era of socialist modernization) if women were to benefit from any new policies to further improve their position in Chinese society, a number of problems would have to be resolved and special attention devoted to the relation between women's productive and reproductive activities, in other words, a number of constraints inhibiting the further redefinition of women's roles could be identified.

Participation in social production is a neccessary precondition for improving female status, and since the late 1950s a large proportion of women have participated in the wage labour force. But one of the most striking of initial impressions on first acquaintance with China, be it in the 1950s or 1970s, is the gender division which allocates to women certain occupations and spheres of activities (such as service, textile, food processing and other light industries). The majority of working women

86 Ibid.

are still confined to the less skilled and lower paid jobs. In fact, the traditional division of labour in the sphere of production, in the western view, remains largely unaltered. Moreover, women have been expected to enter the wage labour force on the same basis as men, and at the same time continue to service and maintain the household.

The situation is worse in the countryside. Land reform in the early fifties and the subsequent collectivization originally suggested the end of the peasant household as an economic unit, yet by 1970, the traditional patriarchal household structure remained largely unchanged in rural areas, and many socio-economic functions still accrue to individual rural households. The structure and socio-economic functions of the peasant household still determine the sexual division of labour, reproduction and the subordination and control of women.

The major economic reorganization of China demanded that the rural household continue to mobilize its resources in order to find solutions to a number of economic organizational problems, such as in production and the transportation of materials for consumption. Visible women's labour— that for which wage renumeration is earned— is seen as important to women's economic independence, but peasant women's "invisible" labour— unpaid work— is a crucial economic input that is overlooked and devalued.

Marriage is seen as a means of recruiting additional labour into the household. The continuing value placed on the labour resources of the individual peasant household contributed to the

maintenance, if not the entrenchment of the traditional patriarchal household, and caused government policies designed to improve the position of peasant women to fall short of their goals.

The ideological climate during the Cultural Revolution was held to be supportive of sexual equality, but Croll sees the failure to establish wide-scale social services to assist women especially in the household since the late 1950s, as due to the inadequacy of setting aside resources for reducing the reproductive and domestic responsibilities of women. Since the late 1970s, there has been some attempt to enable women to combine their productive and reproductive roles with greater ease. A new and radical family planning policy, and the single-child family policy, introduced by the government in the 1970s, will have far-reaching implications for women's mothering and familial roles. The new policies of socialist modernization in contemporary China will alter the political, economic and organizational constraints on the further redefinition of women's roles, whether it changes their status as producers and reproducers remains to be seen.

Croll, extolls the Chinese women who throughout the twentieth century have fought for their own liberation as well as that of their country, concludes, "Whatever the twists and turns in the history of Chinese women's movement, the image and expectations of women have altered beyond recognition."[37]

87 Croll. p. 2.

A few radical feminists such as Stacey and Andors, in exasperation, feel that the Chinese socialist revolution is built on the foundation of the Confucian patriarchal peasant family, and that by giving in to the base aspirations of peasants in order to gain their participation in its revolutionary goals, the CPC is locked into the patriarchal relationship. They complain that the success of the Chinese revolution in 1949 did not fundamentally change the patriarchal social structures of Chinese society, for the "restorationist" peasants the traditional family was "saved" by the CPC.[88]

These writers argue that liberation of women was never a top priority for the CPC. Its policies often fluctuate wildly, and in actual practice the feminist agenda always yields to the economic and political agenda.[89] Furthermore, Andors says that "because of the inadequacy of Marxist theory" which views the liberation of women as an "automatic" consequence of the political liberation of society, Chinese Marxists tend to view patriarchal attitudes and structures as simply ideological remnants of an old feudalistic past. They refute the view of the leadership in today's China that socialist moderization improves the condition of women.

[88] Stacey, p. 157.

[89] See Andor, The Unifinished Revolution of Chinese Women; Stacey, Patriarchy and Socialism in China; Johnson, Women Family and Peasant Revolution in China.

Andors, who sees China as a "still poor, developing and rapidly changing country" justifiably says that "the institutionalized female oppression gives Chinese women and men an objective interest in economic development and technological progress of almost any kind. But Chinese women also have an objective interest in development policies that emphasize goals of collective participation and equality. For the continued transformation of women's roles a supportive ideological climate is also necessary. But it is not enough."[90]

Andors concludes that "Chinese women made most progress in overcoming obstacles that perpetuated their dependent and inferior status as housewife and mother when radical policies were followed. Moreover, there was a greater willingness to explore the ideological roots of female oppression and exploitation during these periods, since old institutions and values in general were usually under severe criticism if not hostile attack." The reasons given are "both the Leap and the later Cultural Revolution periods were marked by radically different, highly innovative (though very controversal) policies."[91]

Marx holds that the bourgeois family was not a universal and permanent part of human existence, but is linked to the functioning system of capitalist social and economic institution. Thus women's liberation would be a natural result of social revolution based on class struggle. Marx recognizes the importance of biological

[90] Andors, p. 4.

[91] See Andors (1980), Stacey (1983) & Johnson (1983).

differences between the sexes (referred to as the division of labour for the purpose of reprodution). He feels that women would achieve equality and liberation only when a classless society is achieved. Radical feminists see class society and the oppression of women as related, but their notion of relationship is reversed; whereas Marxists view sex oppression as an element of class oppression, radical feminists view class oppression as an element of sex oppression.

As heirs to Marx and Engels, the CPC adheres to the Marxist view, yet the harsh realities, as Johnson says, are such that "today the family, and women's relationship to it, remains one of more traditional features of predominantly rural Chinese society. The outcome of nearly a century of upheaval and revolution born partly of, wide-spread family crises among intellectuals and peasants, has done more to restore the traditional role and struture of the family than to fundamentally reform it."[92]

Today patriarchal attitudes still prevail in Chinese society, and the patriarchal family system which still exists in the rural areas remain a fundamental and most serious problem infecting society, and is a destrutive force against women's liberation. According to Stacey, socialism in China has failed to achieve equality between the sexes because the CPC fails to attack the strong root structure of patriarchy. Chinese socialism transformed the traditional social

[92] Johnson, p. 115.

order, but at the same time it was conditional by it. Guided by Marxist theory, it led the peasants in a revolution fought exclusively in the name of national and class struggle. This historical accommodation of patriarchy and socialism in the Chinese revolutionary process constrains the development options.[93]

To some western feminists, there appears to be two approaches to development strategy within the Chinese leadership, conservative or radical. During the periods of the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), in the early 1960s, and since 1976, a more conservative approach was adopted: political and social transformation is seen largely as a by-product of technological development and economic prosperity. This approach according to its critics, accepts and even promotes social and economic inequalities. The other more radical approach reflected in the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution, viewed economic progress within the context of collectivization and sought a greater equality within social and economic institutions.

In the writings of some radical feminists about the position of Chinese women, there is less optimism about what the effects of current policies on the improvements of the status in women will be. Stacey and Andors, for example, applaud both the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution, but worry that the current Chinese rural household production responsibility system and policies

93 Stacey, p. 251.

regarding population control and the single-child family may lead to a retreat to the household as a unit of production which might seriously threaten the meager progress in rural areas, and encourage preference for male children. This question of whether the status and opportunities for women have advanced, particularly in education, more during periods such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution is one that will be examined in the following chapters. Chapters IV throught VI make use of educational data that has only recently become available to examine how social, economic and political developments since 1949 have affected educational policy and the educational opportunities of Chinese women.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN'S EDUCATION AFTER 1949

Introduction

Ever since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, education has been regarded as an instrument designed to serve proletarian politics and socialist construction. Education also underscores the CPC's commitment to the Marxist principle of women's emancipation as an integral part of the ultimate liberation of society and mankind. As the 1949 Common Program (which served as the temporary constitution until 1954 when the constitution was confirmed) documented:

> "The culture and education of the People's Republic of China are new democratic, that is, national, scientific and popular. The main tasks for raising the cultural level of the people are: training of personnel for national construction work; liquidating of feudal, comprador, fascist ideology; and developing the ideology of serving the people." 94

The same principle is found in the Chinese Constitution (1982) which laid down these educational aims:

> "The state develops socialist, educational undertakings and works to raise the scientific and cultural level of the whole nation."
> "Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, social and cultural." 95

94 R. F. Price, Education in Communist China (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970), p. 29.

95 "Constitution of the People's Republic of China", (December 4, 1982), Beijing Review (December 7, 1982), p. 4.

The result was an unprecedented growth in women's education, both in the total number of females participating in education and in their proportional representation. To give an example, the illiteracy rate among women was reduced from 90% in 1949 to 46% in 1982. From 1951 to 1983, the enrolment of female students at the primary level increased from 12,063,000 (28.0% of the total enrolment) to 59,372,000 (43.7% of the total); from 401,200 (25.6%) to 17,351,200 (39.5%) at the secondary level; and from 35,100 (22.5%) to 324,900 (26.9%) at the third level. In terms of the number of women, the increase was almost 4 times at the first level, 42 times at the second level, and 8 times at the third level respectively. These impressive increases in the number of women students reflect China's rapid growth in population, at the same time, the proportional representation of women has improved considerably at all level of schooling.[96]

In spite of these changes to traditional Chinese education, and improvements in womens' education, the general underdevelopment and constant shifts and swings in the educational policies since 1949 have had enormous impacts on Chinese education, and women's education in particular. These changes in education policy have involved shifts in emphasis between quantity and quality, between

96 cf. Between 1949 and 1973 the population increased from 540 million to 890 million by 350 million. The proportional increase in 24 years was 64.9 per 1,000 or average annual increase rate was 21 per 1,000. From [illegible] 1983, birth rate fell from 27.9 per 1,000 to 18.6 per 1,000. [illegible]na's Statistics 1949-1984, p. 25.

education as a means to inculcate the CPC's political ideology and education as a tool to promote socio-economic development.

The following will examine the vicissitudes in women's education in China in relation to CPC's policy shifts since 1949. The momentous changes that have taken place in the education system since 1949 can be divided into three main stages:

The first stage, from 1949 to 1966, seventeen years after the establishment of the People's Republic represents the government's first attempt to set up an educational system. Women were officially granted equal educational opportunities with men, and women's education as a whole made some progress.

During stage two, from 1966 to 1976— the chaotic period of the Cultural Revolution, leftist ideology predominated and academic learning was sacrificed. Education as a whole— including that of women was interrupted and seriously damaged. The authorities paid lip-service to improving women's status through education, but in fact women's position was by no means improved during this period.

The third stage, since 1976 is the modernization period. Socio-economic development has been given high priority, the concern of education is to produce the qualified personnel needed in national reconstruction. In theory, women share with their male counterparts great opportunities in the education sphere. A campaign of nationwide reform of education, including women's education is now being waged.

THE SEVENTEEN YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (1949-1966)

Immediately after the founding of the new Republic, China emerged on the international stage as an important political actor. Economically and culturally, however, the nation was faced with enormous difficulties. Would the new socialist state follow in the steps of the old regime? The answer was a resounding no. Before liberation, China was one of the world largest countries in area and population, yet it was among the poorest, most backward and corrupt nations in the world. Its history was marked by more than two thousand years of feudal oppression and a century of foreign interference. Eighty percent of the population was illiterate, among women 90% were illiterate, and only 20% of the children of school age attended school.[97]

According to the data published by the Ministry of Education of the former Nanjing Government (Nationalist or Kwomintang), in 1946 there were only 23,683,000 primary school pupils (5.3% of the total population), of whom 26% of the pupils in primary schools were girls. General middle school enrolment totaled 1,878,000 (0.3% of the total population), of whom 20% were females. At the higher education level, there were only 155,000 students (0.03%

97 Chinese Education Yearbook (Beijing: People's Education Press, 1984), p. 194.

of the total population), of whom 17.8% were females.[98] Moreover, most of the educated youths were from big or middle-sized cities. Few children of the workers, peasants and other poor families could afford schooling. Forty percent of all college students were in six major cities: Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Tianjin, Hankou and Guangzhou. In the province of Xinjiang, there were only one college (with 100 students) and eight middle schools. In Tibet, there was no primary or middle schooling at all, let alone higher education. The allocation for education in the national budget was miniscule. It is difficult to imagine what the state of women's education was like.[99]

Education Policy and Women's Education

Confronted with such conditions, the CPC viewed education as one of the important means to effect fundamental social change. In 1949 the major principle of the new education policy was outlined,

> "In order to meet the widespread need of revolutionary work and national construction work, universal primary education shall be carried out. Middle and higher education shall be strengthened; technical education shall be stressed; the education of workers during their spare time and the education of cadres who are at their post shall be strengthened; and revolutionary political education shall be accorded to young intellectuals and old-style intellectuals in a planned and systematic way."[100]

98 Achievement, p. 7.
Leo. A. Orleans, Professional Manpower and Education Communist China (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1960), p. 172.

99 Chinese Education (Beijing: Education Publication, 1983) p. 2.

100 Michael Sheringham, "Popularization Policies in Chinese Education from the 1950s to the 1970s," Comparative Education, No. 1, 1984, p. 74.

As is evident from this statement, educational reform was to serve both political and economic ends— socializing and resocializing the population for a new political order and for economic construction. Women's education also benefited. In keeping with this policy orientation— to eliminate and liquidate the outdated measures and regulations left by the old regime, including the traditional discrimination of women, great efforts were made to restructure the educational system.

First of all, the new government took over and reformed all the public and private schools including missionary schools, some of which were girls' schools.[101] A centralized educational system was established under the Ministry of Education which gradually set up and enlarged various types of schools which consisted of six-year primary education, three-year junior secondary education, three-year senior secondary education (including general and specialized middle schools), and three to five year higher education.

Secondly, the most evident change in the educational system in the early years was that the government adopted a policy of making schools accessible to male and female workers and peasants by providing scholarships and subsidies. Universities not only were tuition free but also provided free medical care. By 1957, there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of both male and female

101 Survey of Chinese Mainland Press (April 28, 1951), p. 33.

students from worker and peasant families. In primary schools students from worker and peasant backgrounds increased from 20.5% in 1952 to 36.3% in 1957; in middle schools from 56.1% to 69.1%; and in higher education from 20.5% to 36.4% respectively. By 1951, the participation rate of beginning school age children (6— 7 year old) increased from the 1949 level of 20% to 49.2%. Most of this increase came from the enrolment of children of workers and peasants. These changes illustrate the increase in total enrolments. Before 1949, girls from destitute families never dreamed of even a basic education, and few ever demanded further education. In the early 1950s, a considerable number of middle-aged women also had access to adult education, which was unheard of in the past.[102]

To raise the cultural level of cadres, especially females, spare time schools with accelerated courses and continuation schools were established. In spare time primary schools, the number of students from worker and peasant backgroud increased from 1,375,000 in 1952 to 6,267,000 in 1957. In spare time middle schools, it increased from 249,000 to 2,714,000, and in spare time higher education, it increase from 4,100 to 75,900 respectively.[103] These represen increases of 3.5 fold, ten fold and 17.5 fold respectively.

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102 Education for Women in China (Beijing: All China Women's Federation, 1984), p. 21.

103 Great Progress in Ten Years — Statistics Concerning Economic and Cultural Construction in the People's Republic of China, (Beijing: State Statistical Bureau, 1959), p. 176.

As the total numbers of students from worker and peasant origin jumped, the number of female students of workers and peasants would have also increased, but the extent of increase is unknown because the relevant data for females is not available.

Education for women was never articulated as a specific separate or independent policy, despite the increasing numbers of women in education. It was glossed over in principles dealing with sexual equality. These statements about equality were not accompanied by programs or policies designed to insure that women would have opportunities equal to those of men. Indeed some educational policies may have served to decrease opportunities for women. For example, many girls' only schools were merged with other schools to make them co-educational. It was argued that coeducation was the only way to be fair to the female sex.[104]

Adult Literacy

In the early 1950s in the People's Republic, 90% of all Chinese women were illiterate or semi-illiterate. That means some 200,000,000 women were illiterate. Only one girl in a thousand received a middle school education; and one girl in ten thousand, a college education. If women were to play an equal role in the new Chinese society, they at least had to be able to read and write.

104 People's Daily, September 7, 1952.

Making primary education universal and eliminating illiteracy among adults, especially women were the core tasks of the transformation stage of socialism. Mass campaigns were launched to combat the problem of illiteracy and a quantitative breakthrough was achieved.

Although no national data on all literacy programs for women is available, local information gives some picture of the attemps to deal with illiteracy. In 1950, there were 170 literacy groups consisting of 9,000 women from Shanghai textile factories. The city of Dalian reported in 1951 that 94.5% of all illiterate women workers (8,640 women) were attending literacy class. In the coastal cities of Shandong province there were 597 literacy classes for women in 1949, but in 1950 there were 1,687 classes involving 40,000 women. In Sian, a city in northwest China, there were 5,481 women in the literacy classes and spare time schools in 1950. By 1952 the figure had increased to 28,137, a five fold increase. Meanwhile in Beijing 78% of the students in day school were women and 65% of those in night schools were also women.[105]

For China as a whole, in 1951 of the 56 million peasants in winter schools and spare time schools becoming literate, about half were women. According to the Women's Federation, more than 1,700,000 men and women workers were attending spare time schools in 1952.[106]

105 C. K. Yang, The Chinese Family in the Communist Revolution (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1965), p. 115.

106 Deng Ying-chao, Document of the Women's Movement of China (Beijing: New China Women's Press, 1956), p. 16.

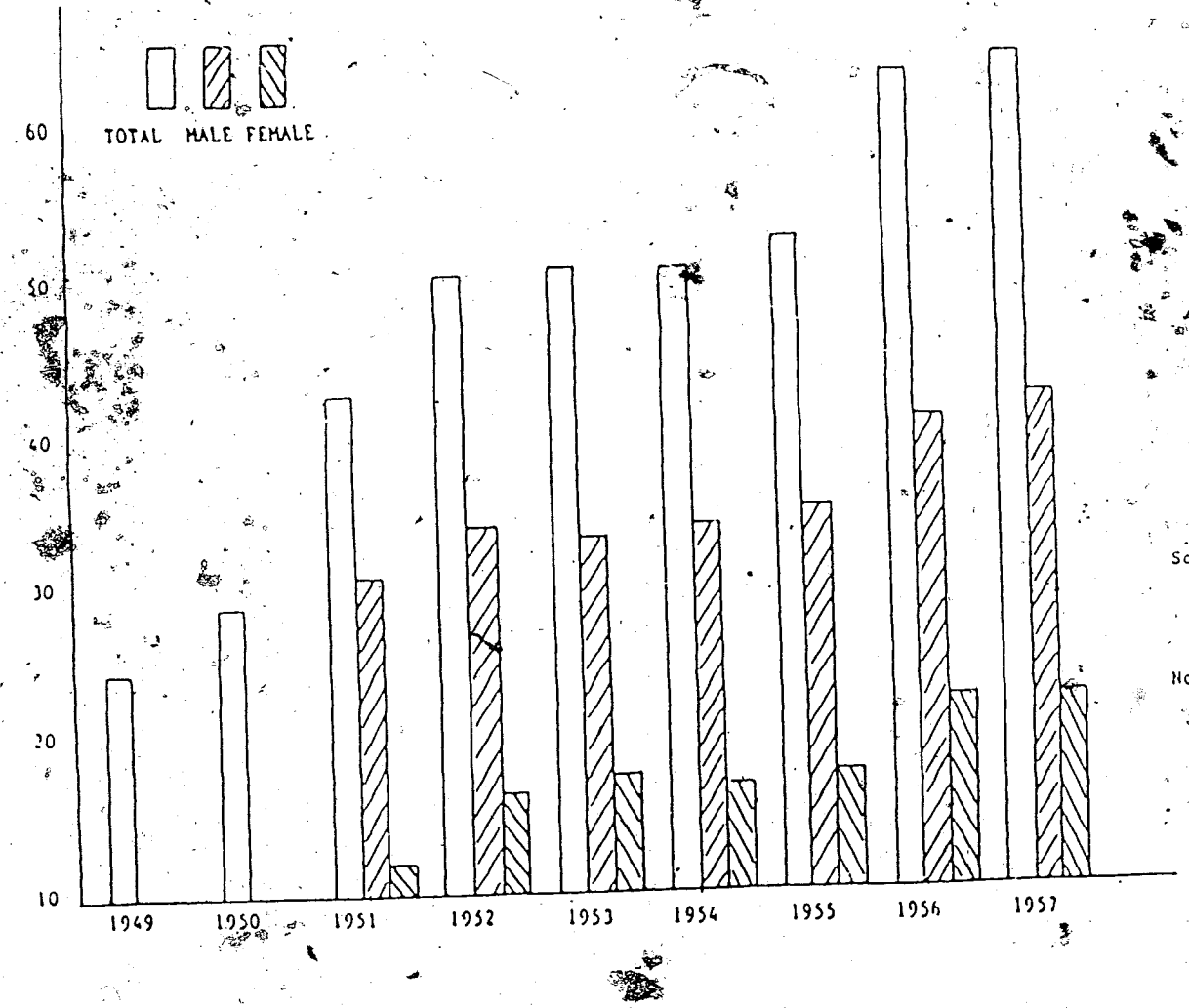
Although the government in the early period of the Republic was well aware of the problem, it faced many impediments in trying to eliminate female illiteracy. Among the difficulties were poorly trained teachers, limited resources, and the inadequate time available to peasants to study. In addition, the language skills that women learned in the spare time schools were miniscule. The standard for minimal literacy was 1,500 characters for peasants and 2,000 characters for workers.[107]

Enrolments in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Schooling

Between 1950 and 1952, the years of national economic recovery from the civil war, schooling at all levels expanded. Figure 1 shows that at the primary level, the total number of pupils by 1952 was 51,100,000, among them 16,797,000 were girls (32.9% of the total enrolment). The total number of pupils increased by 26,709,000 as compared to that in 1949, an increase of 110%. By 1952, the total number of studnets in general secondary school was 2,490,000, among them 585,800 were girls (23.5% of the total enrolment). Compared to 1949 the total increase in the number of students was 140%. The 1952 figures for higher education show that the total number of students was 191,000, among them 45,400 (23.4%) were female. The total number of students increased by 63.2% as compared to 1949, while the number of females increased by almost 100%.

107 New China News Agency, June 20, 1956.

Figure 1: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1949-1957) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p.29.

Note: The figures of pupils by sex in 1949 and 1950 are not available.

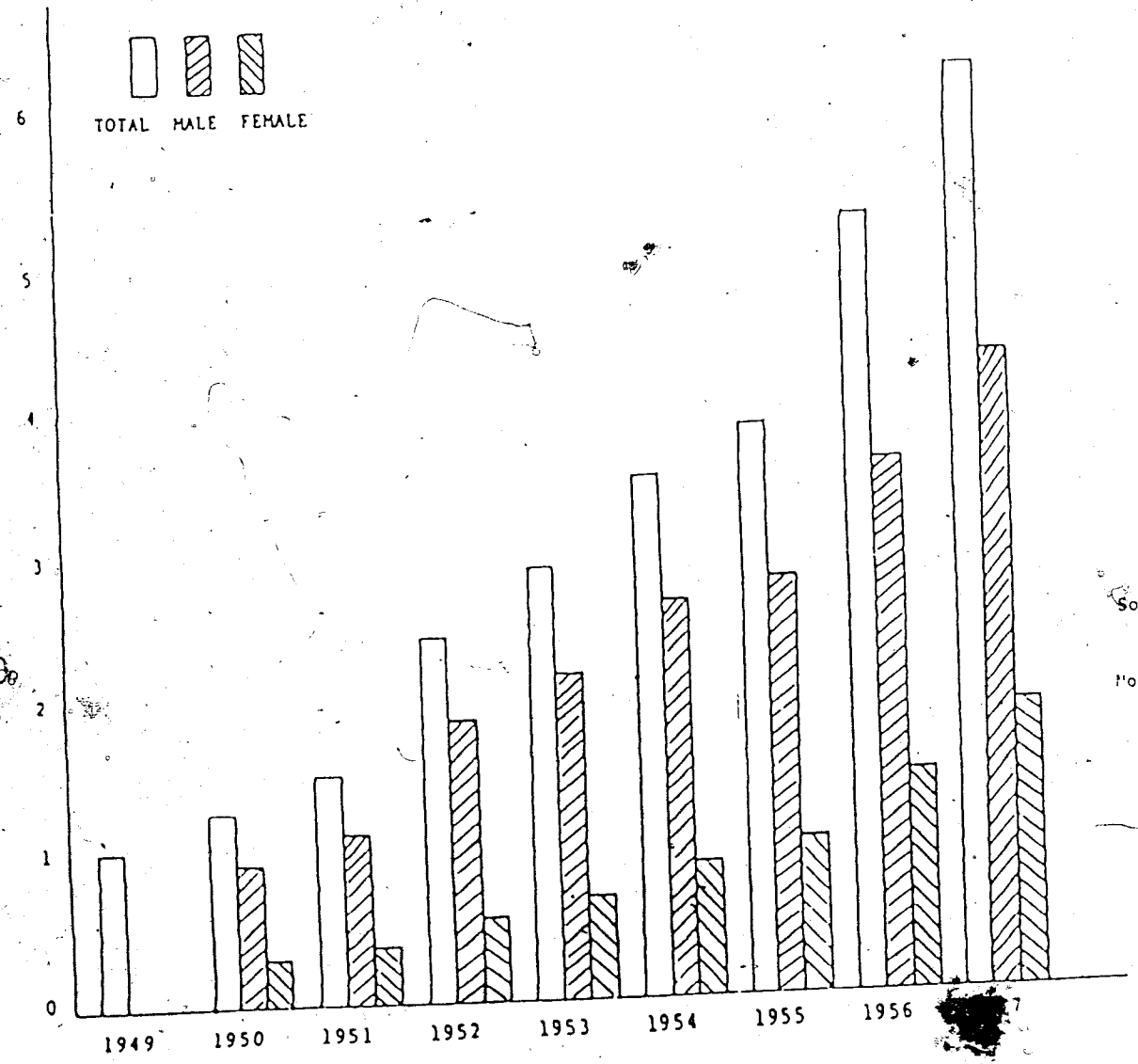
Seeing a too rapid expansion in primary education from 1950 to 1952, the government initiated an adjustment. The total number of pupils at the first level increased only 1.1% in 1953 as compared to the previous years.

During the Five Year Plan for the development of the national economy covering the period 1953 to 1957, the total number of primary pupils increased from 51,664,000 in 1953 to 64,283,000 in 1957. The overall increase in enrolment of 24.4%, reflects the attempt to slow the growth in primary schooling. The total number of students was actually lower in 1954 than it had been in 1953. There was some increase in 1955 over 1954, and the proportion of girls reflected a pattern similar to that of the total enrolment. There were 17,822,000 girls (34.5% of the total enrolment) in 1953, 17,071,000 (33.3% of the total enrolment) in 1954, and 17,758,000 (33.4% of the total enrolment) in 1955.

Figure 2 shows that during the First Five Year Plan period, the total number of general secondary school students increased by 114% from 2,933,000 to 6,281,000. The number of girls increased more dramatically from 714,400 in 1953 to 1,935,300 in 1957, an increase of 171% in the number of female attending secondary schools. This is reflected in the rise of the proportions of female students from 24.4% of total enrolment to 30.8% of the total.

These general trends in secondary education are evident in both general middle schools and secondary specialized education. Although the available data are not complete, in general middle schools

Figure 2: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1949-1957) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

Note: The figure of students by sex in 1949 is not available.

enrolment increased by 17.8% in 1953, by 22.3% in 1954 and by 18.7% in 1955 compared each of the previous years. Among the total, girls constituted 23.5% in 1952, 24.4% in 1953, 25.0% in 1954 and 26.9% in 1955, a gradual but steady growth. In secondary specialized education the proportion of girls among the total number of students was 25.8% in teacher training schools and 26.0% in technical schools in 1953; 28.4% and 25.4% in 1957.[108]

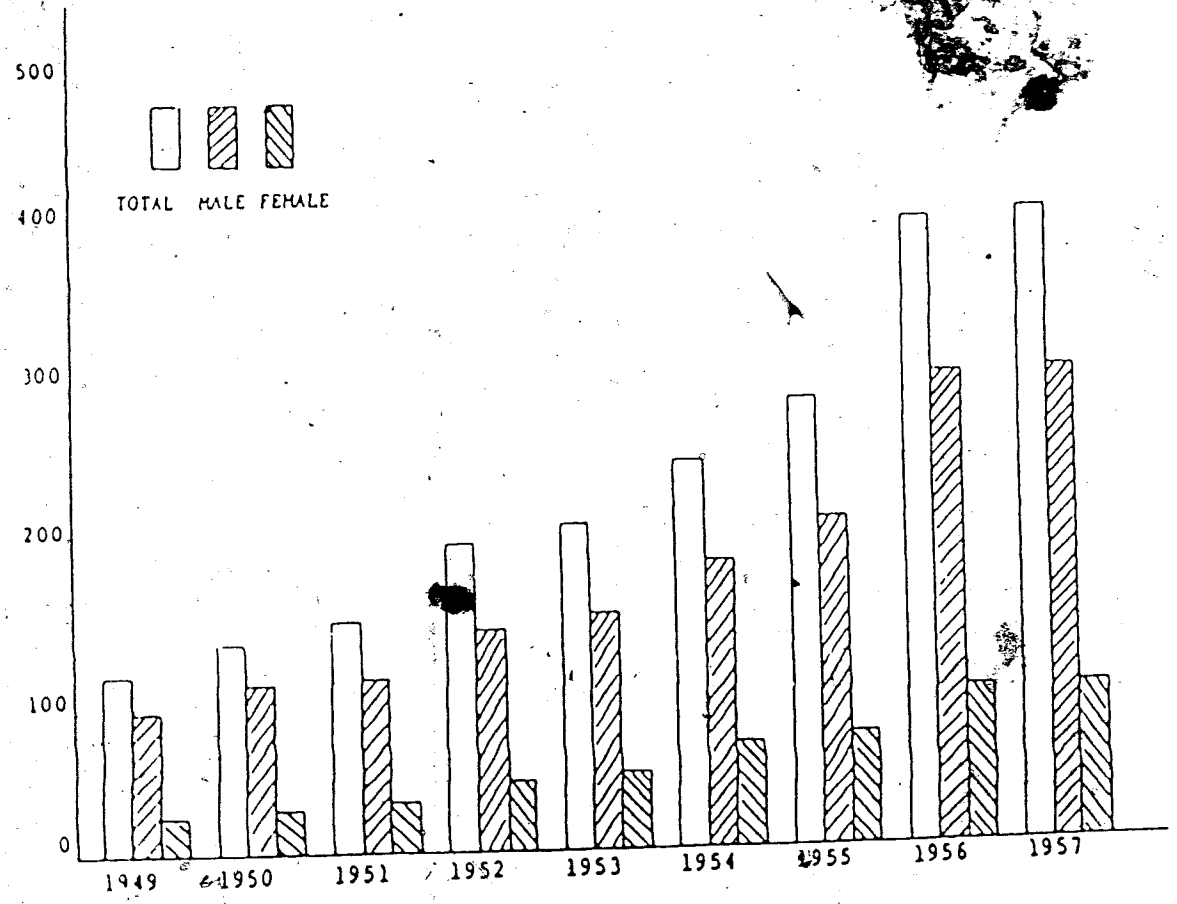
Figure 3 indicates that the total number of students in higher education from 1953 to 1957 increased from 212,000 to 441,000, an increase of 108%. The numbers of females were 54,700 or 25.3% of the total enrolment in 1953, 67,000 or 26.3% in 1954 and 103,000 or 23.3% of the total enrolment in 1957. In 1957 under the guideline of "rapid growth and high quality", there was an expansion in education, but the proportion of female students in higher education did not increase.[109]

During the early 1950s, Chinese education was most affected by copying Soviet practices— from teaching methods and curricula, to education administration. In higher education, polytechnic and specialized institutions were established. For example, Qinghua University, once a comprehensive higher education institution consisting of a school of humanities and languages, a school of law and social sciences, a school of natural sciences and school of

108 Achievement, p. 39.

109 Chinese Education Yearbook, p. 102.

Figure 3: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY SEX (1949-1957) (THOUSAND)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

engineering, was made into a polytechnic after the Soviet pattern. Students in science and engineering were elevated in importance, (another Soviet practise,) students in general liberal arts and in non-scientific and non-technological fields were relegated to a position of much less importance. The students in specialties were unevenly distributed, and a large proportion of female students were generally among those considered to be in unimportant fields. In science and engineering, the proportion of females was only 15%. The pattern of female under-representation in certain specialities remains largely unchanged even today.[110]

Women's Education and Shifting Policy

The CPC initiated the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s (1958-1960). It was assumed that China would become a fully realized communist country within ten to fifteen years. Very high production targets were set for steel, hydroelectric power and rural factories; in agriculture, communes were established and extremely large quotas were set for each commune's output.

In education, policy also shifted. Less priority was given to the training of scientific and technological personnel and more quantitive expansion in the enrolments at all levels of schools.

110 Leo A. Orlean, p. 34.

Figure 4 shows that in primary education, the total enrolment increased from 86,403,000 in 1958 to 93,791,000 in 1960; in general secondary education, it increased from 8,520,000 to 10,260,000; and from 660,000 to 962,000 in higher education respectively. The enrolment of girls increased by 3,400,000, or 10.2% at the first level, by 537,000, or 20.2% at the second level and by 82,000, or 53.3% at the third level (see Figure 5 & 6). Despite the rapid expansion of the total, women's educational level was not much improved, especially in the rural areas. The majority of women remained illiterate or semi-illiterate.

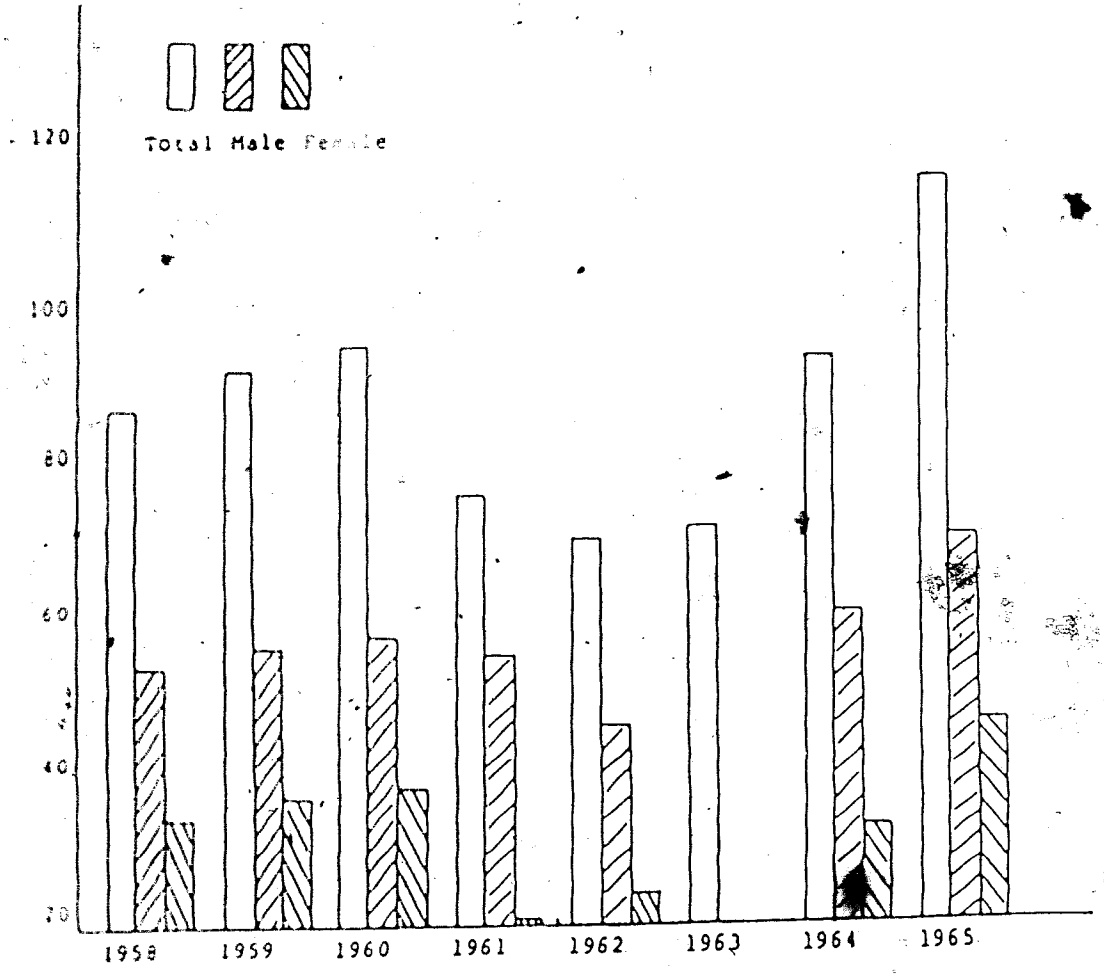
This expansion of education created many problems especially in terms of the quality of education. Compared to the early 1950s, when public expenditure on education as a percentage of the national budget increased from 5.52% to 6.42%, during the Great Leap the funding for education declined to 4.8% while enrolment expanded. The result was poor facilities and low quality schools especially in rural schools.[111]

Because of inadequate funds, "minban" schools were expanded. ("Minban" schools were run by communes and brigades.) "Minban schools" received no funding from government but were funded by the communes and brigades. In rural schools fees were charged, while in urban areas university and college education was tuition free.[112]

111 Achievement, p. 371.

112 Jan-Ingvar Lofstedt, Chinese Educational Policy (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1980), p. 97.

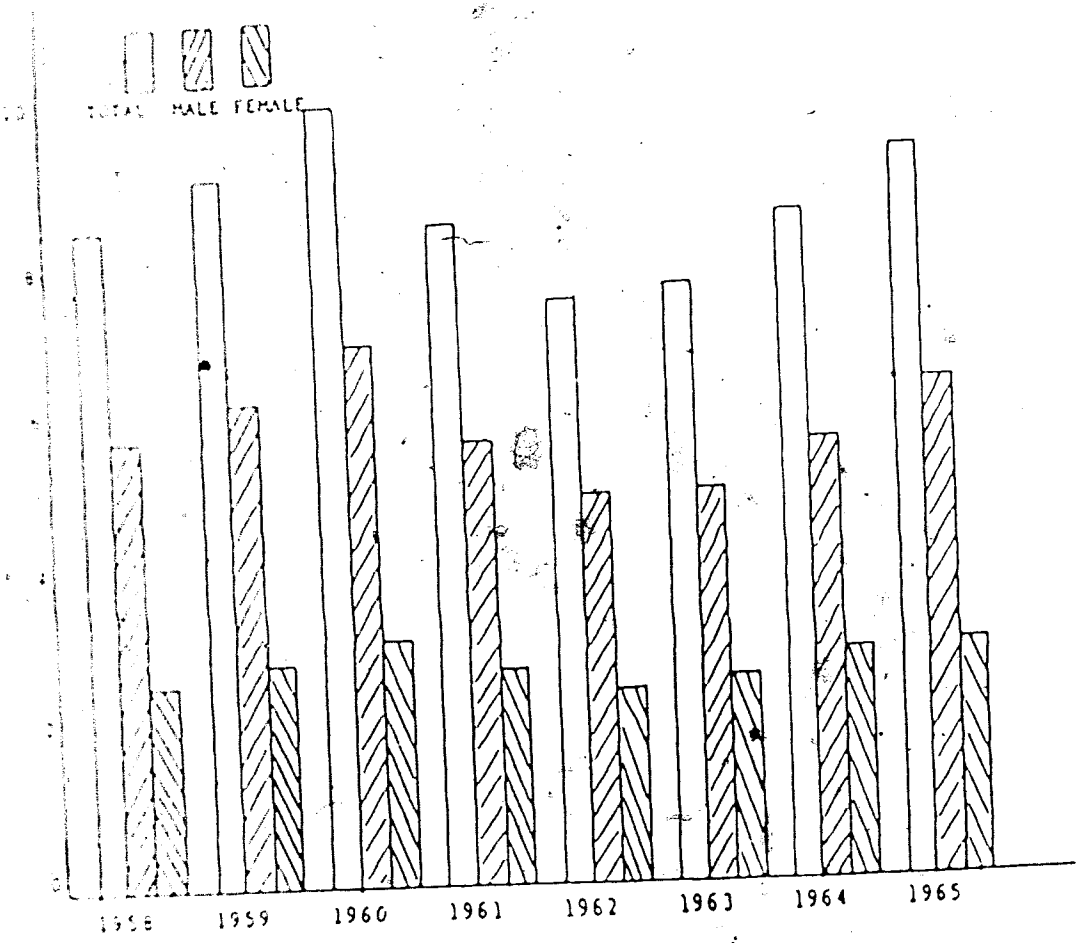
Figure 4: NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1958-1965) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

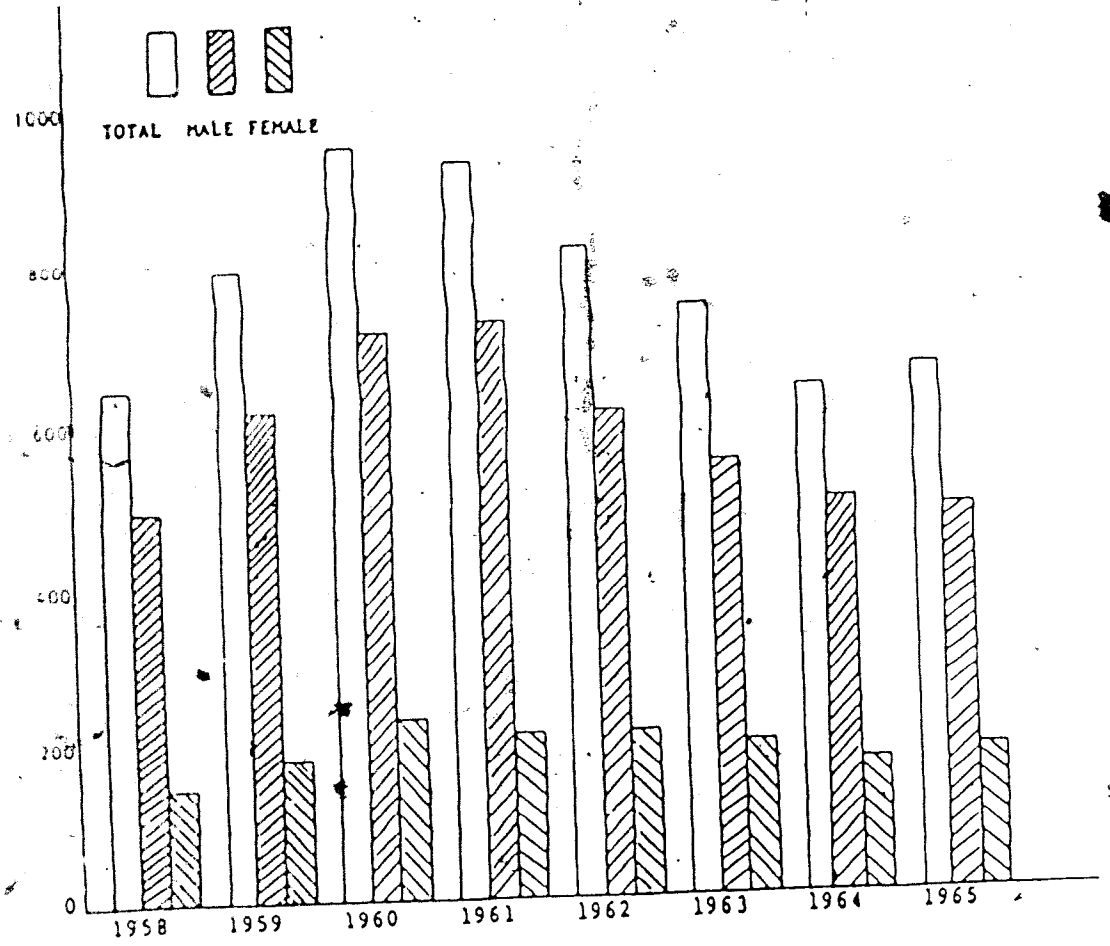
Note: The figure of pupils by sex in 1963 is not available.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1958-1965) (THOUSAND)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29

Figure 6: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY SEX (1958-1965) (THOUSAND)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

During this expansion, the shortage of trained teachers necessitated the hiring of under-qualified substitutes. It was common to find graduates of senior middle schools assigned to teach in junior middle school, especially in the rural schools. The political activities during the Great Leap also required frequent political meetings leaving teachers and students exhausted. Overall the effect was a decline in academic standards.

The level of women's education in rural China during the Great Leap is unknown, since the specific data and information is not available. In the countryside, male peasants worked outside their villages on construction, and women were left to do the field work. Peasant women were loaded with this double burden, and would have had very limited time in which to study. Besides, a persistence of the traditional lack of interest in female education remained strong in the countryside. The speculation is that there was a substantial differential in school attendance between the sexes.

From 1961 on the CPC endeavored to repair the damage done during the Leap. Under the CPC's slogan of "adjustment, consolidation, reinforcement and improvement", educational policy during the early 1960s tried to concentrate limited budgetary resources on high quality rather than quantity. School enrolment at all levels was reduced. In primary schools the total enrolment fell by about one third from 93,784,000 in 1960 to 69,239,000 in 1962; from 10,2[illegible] to 7,523,000 in [illegible] schools from [illegible] to [illegible] in universities and colleges. The percentage of girls decreased

from 39.1% to 34.8% in primary schools. In middle school and university it increased from 31.2% to 34.1% and 24.5% to 25.3% respectively (see Figure [illegible] & 6).

In 1965, 6,676,000 pupils graduated from primary school, but only 2,998,000 enroled in general junior middles school (44.9% of the total primary school graduates); 1,738,000 graduated from junior middle school, but only 1,459,000 enroled in general senior middle schools (16.4% of the total junior middle school graduates). Most of the graduates had to continue study in vocational or specialized schools.[113]

By the end of 1965, the total number of senior middle school students reached to 2,731,000, among them 547,000 were in specialized schools, 101,000 in technical schools and 775,000 in agricultural and vocational schools. The proportion of students in secondary specialized schools represented 52.1% of the total, and 41.6% were girls. In junior middle schools the number of students was 11,691,000, among them 8,030,000 were in general middle schools (68.7%). The proportion of girls was 32.2%. In junior specialized schools the proportions of girls was: technical schools-- 37.9%, normal schools-- 48.6%, and agricultural schools-- 26.4%. The proportion of girls in specialized schools was relatively higher.[114]

113 Education Yearbook, p. 189.

114 Ibid.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, some women cadres from among ordinary workers who made outstanding achievements were reported as advanced workers or national labour heroines. They were then recommended to a two-year preparatory course before they entered university. Textile worker Hao Jian-xiu who was famous for her working methods, attended the East Textile Engineering College during this period. In 1962, the college had 131 worker students, among them 85 were women (47.1%).[115]

As the level of women's education was improved, by 1963, in the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, women scientists were almost equally as numerous as men. In the Academy of Sciences, one fifth of the scientists were women. Women engineers, factory directors, and workshop leaders were reported in the fields of metallurgy, machine building, electrical engineering and other heavy industries, in which few opportunities for women previously existed.

Summary

During the seventeen years after the liberation, the social and economic position of Chinese women underwent a profound change. In the period 1951-1965, the number of girls enroled in primary education increased from 12.1 million to 45.0 million, their numbers tripled; in secondary education the increase was from 0.4 million to

[115] Cheng Chu-yuan, Scientific and Engineering Manpower in Communist China, 1949-1963 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 148.

3 million, an increase of six times; in higher education the increase was four-fold from 35,100 to 181,300. There was also some increase in the number of women scientists as women's education level raised. An official 1963 report showed that women accounted for over 28% of the research workers in the Academy of Sciences, an increase of over 10 times the proportion in the early post-1949 period.[116]

However, these achievements in women's education were made without specific policies and effective programs. Women on the whole still formed a minority of those educated at schools. Even though the CPC was aware of the meager education level of women and equality was part of the party platform, specific policies and effective programs were not set up to deal with the problems. A minority of women intellectuals did make educational advances during the seventeen years after liberation in 1949 which resulted in increased numbers of women scientists, technicians, engineers, etc.. Still, most women entered the labour force at the lowest levels. A lack of basic education restricted them to only simple and unskilled work. Up to this point, a lack of education was a basic factor in refusal to employ women. Low skill levels remains a persistent problem for women who enter the labour force.

The situation for rural women was even worse. The traditional conception that it is useless for women to be educated persisted.

116 Ibid.

Many people considered women physically and mentally inferior to men, and saw woman's primary role within marriage and childrearing, therefore it was not necessary for women to be educated. In addition, some women saw themselves as unqualified for education, there was a desire to stay at home and a lack of motivation for women to study. Among women who did desire an education, many were so bogged down with household chores that they could not find the time or energy to keep up with their studies. There is still a long way to go in raising women's education level as a whole.

CHAPTER V

TEN YEARS OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION (1966-1976)

While reviewing China's history, one cannot help remembering what Karl Marx wrote in 1851,

> "Hegel says somewhere that all great historic facts and personages recur twice. He forgot to add: 'Once as tragedy, and again as farce.'" [117]

Compared with the Cultural Revolution in China, the French Revolution seems minor in terms of the tears and blood shed in China between 1966 and 1976. An assessment of the Cultural Revolution made by the CPC in 1981, holds that the Cultural Revolution was:

> "responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state and the people since the founding of the People's Republic." "Mao Zedong's principal theses for initiating this revolution conformed neither to Marxist-Leninism nor to Chinese reality. The Cultural Revolution did not in fact constitute a revolution or social progress in any sense." [118]

Much has been written in China and abroad about the ten upheaval years. In the mid-seventies the national economy of China was brought to the verge of bankruptcy. From the beginnings of the People's Republic the so called "class struggle as the key link" implied among other things that everything connected with the West,

117 Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (Chicago: Charlesl H. Kerr, 1914), p. 1.

118 Solution of CPC History (1949-1981) (Beijing: People's Press, 1981), p. 3.

and things intellectual were bourgeois and therefore considered evil. The dilemma was that while intellectuals were in urgent demand for the nation's reconstruction, they had never been trusted. Their skills were vital for the development, but their inquiring minds might question the authorities. Although opnions often differed, and although there were ups and downs in policy making, this under-current of suspicion persisted until it became the nationwide torrent known as the Cultural Revolution.

Education Policy

In 1966 when the Cultural Revolution began, education became the main target of the radicals. The gains in education during the seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution were undone. The radicals reviled all the "revisionists" who had dominated Chinese education for the seventeen years from 1949 to 1966; and intellectuals were defined as bourgeois, to be ranked as the "stinking ninth category of class enemy."[119] In addition to maligning the majority of teachers and students as bourgeois intellectuals who had trained in revisionist schools, the radicals subjected them to ruthless persecution and attack. Professors, teachers and educators were castigated and deprived of their right to use their talents in

[119] According to the radicals, class enemies include landlords, rich peasants, anti-revolutionary reactionaries, criminals, rightists, capitalists, spies, capitalist roaders in the CPC and intellectuals.

constructive service. Even highly qualified scientists, whose services were desperately needed were exiled to the countryside for years of hard labour without any chance to contribute their expertise and scholarly attainment. Some were brutally killed or committed suicide.[120]

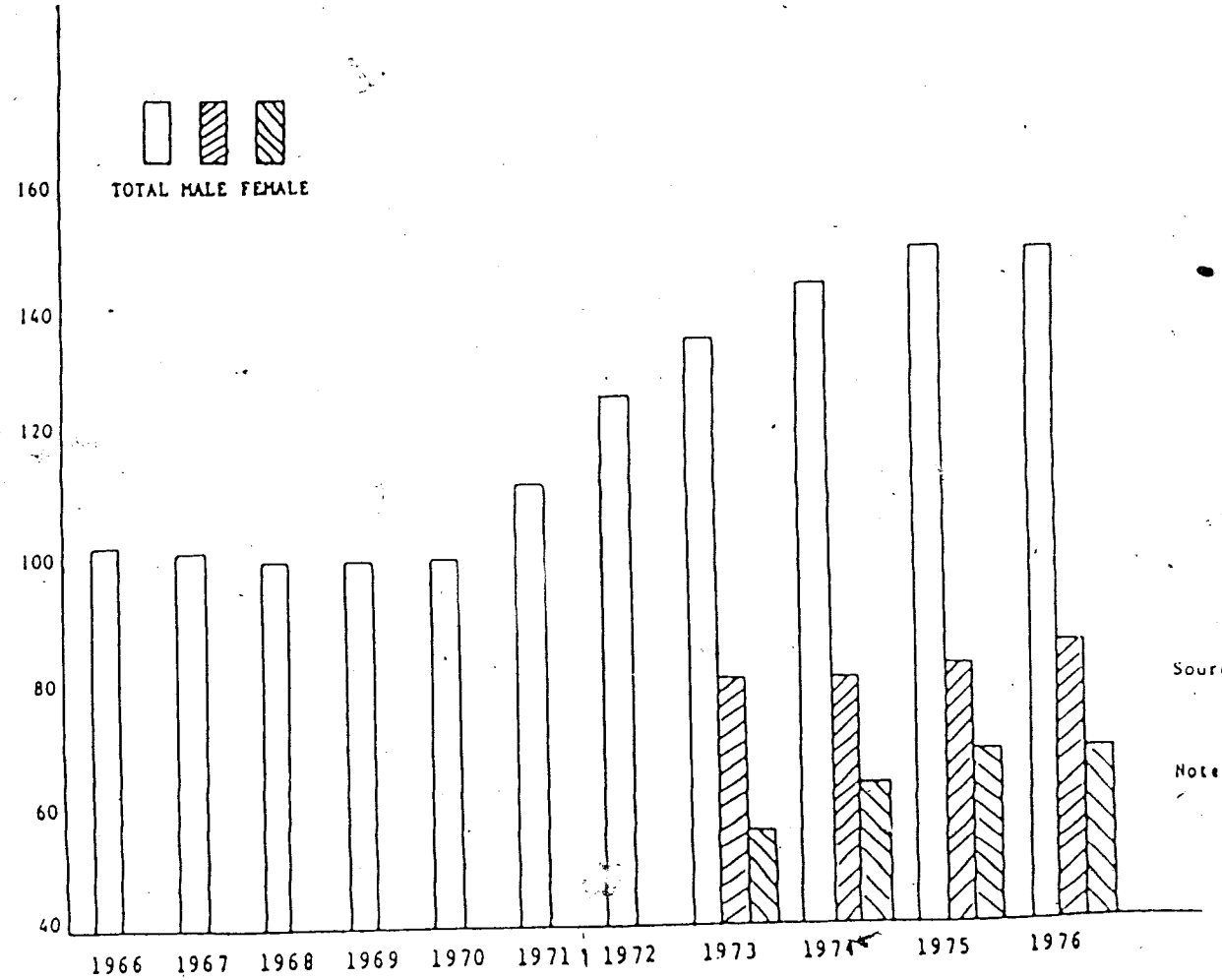
The intent was to substitute equity for elitism in education, or to "universalize" educational opportunities. Emphasis was placed on practice rather than learning. The activists of the Cultural Revolution wanted to turn education upside down, so in the name of educational reform, all schools were forced into closure from 1966 to 1969.

Primary Education and Secondary Education

Let us first examine the quantitative aspect of primary and secondary education during the Cultural Revolution. There are no statistics available for the numbers of girls attending school between the years 1966 and 1972, only the total number of students for each year. According to Figure 7, the number of primary school pupils from 1966 to 1971 for six successive years was lower than the pre-Cultural Revolution year of 1965. In 1973 there were 135.7 million primary school pupils, of whom 55.3 million were girls (40.7%). This compares with 145.6 million students in 1966.

[120] The official report says that over 10 million people were persecuted, or died of beatings, torture, murder and suicide during the ten years of Cultural Revolution.

Figure 7: NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1966-1976) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

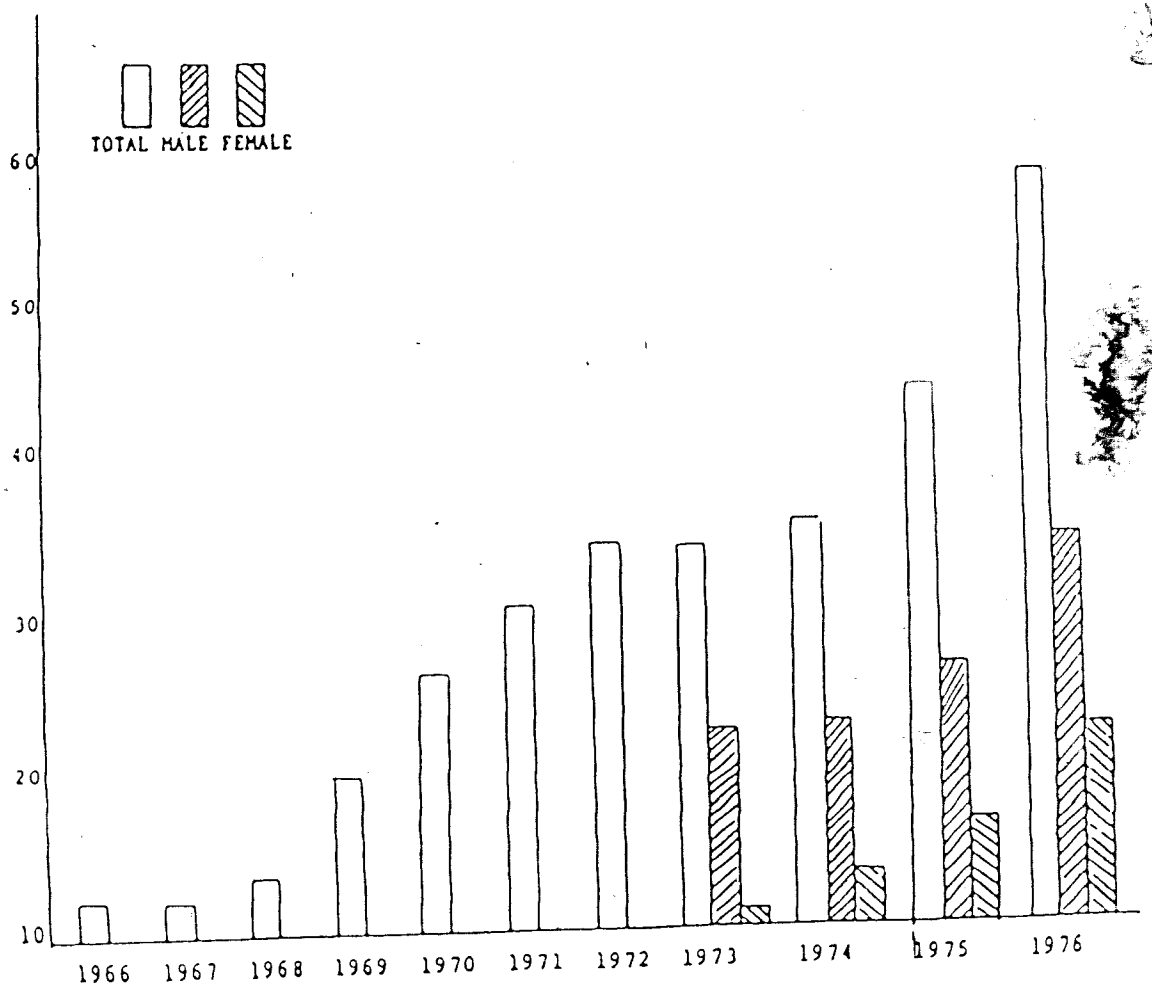
Note: The figures of pupils by sex from 1966 and 1972 are not available.

In the eight years from 1966 to 1973, primary enrolment fell by 6.8%, while in the eight years before Cultural Revolution enrolment increased by 110.5% from 1957 to 1965. In secondary general schools, the number of students increased remarkably. Compared with the 1965 figure, the increase was 278.1% in eight years. In 1973, the number of students totaled 3,446 million, among whom 33.0% were girls. (See Figure 8) While it appears that during the Cultural Revolution the total enrolment in middle schools increased more rapidly than during the pre-Cultural Revolution years, in fact the figures in Figure 8 embody secondary specialized education, since many technical vocational schools which were abolished during the Cultural Revolution, and some students transferred into ordinary schools. Compared with 1965, when there were 18,102 general middle schools, by 1976 there were 192,152 such schools. In 1965 there were 626,891 technical, agricultural and normal schools, and in 1976 there were only 2,443 technical and normal schools. All the agricultural schools were abolished.[121]

Students and pupils were told to disregard academic study. The teaching profession was demoralized; textbooks were haphazardly devised; and the curriculum was subjected to exceedingly narrow ideological constraints. Pupils and students spent most of their time memorizing political slogans. The so called "equity" in education was restricted to enrolment. When a youngster attended

121 Achievement, p. 20.

Figure 8: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1966-1976) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA p. 29.

Note: The figures by sex from 1966 and 1972 are not available.

schools for enough time (3-6 years), she or he was considered "graduated". An indication of the low quality of education is the 1982 illiteracy rate which was 14.4% among the 12 to 14 age group and 23.3% among the 20 to 24 age group.[122] Most of these illiterate youth were school graduates during the Cultural Revolution. After "graduation" male students had the opportunity to join the army or to go to work in factories (if they had good family background and high ranking officals as supporters,)-- an escape route which few girls could obtain because they were still considered physically and mentally inferior.

The goal of the Cultural Revolution was claimed to be an equalization of economic and educational opportunities. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, however, the educational budget was lower than that of 1965. In 1970, the funding of education in the national expenditure was 4.24%-- the lowest point since 1949. There was no infusion of government funds into rural schools, the facilities were scarce and quality was low. As a consequence, the means for implementing the policy of equality of opportunity were not available.[123]

With rural education, the inequality vis-a-vis urban education was evident. A report in the **People's Daily** revealed that in

122 1982 Census, p. 23.

123 Ibid. p. 371.

the mid 1970s in Gaoshu Commune in Jiangsu Province 85% of the girls did not go to school. The reason given for this low attendance was the belief that boys belonged to the family while girls were married off together with their knowledge. It was neccesary to invest in a boy's education while girls' education was neglected in the feudal fashion.[124]

Linda Gordon who went to China in 1972 described the schools for rural boys and girls at one of the "model" communes:

> "We visited the primary school, which is compulsory, and it had 50% girls; in the junior middle school, which is not compulsory, had only 20% of girls. When we asked why, the chairman of the revolutionary committee said there were many more boys than girls born in that region... Finally a woman said that she thought the reason there were so few girls in the junior middle school was that the girls were expected to do the housework." [125]

Gordon's comments illustrate that the so called "revolutionary model" and the policy of "equal educational opportunity" received no more than lip-service. The prejudice against women's education was still very strong even from cadres; and the level of education for rural women was low. Only a small number of girls could attend junior middle school; and there was no senior middle school in this area. The girls attendence was affected by the fact that there were no policies set up to help girls attend schools, instead, the traditional custom placed great emphasis on girls working in the house

124 Vubeke Hemmel, Women in Rural China (London: Curzon Press, 1984), p. 100.

125 Curtin, p. 51.

and in the field. When girls reached the age of eight, they had to take up the double burden: cooking, taking care of the younger children and doing field work. Later when they got married, young women moved to the home of their husbands, just as patriarchal tradition prescribed. Because a woman loses her connection with her parents after marriage, if her family had invested in her education, they would receive no repayment or advantage from their investment. In 1982, it was estimated that there were 23 million illiterates, among whom 70% to 80% were rural females.[126]

Problems of Youth Unemployment

In the ten years of Cultural Revolution, more than 20 million young people graduated from middle schools without either basic knowlege or special training. To deal with the serious problem of youth unemployment, the government sent the young people out into the countryside. The policy of "sending down" of youth was in theoretical terms, mainly concerned with "re-education;" the young should experience hard labour, but in reality, it was a kind of physical and mental punishment.

Most of the youth who had been brought up in cities found it impossible to match the agricultural skills of their rural counterparts. Educated youths suffered discrimination in that they were paid at lower rates than local peasants. Even though youths there

126 Education for Women in China, p. 14.

did the same kind of jobs as the peasants, they received only 60% or less of the workpoints given to local peasants. The situation for females was even worse as they could receive no more than 60% of the workpoints.

Many youths were unable to earn their own living. In some places, girls were forced to marry early because of their inability to earn a living. A combination of hard work, atrocious conditions, inadequate pay, and lack of medical attention caused widespread illness and death among youth. Young people who tried to leave the countryside suffered mentally and physically, and instances of girls being seduced or raped were reported.[127] Consequently, these educated youths came to constitute what was possibly the most discontented and explosive element in Chinese society. Suffering from a lack of opportunity for education and career advancement, they became a frustrated and disappointed group.

In the 1970s, a rigid system of job assignment existed, it relied on bureaucratic allocation, with no real labour market and little if any room for individual choices. According to this employment system, as soon as an individual finished school, the school committee would decide where they would be assigned. Except for those who claimed to have a serious medical problem, the authorities sent all students to the countryside. After working in the

127 Fox Butterfield, "Love and Sex in China", New York Times (January 13, 1980), p. 15.

rural areas for years, some were transferred to the cities and towns. Many of them moved back to the urban areas without any jobs. By 1979 the unemployed reached 6 million. Sixty to seventy percent of all unemployed young people were females.[128]

Most young men and women between the age of eight and eighteen at the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) had their education interrupted. This mass of people have been termed "the lost generation," they suffered widespread discontent and disillusionment, many of them faced a "crisis of confidence" in attitude towards the government's policy. Their time was wasted in the political upheaval and they possessed neither education nor the necessary skills to be employed.

Higher Education

From 1966 to 1970, there was no enrolment at universities. One hundred and six universities were either broken up, merged, moved or dispersed.[129] Graduate studies were abolished.

In 1968 Mao Zedong published a directive concerning the kind of higher education China should have: "It is still necessary to to have universities; here I refer mainly to colleges of science and engineering."[130]

128 Women in China (October, 1984), p. 4.

129 Chinese Education, p. 58.

130 People's Daily, June 22, 1968.

Under Mao's instructions, the study of humanities and liberal arts, such as sociology, law, finance, psychology, pedagogy, and political science was suspended, these subjects were condemned as bourgeois "poisonous weeds".

When a few universities were reopened in 1971, there were no entrance examinations, however, the competition was very tight, not in terms of academic performance but in relation to students' social background and their parents' influence. Only those who were "workers, peasants and soldiers" were admitted, most of whom had studied only at the primary level. As Susanne Pepper later observed, "children and relations of cadres of office-holders--local, as well as leading, and rural, as well as urban-- were the major beneficiaries of this enrolment system. This is because it was open to influence-peddling and parental pressure at all levels, given the pivotal role of local leaders in the nominating process."[131]

These young people who had parents or relatives in high positions were able to escape the rural exile during the Cultural Revolution when academic performance gave way to political background. So for the "new class" of bureaucrats the link between parent's status and children's success remained. It is ironic that the goal

131 Suzanne Pepper, China's Universities: Post Mao Enrolment Policies and Their Impact on the Structure of Secondary Education (Ardor: University of Michigan, 1984), p. 86.

of educational reform claimed to equalize opportunity for workers, peasants and soldiers, but this enrolment system was particularly rigid, and resulted in the decline of academic quality and led to a shortage of qualified graduates.

Figure 9 shows the situation of university enrolment from 1966 to 1976. The impact of Mao's policy was clearly reflected in higher education where the total number of students fell from 674,000 in 1965 to 48,000 in 1970, the lowest in the previous twenty years. While there is no breakdown for the number of males and females, the total number of students in 1970 was less than one tenth the number of students in 1965. In 1973, 96,500 females were enroled as compared with 181,300 in 1965, decrease of 50%. The chance for girls to go on to college education was very small. If higher education was condemned as elitist before 1966, during the Cultural Revolution period the door to university was even narrower.

Summary

Some have speculated that women seemed to have a clearer field of competition in higher education during the Cultural Revolution, because at that time intellectuals were politically vulnerable and harassed, few people wanted to be intellectuals. People were expected to seek employment in factories in order to become members of the working class and promote "family's political development".[132]

132 Education and Research (Beijing: Education Press, 1983), p. 22.

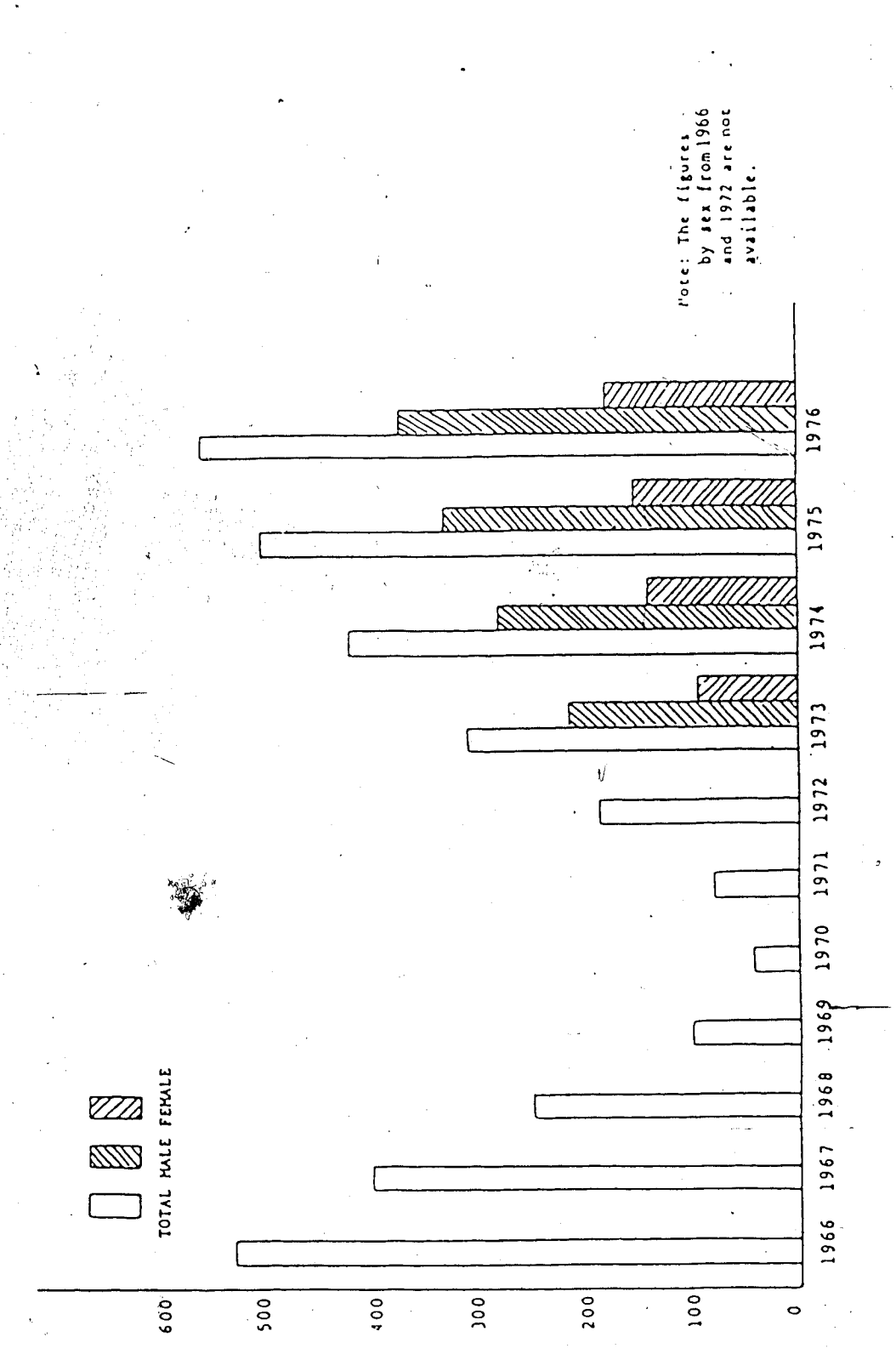


Figure 9: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY SEX (1966-1976) (THOUSAND)

Class status in China is passed on through the male line and is determined primarily by the occupation of the father. It is within this context that women's proportional enrolment ostensibly increased during the Cultural Revolution. Even if any proportional increase in the number of women in tertiary education occurred, the inferior status of women was ~~not~~ eradicated in any significant sense.

During the early 1970s, a quota system intended to increase female enrolment was instituted in higher education enrolment. One-third of the students in universities or colleges were to be women. To meet this political necessity, many females were sent to universities. This quota represents an unusual instance of a specific policy that addressed the principle of more opportunity for females, however, the actual effect on increasing female opportunity was limited by the content of the education they received. Those so called college students did not really learn, for their role was to practise "class struggle". This coupled with slogans such as "Study is futile" and "Book knowledge is harmful" led many young people to lose interest in academic study. Anarchy undermined school discipline and as a result, teaching in all schools became chaotic and teaching standards deteriorated. (Although many people later realized that they themselves were also victims of the endless class struggle). In sum, it was estimated that in the ten years, China lost about one million college and two million middle-level students who would have otherwise obtained an education had earlier education policies continued.

It is impossible to calculate China's loss during the Cultural Revolution. It extends far beyond the decade when the schools were in turmoil, when the quality of education was questionable, and when much of a generation of young people did not receive any education.

CHAPTER VI

MODERNIZATION PERIOD (1976 TO THE PRESENT)

Education Policy

The post Cultural Revolution years since 1976 is known as the modernization period, it marks the beginning of renewed efforts to train professional and technical personnel. When Deng Xiao-ping assumed the leadership in mid-1977, he took as his mandate the rehabilitation of the economic and educational order. Deng proposed to take charge of educational affairs himself, as it was considered to be of key strategic importance for the reconstruction of the socialist state. He felt that a concerted effort had to be made to remedy the chaos created during the decade of the Cultural Revolution to set education on a right course.[133]

Deng outlined a Chinese education policy to meet the needs of China's modernization program. In 1978, the Chinese government explicitly set these goals for the rest of this century: to modernize China's industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defence. To do this, according to Deng, educational quality needed to be improved; school discipline needed to be stressed with emphasis on elevating students' moral, intellectual and physical

[133] Deng Xiao-ping, "Setting Things Right in Education", Deng Xiao ping's Works (Beijiing: People's Publications, 1983), p. 83.

levels, and teachers and intellectuals had to be highly respected.[134]

Intellectuals who had been accused or punished were rehabilitated; predjudices against intellectuals and knowledge were harshly criticized; educational institutions which had been closed during the Cultural Revolution were reopened; entrance examination systems and graduate training programs were restored; enrolment was expanded; and teaching standards were improved.

Education was accorded a key role in the nation's large-scale reconstruction, it was clearly recognized in the new educational policies that "a vital factor for the success of our cause lies in the availability of skilled people, which requires the vigorous development of education as the economy allows," and nothing was seen as "more urgent than to bring up millions upon millions of labourers having socialist consciousness and mastering modern production skills and to train hundreds upon thousands of specialists in various fields and many experts and cadres for modern economy and modern science and technology."[135]

Since the 1985 Decision on Education Reform the importance of education has been greatly emphasized, among other things, this policy demands reviewing the general guidelines, changing the structure of education and reforming the mode of school administration.

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134 Deng, p. 119.

135 1985 Decision on Education Reform, (Beijing: People's Publications, 1986), p. 1.

Universal and Primary Education

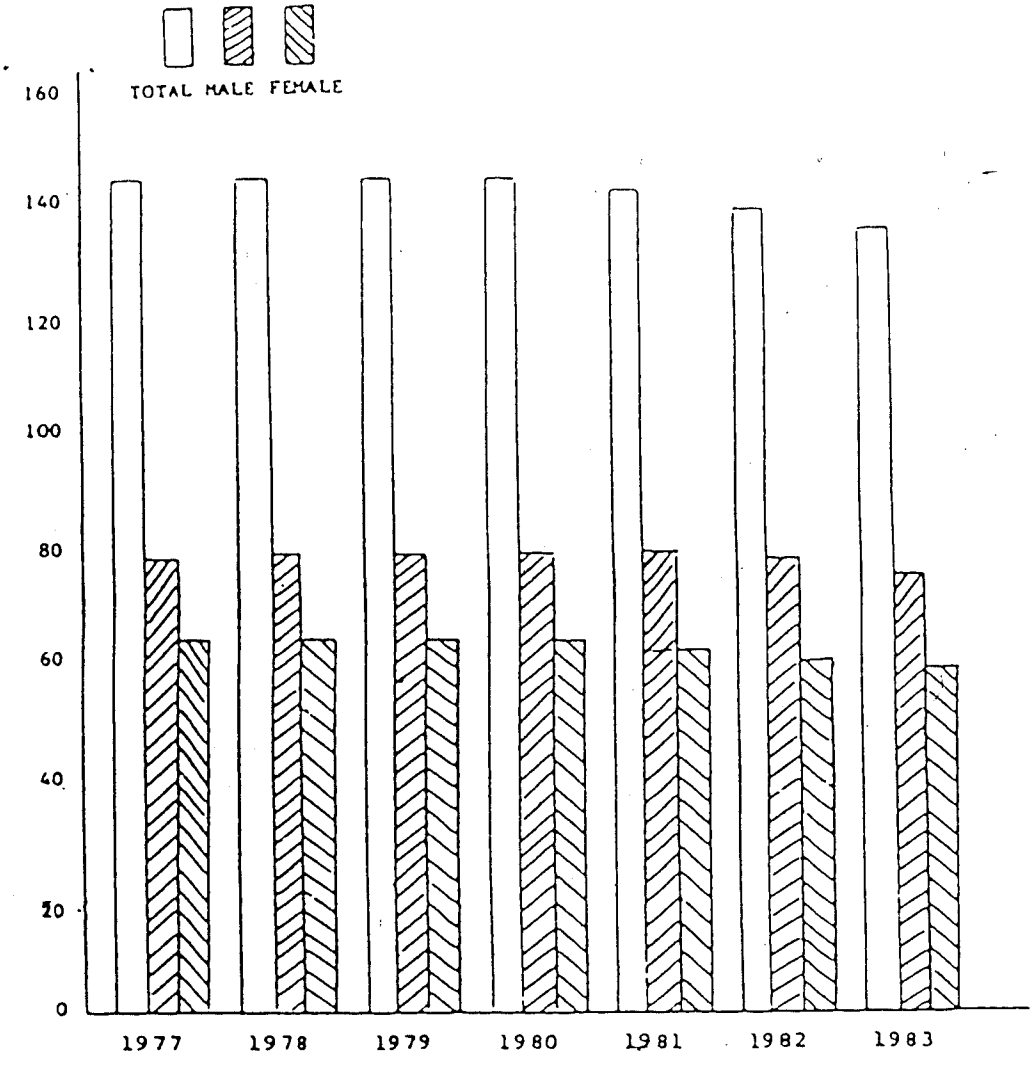
Primary education has been the basic link in developing and reforming the educational structure. It is the most numerous, accounting for 130— 140 million students, about 70%— 75% of the the total enrolment in the educational system, with the poorest facilities and most acute shortage of qualified teachers.

The 1985 Decision on Education Reform stresses the need to practise nine-year universal education (six-year primary school plus three-year junior middle school education). The call for a six-year universal education was first made in the 1950's, and repeated more than once since, but it has never come about. For in such a vast, populous and still underdeveloped country, the task is indeed a difficult one.

First, if nine-year education becomes compulsory, how many children would go to school? According to the 1982 census, children aged 7 to 12 constituted 14.94% of the over one billion total population, or approximately 150 million children. Universal schooling for a group this size would require considerable expansion of schooling,[136] especially when viewed in the light of recent contractions in enrolments. To illustrate, as Figure 10 shows the total number of pupils in primary education alone fell from 146,176,000 to 135,780,000 between 1977 and 1983. The number of

[136] "1982 Census," Beijing Review (January 16, 1984), p. 21.

Figure 10: NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1977-1983) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

girls fell correspondingly from 66,321,000 (45.4% of the total students) to 59,372,000 (43.7% of the all students) respectively. In other words, rather than expanding to meet the nine-year compulsory education goal, the primary sector has been contracting.

A second aspect of the problem of providing universal schooling for nine years has to do with the quality of schooling and the provision of education facilities. There are two types of schools--government or publicly run schools, and "minban" schools run by the people. Minban schools are found primarily in the countryside and many do not even offer a six year program. In rural areas, many minban schools have only a three to four year cycle.[137] When this is seen in terms of the urban/rural distribution of students and schools, the magnitude of this problem becomes evident. Official statistics show that in 1981 there were over 143 million primary pupils in China's schools. Of these 7.1% lived in cities, 5.9% in county towns and 87% resided in the countryside. The greatest number of students are found then, in those areas with the most limited facilities.[138]

Urban/rural disparity is also evident in school retention. In October 1984, 95% of the school age children were attending primary school, only 393 counties (out of more than 2,000) were

137 Education News, 1985, p. 25.

138 China's Statistic, (Beijing: China's Statistis Bureau, 1983), p. 16.

said to have 100% attendance, and 1,388 counties reported 95% attendance.[139] Although the majority of children enter primary school, in some places, only 65%-70% finish, and according to the Women's Federation, most dropouts are girls.[140] Judging from the disparities between the numbers of pupils admitted and graduated, the drop-out rate of rural pupils is much higher than that of urban pupils, and the majority of drop-outs are rural girls. In 1981, for example, of all the pupils in primary schools 44% were girls.

Another educational problem arises from economic reforms instituted after the Cultural Revolution. When the rural Contract and Responsibility System began in 1979, people were so anxious to become rich that they ignored schooling. Sending a child to school meant the family would lose a workhand. Even if a student was quite successful at school, she/he had to leave school to help the family. The return on the investment of schooling was seen as counter to the pursuit of the goal of the "ten thousands yuan family". In Dongfeng district, Chaozhou city, Guangdong province, where families needed work-hands, school children were encouraged to work at home. By 1981, 541 girls (60.4% of the drop-outs) left school.

139 Women's Federation Report (Beijing: China's Women's Federation 1985), p. 44.

140 Women in China (January 1986), p. 5.

In Changling County, Jilin province, one tenth of the students left school; 78% of those were girls.[141]

The number of illiterates or semi-illiterates in the population is a reflection and a consequence of these problems. Table 3 shows that in 1982, the illiterate and semi-literate population was 23,792,530 or 31.9% of the population. Compared with the male illiteracy rate of 19.17%, the female rate was 45.27%, more than twice as high. For those in the 12 to 14 age group, female illiteracy rate was 3 times higher than males. Among those in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 groups, female illiteracy was 4 times higher than those for males. This indicates that the youth who were attending schools during the Cultural Revolution did not learn anything, women in particular were the most affected.[142] A 1980 survey showed that among rural women, 42% were illiterate, 45% had primary schooling, 9.5% junior middle schooling and 3.5% had senior middle schooling.[143]

In 1984 the China's Women's Federation publicized a letter from 148 illiterate teenage women in Shuyang County, Jiangsu province. In the letter which had to be written by others, the women expressed their frustrations. "We had to do household chores and field work since childhood instead of attending school," they

141 Women in China (January 1986) p. 5.

142 1982 Census, p. 20.

143 Economic Research, June 20, 1982.

TABLE 1

RESULT OF 10% SAMPLE TABULATION OF 1982 POPULATION CENSUS DATA

Age Group	Illiterate & Semi-Illiterate Population	Total	Male	Female
All	23,792,530	31.9	19.17	45.27
12	254,444	9.60	5.29	14.18
13	278,624	9.87	5.29	14.71
14	244,787	9.98	5.30	14.95
15-19	1,178,322	9.40	4.25	14.74
20-24	1,064,209	14.32	5.71	23.27
25-29	2,078,147	22.44	9.36	36.18
30-34	1,917,234	26.28	13.24	40.38
35-39	1,520,196	28.05	14.20	43.45
40-44	1,876,627	38.79	22.43	57.47
45-49	2,470,226	52.20	32.33	74.49
50-54	2,518,337	61.65	40.59	85.18
55-59	2,302,099	67.89	47.39	89.75
60 & Over	6,087,278	79.41	60.89	95.46

Source: Population Census Office under the State Council and Department of Population Statistics, State Statistical Bureau, People's Republic of China. Beijing, July 1983.

complained. "Our feudal-minded parents think it doesn't matter whether we have any schooling or not." This is consistant with the infomation that arranged marriages still exist in some places in Fujian province, parents still keep their daughters uneducated so they will remain "obedient."[144]

In some rural areas, penalties have been instituted in order to promote education for girls. In Jianning, Fujian province, parents who refuse to send their girls to school cannot contract land. Those who encourage the girls to drop out of school are fined thirty to fifty yuan, and their children cannot seek work outside the village. If a family has both sons and daughters and does not allow the daughters to attend school, then the sons as well will not be allowed to attend. The county boasts 14,159 school-age children, of whom 6,782 are girls. The primary school registration rate for girls reached 95.08% in 1984. But harsh penalties alone will not be effective tools to promote the goal of increased women's education levels in the long-term.[145]

In addition to the lack of facilities, and traditional attitudes in favour of education for males, the shortage of qualified teachers is acute, and their distribution is uneven. In 1981, there were 5.58 million primary school teachers: 998,320 in cities (17.9%), 602,040 in county towns (10.8%), and 3,977,540 in the rural areas

144 Women in China (May 1985), p. 1-2.

145 Women in China (June 1986), p. 6-7.

(71.3%), where 80% of students live. Of the total, 3,660,000 teachers (65.6%) were females, yet in some big cities, only 4% to 5% of primary school teachers are males, because the profession is under-paid and without high social status.[146]

According to the survey by World Bank, 47% of the primary school teachers were not academically qualified.[147] An article in the **People's Daily** points out that the expansion in enrolment requires the availability of appropriately trained teachers and China must cope with the serious handicap of an acute shortage of school-teachers. In Sichuan, a province with a population of almost 100 million, there are 460,000 primary school teachers, only 200,000 (43.4%) of whom are qualified.[148]

The problem is especially acute in the rural schools, where in large numbers of minban school teachers are barely beyond the illiteracy level. The authorities are attempting to upgrade the qualifications of these teachers through on the job training. In the five years from 1978 to 1983, more than 1,000,000 primary school teachers were trained. But the process is slow, especially in the rural areas.

146 During the Cultural Revolution, teachers were severly criticized as bourgois and many were forced to abondon their teaching. For example, in Shandong province, about 17,000 teachers left their post.

147 World Bank, Socialist Economic Development, Vol. III. The Social Sector: Population, Health, Nutrition and Education (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1985), P. 149.

148 Education News, 1986. p. 89.

It is against this backdrop that any changes in education have to occur. According to the Chinese leadership, the nine-year compulsory education will be carried out in three steps. First, the program will be introduced in big cities and coastal provinces which are economically developed and can provide more funding for education. It is expected that universal nine-year compulsory education will be available by the year 1990. Second, the less developed areas are expected to universalize six-year primary education by the year 1990. Finally, in backward areas, particularly mountain areas and regions, a double effort is required to eliminate illiteracy and universalize primary education.[149]

Since the more underdeveloped a locality is, the more girls are restricted to minimum educational opportunities, consequently, girls (particularly rural girls) are wedged in at the bottom of the Chinese educational pyramid.

Due to the country's economic limitations, different methods must be adopted to implement universal primary education, and the government has responded by increasing its allocation for education. State-run enterprises, public organizations and individuals are encouraged to run schools. The growing tide of economic reform has brought forward initiatives from the "new rich" and enlightened persons who contribute funds for building new schools or to improve

149 1985 Education Reform, p. 6-7.

old ones, especially in the rural and backward areas. In recent years, Chinese newspapers and radio have given priority to educatic issues in order to raise the social position of teachers. In 1985, September 10th was established as national Teachers' Day.[150] Teachers have received retroactive pay increases and preferential treatment in problem areas such as housing. Teachers are recognized as the key to implementing the nine-year compulsory education program. Chinese authorities say that between 1986 to 1990, one million primary schools teachers will be trained. To do this, recently, large numbers of cadres from government departments were sent to 22 provinces to upgrade teachers. Since most of these cadres have never worked in the education field, one wonders how they can train teachers.[151] It is too early to say how far-reaching and effective the changes made will be in terms of improving the low socio-economic status of primary school teachers.

Secondary Education

The May 1985 Decision also stipulated the reform of secondary education by putting an emphasis on expanding specialized eduction. In the early 1950s, many specialized middle schools were established. By the mid-60s, a system of secondary specialized education took shape.

150 People's Daily, September 10, 1985.

151 Peopel's Daily, November 20, 1986.

During the Cultural Revolution, most of the specialized schools were abolished, merged, or dispersed. The intention of the abolishion of specialized middle schools may have been to alter the exclusive emphasis on intellectual training in ordinary middle schools, by combining "mental" and "manual" labour in these schools, but the consequence was a large number of primary and junior middle school students either thronged to ordinary middle schools or were left without access to education. Abolition or curtailment of specialized schools resulted in a shortage of qualified middle-level personnel.

For example, the engineer-technician ratio is imbalanced: 4:1 in Beijing textile industry; 10:1 in Shoudu Iron and Steel Company and 7:1 in Shanghai metallurgical industry.[152] In other cases the ratio was 9:1. The official target is 1:3. Modernization not only requires advanced scientists and engineers, but also demands millions of well-trained middle-level technical and administrative personnel. It is here where the weak link in the national education system lies. In 1977, a mere 5% of all middle school students were enroled in the vocational schools. Furthermore, in general middle schools academic preparation for entrance examinations is stressed, so there are too many graduates seeking too few higher education openings. This ignores the needs of the majority of students who go directly into the labour market. Since 1977, about 4 million

152 People's Daily, May 31, 1985.

senior secondary school students graduate each year, universities and colleges admit only 300,000 to 400,000, or less than 10% of these graduates. The enrolment in higher education never meets the demand by senior middle school graduates. More than 90% of secondary graduates must therefore look for jobs, but have little training for them.[153]

The 1985 Decision outlined the task of secondary education:

> "To meet the need for vigorous development of vocational and technical education, our young people, beginning at the middle school level, should generally be divided into groups, with one group of junior middle school graduates entering regular senior middle schools and the other receiving senior middle vocational and technical education; one group of senior middle school graduates entering regular colleges and universities and the othe receiving senior vocational and technical training." 154

China's leaders now entrust middle schools with the dual task of producing graduates for universities and skilled workers for society. Specialized education must be expanded so that it can fulfil the need to train large numbers of middle-level personnel.

From 1977 to 1983 the number of students in secondary specialized education increased from 0.69 million to 1.14 million. The number of girls in specialized schools increased from 0.24 million (35.0% of the total number of students) to 0.41 million (36%) respectively. In 1983, some 680,800 new students enroled in technical schools, 240,000 were girls— 35.3% of the total. There were

153 Education Newspaper, September 21, 1985.

154 Educational Reform, p. 24.

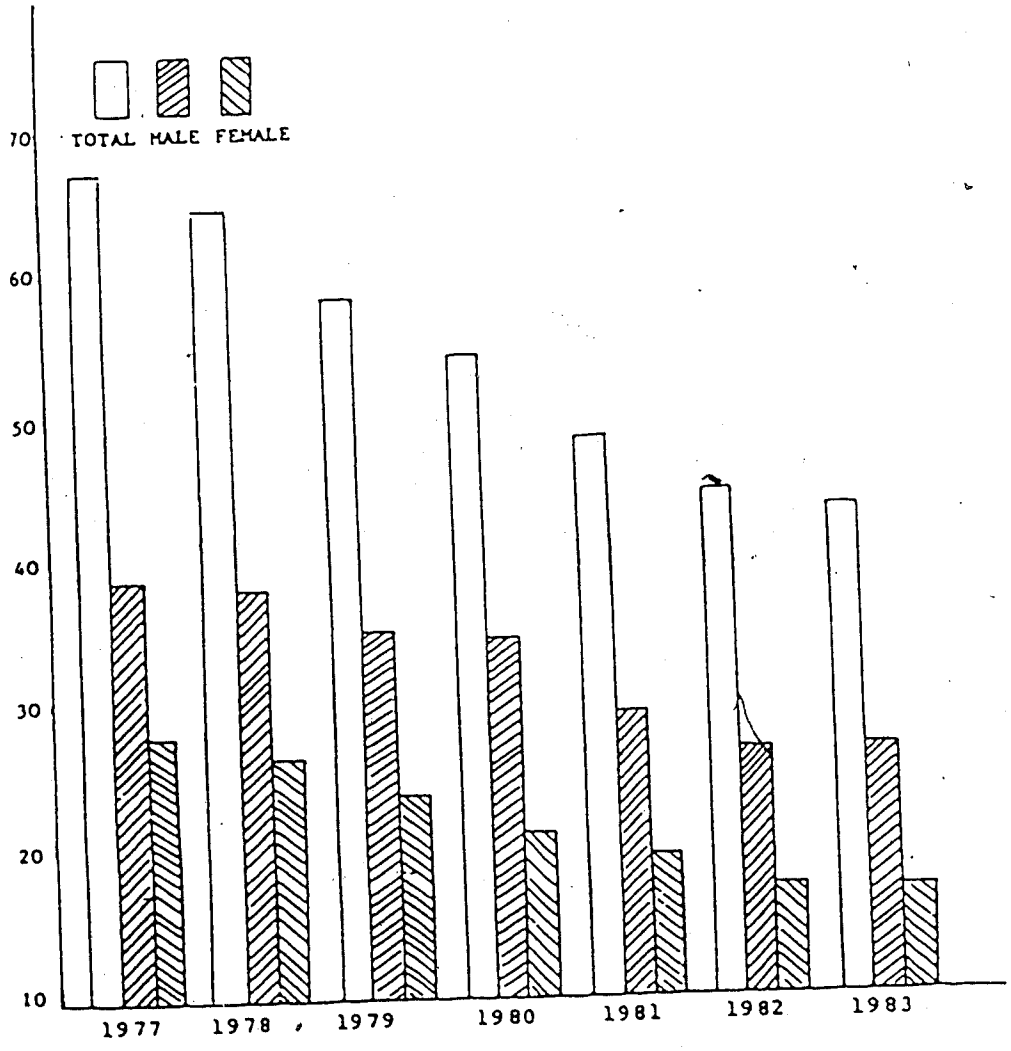
1,220,000 in agricultural schools, of whom 476,000 were girls—39% of the total. The percentage of girls was 14% higher than the peak year (1963) before the Cultural Revolution.[155]

As a consequence of the expansion of secondary specialized education, the number of students in general middle schools has declined. Figure 11 shows that there were 67.8 million general middle school students in 1977, 59 million in 1979, 48.6 million in 1981 and 44 million in 1983. The total number of general middle school students declined by 35%. Similarly, the number of females in general middle schools declined from 28.3 million (41.7%) in 1977 to 21.8 million (39.6% of the total number of student) in 1980 and 17.4 million in 1983 (39.5%).

Ideologically, one would expect the CPC policy on education to favour co-education. Indeed, in the 1950s, there were debates about co-education in middle schools. Before 1949, some girls' schools offered courses such as home economics and sewing, with the conservative view of separating girls and boys as far as possible and limiting women's roles to the traditional ones of wives and mothers. Though there is no specific policy on co-education, it was the CPC's practice that primary and higher education were to be coeducational. Yet in the middle schools, the practise of keeping boys and girls separate persisted. In addition some

155 Achievement, p. 22.

Figure 11: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SEX (1977-1983) (MILLION)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

"girls only" schools continued to function. It was not until the Cultural Revolution began that "girls only" schools ceased to exist, and ideology and practice were reconciled.

Recently women's vocational schools and colleges have been established by both private initiative and that of provincial women's federations to enhance the training of women.[156] The number of women attending such schools is small since there are only a few such schools, with limited enrolment. For example, the Women's Vocational School in Gansu province has 457 students. There are programs of half-year, one-year, two-year and three-year according to the specialty. Students receive training in pre-school education, practical English, beauty culture, applied arts, nursing, micro-computer operation, and book-keeping.

Another example is the Dalian Women's Vocational School which was established in 1984 and is jointly run by the municipal educational department and the municipal women's Federation. There are about 800 students in training as tourist guides, and office secretaries.[157]

Today there are remarkable changes in the way of life of teenagers, their thinking and the scope of their socialization. Young girls who encounter sexual discrimination are more aggressive than

156 Guang Ming Daily, December 6, 1986.

157 Women in China (June 1985), p. 8.

the older generation, there has been a great change in their self-consciousness. They are the future. Their education is an indispensible part of the social transformation in China, if the transition from traditional to modern is to be successful then more attention must be given to the education of girls in the reforms.

Higher Education

Higher education today is considered to have a central role to play in the "training of advanced specialized personnel and of developing science, technology and culture." According to the CPC's policy, by the end of the century, higher education should be a "well-proportioned, rationally-tiered system embracing a complete range of disciplines and areas, on a comprehensive scale conforming to its economic strength."[158]

Two main reasons are given for the recent surge of development of higher education. First, the ten years of the Cultural Revolution virtually destroyed the higher education system, and what remained was of poor quality. All institutions were closed for four years, and in the subsequent six years, ultra-leftist ideology sacrificed academic standards for radical policies, thus lowering the quality of education that China had achieved in the previous seventeen years. The result of this break in continuity

158 Decision on Education Reform, p. 3.

is a serious lack of trained professionals, as a consequence the reconstruction of higher education has to be a priority.

Secondly, China has also embarked on a modernization drive, and higher education is seen as an important factor for the success of this course. The availability of skilled people and vigorous development of higher education is a neccessary requirement for modernization.

An important measure in reorganizing the educational system after 1976 was the restoration of the entrance examination in 1977. An editorial in the The **People's Daily** said that the new admission policy "has a direct bearing on the quality of higher education, exerts a potent influence on secondary and elementary education, and holds significant implications for every trade and profession and for hundreds of thousands of families."[159]

According to policies laid down, students who apply to sit for the examination should fulfill the following requirements: they must be 1) senior secondary school graduates, 2) under 25 years old, 3) unmarried, and 4) in good health. Candidates are required to take a three-day examination. There are two categories of exams: those for students specializing in science and those in liberal arts. The science category contains exams on politics (historical materialism, Marxist-Leninist theory, and political economy), mathematics, physics, chemistry, Chinese and a foreign

159 People's Daily, October 21, 1977.

language. The liberal arts section contains exams on politics, mathematics, Chinese, a foreign language, history and geography. The secondary school curriculum was unified and fixed, and the teaching plans have been arranged by the State Education Commission (Ministry of Education) to prepare students for the examinations.[160]

Competition for the examinations have caused middle school teachers and school authorities to divide students according to their abilities. In order to obtain a high percentage of students who go on to university, teachers devote their attention primarily to "bright" students who will be candidates for the entrance exam. This practice has not gone without criticism. The Chinese media point out that in some localites schools are primarily pursuing a high percentage of graduates admitted to higher-level schools, and that many secondary schools have turned their "fast process classes" into "higher examination classes... Certain people have also regarded the percentage of graduates admitted to higher level schools as the sole criterion for evaluating the operation of a school."[161]

They also point out that students are engaged in study for longer hours and feel pressure to concentrate on narrow areas of specialization. This not only endangers the health of the students but also runs the risk of producing narrow specialists who lack breadth and depth of understanding and whose education fails to

160 Chinese Edcuation, p. 57.

161 People's Education (May 1983), p. 4-8.

develop perspectives essential to qualified personnel. It interferes with orderly, systematic study, which is important for quality of education.

Finally, the consequence of a selection procedure based on rigorously integrated grades and examinations is that youth from cities will provide a large percentage of university students. The urban home setting, including access to books, the special status of urban schools, and the family encouragement provide the background and support for the difficult educational competition. Success rates on the entrance examination reflect rural and urban disparities. In a relatively rich rural county in Guangdong only 21 of 400 graduates were able to go to college in 1979, peasant youth at one of the best rural schools had a 5% chance of going to university, while in the top urban schools 70% to 80% of the students were admitted.[162]

There is also a complaint that the questions on the examination, do not ask the students to express their own ideas, they are required to simply reproduce what they have been taught and not to raise any questions about its truthfulness or consistency. School instruction tends to foster verbalism and unquestioning repetition of dogmas rather than understanding and original critical thinking.

[162] Education Research (February 1984), p. 16-17.

This selection system based on entrance examinations also creates a variety of problems in higher education. The policy of quality education dictates the selection of the brightest students, and because of the shortage of facilities and the limitation of enrolment, the competition is very keen. In 1977, out of 5.7 million applicants 278,000 were accepted; in 1978 out of 6.8 million 300,000 were accepted; in 1979 out of 4.6 million 270,000 were accepted; and in 1980 out of 3.3 million candidates 281,200 were admitted— less than 10% of those who took the entrance examination were admitted.[163]

In an attempt to solve this dilemma and to improve the situation, in 1978 TV and Broadcasting, and Correspondence universities were established. Many young people who had their education interrupted by the great upheaval of the Cultural Revolution tried to catch up through part-time and spare-time programs. In 1983, the total enrolment of the Radio and TV Universities was 478,758, among whom 134,361 or 28% were women.[164]

Since 1977 the situation concerning higher education in China has changed dramatically, in comparison with higher education during the Cultural Revolution. The present system puts great emphasis on equipping students with academic knowledge and professional skills. How much women can benefit from the changes in higher education structure is of particular interest.

163 Chinese Education (March 1981), p. 20.

164 Education of Women in China (Bejing: National Women's Federation, 1985), p. 14.

Enrolment of Women in Higher Education

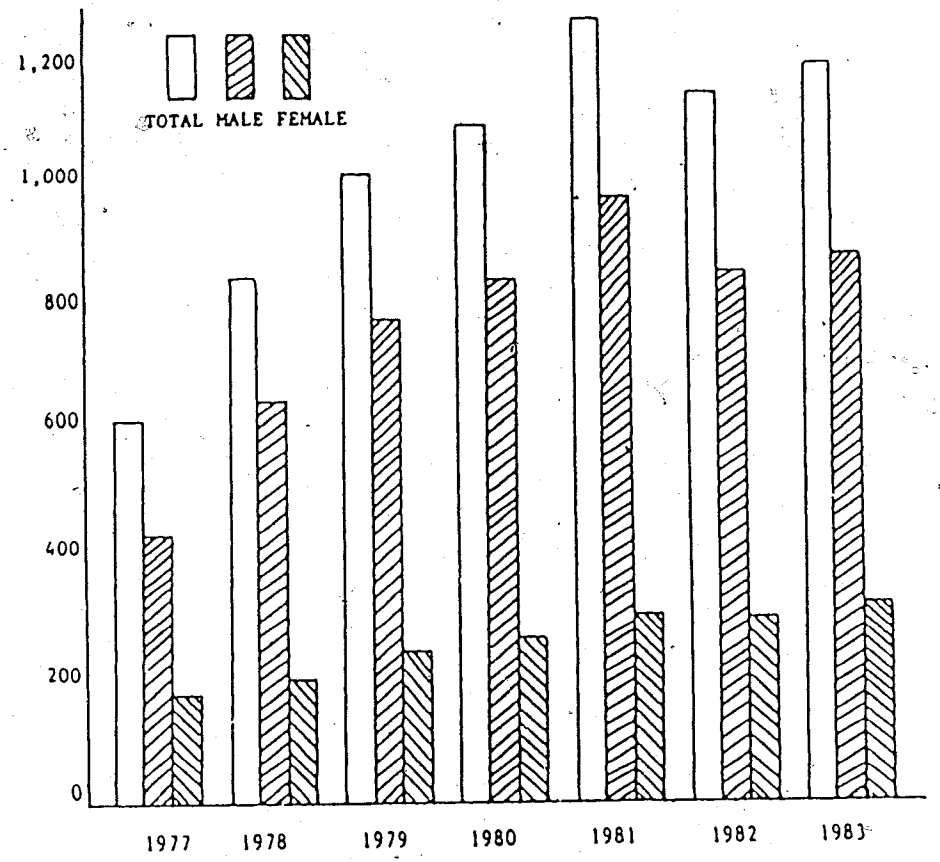
Between 1977 and 1981 enrolments in higher education doubled from 600,000 to 1,277,000 students (see Figure 11). During that period the decline in the proportion of students who were women which had begun toward the end of the Cultural Revolution continued. Women who constituted 30% of higher education enrolment in 1977, made up only 23% of the student body by 1980. Overall the number of women enroled in higher education increased but not nearly as rapidly as the number of men. Suzanne Pepper shows this proportional decline in her study of four universities.

From 1977 to 1979 female enrolment declined from 26.0% to 13.3% in Lanzhou University, from 28.8% to 22.5% in Jilin University, 27.8% to 18.0% in Wuhan University and 19.6% to 19.5% in Nanjing University.[165]

University enrolments in 1982 and 1983 were lower than the 1981 peak of nearly 1,300,000 students. Despite the lower overall enrolment during this period female enrolment was 312,400 or 24.4% of the total in 1981; 305,000 or 26.5% of the total in 1982; and 324,900 or 26.5% of the total in 1983. Though the proportion of females has inched up since 1980, the most recent rates are about equal to the proportion of females in higher education in mid-1950s and just prior to the Cultural Revolution.

165 Pepper, p. 142.

Figure 12: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY SEX (1977-1983) (THOUSAND)



Source: ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA, p. 29.

Underlying these recent increases in the proportion of women, are considerable differences in these proportions from university to university, from one field of study to another, and from undergraduate studies to postgraduate studies. For example, in two of the leading universities in China, women constituted only 23% of students at Beijing University in 1980, and 16.5% of students at Qinghua University in 1982. At the same time more than half of the students at some provincial teachers' colleges were women.[166]

When this is coupled with the fact that in 1984 72% of students were in the field of engineering and natural science, 20% in liberal arts and 5% in foreign languages. It is not surprising that there are proportionally fewer women than men in higher education and they are also unevenly spread across specializations. According to **Guangming Daily**, more males tend to be in the field of science and engineering, but more females tend to major in arts and language. This sex differential in specialization is illustrated in data given by the president of Shanghai Fudan University, the only woman in such a position in China, Dr. Xie Xide, about 28% of the students were women at Shanghai Fudan University. In some departments like foreign language and literature there were more women than men, but in others like physics, there were few women. Of the 372 students in the Physics Department in 1984 only 50 (15%) were women. Before 1966 about a third of all students were females.

166 China Reconstructs, 3, 1982, p. 25.

This number dropped after the Cultural Revolution especially in the sciences. In 1977 of the first students who enroled in the Nuclear Science Department only 5% to 10% were women.[167]

At the post-graduate level, the female/male difference is even wider. In 1983 there were 16 Ph.D graduates in China, only one was a woman. In 1982, of the 72 graduate students sent to the United States by the China University for Science and Technology, only 3 were women.[168] In 1985, among 108 Chinese graduate students at the University of Alberta only 25 were females, 16.3% of the total.[169]

What the effect of entrance examinations on female enrolments has been, can only be pieced together from various fragmentary figures. In 1979 61,900 women were admitted to Chinese universities; they consistituted 22.5% of admissions. In 1984 out of 470,000 admitted 69% were males and 31% were females.[170] In Beijing, among 27,876 enroled in higher education in 1984, 32.6% were women; in 1985, among 40,008 enroled 31.5% were female.[171]

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167 Stacey Peck, Halls of Jade, Wall of Stone (Washington: Library of Congress, 1985) p. 89.

168 Beverly Hopper, "Chinese Modernization," Modern China (July 1984), p. 320.

169 Based on a study conducted for the Office of International Student Affairs, at the university of Alberta in April 1986, by this author.

170 Education News, February 1980.

171 Education Statistics, (Beijing: Beijing Education Bureau, 1986), p. 3.

The government policy is that if a female's qualification is equal to that of others, a school is not supposed to deny admission solely on the basis of her sex. Despite this, beginning in 1982, some local officials raised admission scores for females, and some universities have instituted a quota system to limit the number of female students in their institutions. The result is that some women with high scores on the entrance examination are kept out, but lower-scoring men get in.

Discrimination against women continues to be reported on and outside campus. For example, last year Qinghua University started a course for training translators of scientific literature. An [redacted]ance examination was held. The examination results showed that the seven best scorers were all female. "Had it been in another province, not in Beijing, we could have admitted three women and four men, even if the latter got lower grades," the teacher who was in charge of the admission procedure complained, "But we could not do so due to the watching eyes of the women's federation in Beijing that would make a row. See what we did? We admitted all of the seven best women plus a boy in Beijing, and we made up by rejecting some of the best scoring women and admitted more boys in other areas, for in the provinces, the voice of the women's federations can be ignored."[172]

172 Education and Research (June 1984), p. 24.

Cases of discrimination against women are not exceptional, and are regularly reported from all quarters in Chinese media. Women are losing out in the race for admission to college. What is even more disturbing than the real decline in the proportion of women college students, are the ready rationalizations provided for the phenomenon. Assumptions about the physical and intellectual inferiority of women are held in academic circles and are rationalizd by arguments of biological determinism. It is still a common belief that girls grades are better in the primary level because they have a more diligent but less creative approach to their studies. Boys, by contrast, are held up to be more active and intellectually alive at this stage. The differences become apparent in junior middle schools, where it is believed that girls' brains stop developing earlier than those of boys. Health Ministry personnel even confirmed this general belief in the relationship between female intelligence and brain size.[173]

When we compare the number of women students in higher education institutions with the maximum in the pre-1949 years, there has been a ten-fold increase in female university students. Women scientists and technological personnel account for about one third of the nation's total, among them 58.9% were in medicine, 27.9% in teaching, 17.6% in engineering and 14.5% in agriculture.[174]

173
Education Research (December 1984), p. 23.
China Youth Newspaper, April 12, 1983.

174
Employment For Women in China, p. 4.

There is no data related to the proportion of women scientific and technical personnel prior to 1949, but since women constituted 17.8% of the total number of students in higher education in 1949, the proportion of female scientific and technological personnel could not be higher than one-third of the nation's total.

Women in China always lag behind in senior positions, for example among academicians in Academia Sinica's General Assembly only 15, or 7.5% are females, and the level of women's education as a whole lags behind that of men's.

Those women who have received higher education face other problems. Studies show that sometimes girls with a higher education have great difficulties in finding a mate. Many young men, would rather choose women for their beauty and the ability to run a household than for their high educational standing. A 1983 survey of ten higher education institutions in Beijing found that only 28% of male students wanted their future spouses to have a university degree. (In contrast, 79.5% of females said they would prefer to marry university graduates). About 50% of young men even expressed the feudal idea that "a woman without talent is virtuous." The survey concluded that the main problem was male students' demands that their future wives should be devoted to household responsibilities. Such male attitudes, no doubt, only further undermine women's upward educational mobility.[175]

175 Beijing Review, 37, 1983, p. 26-27.

In keeping with these attitudes, women graduates are discriminated against in employment. In 1984, Antu county in Jilin province hired 45 people after examinations, only 9 were women, though women had done quite well in the exam. A woman wrote, "The Constitution stipulates clearly that women are equal to men. It is unhuman, unreasonable and unjust to treat us this way."[176] Shanghai Fudan University found that in 1984, one third of the employer units asked for male graduates only and in 1985, 200 units refused to take women recommended to them.[177]

The Beijing East Wind TV Factory employed 2,500 workers in 1985. Of 221 college graduates, 120 were men and 101 were women. The leaders at the highest level were almost all men, except for one woman in charge of the trade union. Twenty-two women were office or workshop cadres, while 82 men held such posts. Of all graduates in the factory over the past five years, one woman was raised to the position of main project designer, but dozens of men advanced in their positions or became designers. When asked what prevents women's advancement, one cadre gave the reason that "after girls graduate from college they usually fall in love. At about 25 they get married and have a child. After half a year's maternity leave, they come back to work, but they have spent time

176 China Reconstructs, (March 1986), p. 22.

177 Ibid.

nursing their babies. On the other hand, boys are, comparatively speaking, much less affected by this period of many changes. They tend to use this time to concentrate on their work and excel in their career."[178]

Summary

The present Chinese educational system both in quantity and quality lags behind the internal goal of modernzation as well as advances at the world level. Female education in particular is still chronically weak. In 1983, only 43.7% of students at the first level, 39.5% at the general secondary level and 26.9% at the third level were female. Women are still under-represented in schooling, particularly at the higher levels.

The current emphasis on entrance examinations, (which are not unlike the Civil Service and Court Examinations used to select the intellectual mandarins and feudal officials), may make the situation worse. Students are required to learn exclusively by rote, little consideration is taken to develop the student's ability to think independently and creatively. Female students are regarded as "inferior" to males in intelligence and reasoning ability, and the discrimination against women in admission to higher education is systematic.

The discrepancy between male/female access to education

[178] Women's Federation Report, p. 60.

remains disproportionate, and this is particularly true in the rural areas. Female illiteracy is twice as high as that of males, and most of the illiterates are in the countryside. In 1981, there were 1.2 millon students in higher education. This constituted 1.2 students per 1,000 of the total population, of whom 0.32 per 1,000 were females— over three fourths of them from the urban areas, and only 0.03 per 1,000 from the rural areas.[179]

In terms of the distributions by fields of specialization, the majority of females are assigned to traditional "female preserves"-- language, education, humanities, etc.. Some education institutions have adopted a quota system to restrict women's entry into engineering and natural sciences and thus penalize females.

Education is important to social and economic development, and is determined by society and history. In a tradition-bound society like China's, women's education has been adversely affected by the patriarchal social structures and customs. The belief in women's mental and social inferiority is reflected even in the attitudes of females themselves, with females tending to be less intellectually confident than males. China's women need to unshackle themselves from the long-standing bonds of "female weakness," "inferiority," and "dependent mentality," they must actively seek to realize full emacipation and equality during the current societal transformation. An appropriate and progressive policy on women's education is pivotal to women's emancipation.

179 Education Newspaper, April 1, 1986.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

A report in Time magazine on "the world's largest educational system" says,

> "About 183 million children between the ages of 7 and 19 attend primary and secondary schools. Of these, 136 million reach junior high school, and a mere 7 million go on to senior high school. (An additional 1 million students attend secondary vocational schools.) As a result, today there are only 6 million college graduates among China's one billion people. Early this year Beijing promised to increase funds for education by 72%, to $31.5 billion, over the next five years." 180

As a whole, the educational level of women in the People's Republic of China has improved over the past three decades. Table 4 from the 1982 census displays the education levels of females by various age group in 1982. It shows that the level of education in younger age groups is higher than that in the older age groups. For those in the over 60 age group who received their education prior to 1949, only 0.1% have higher education, 0.8% have attended secondary school, 3.7% have primary schooling, while the vast majority, 95.4% are illiterate. Among those in the 50 to 59 age group, who obtained their education in the early years of the PRC, the

180 Time (November 17, 1986), p. 92. The Education budget in China is low. According to the People's Daily June 29, 1983, of the 151 states in the world, China's per-capita expenditure on education ranks third from the bottom.

TABLE 4

1982 CENSUS ON FEMALE EDUCATION LEVEL (PER 1000)

Age	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Illiteracy
20 - 29	291	400	5	304
30 - 39	386	191	6	417
40 - 49	238	94	10	658
50 - 59	98	26	6	870
Over 60	37	8	1	954

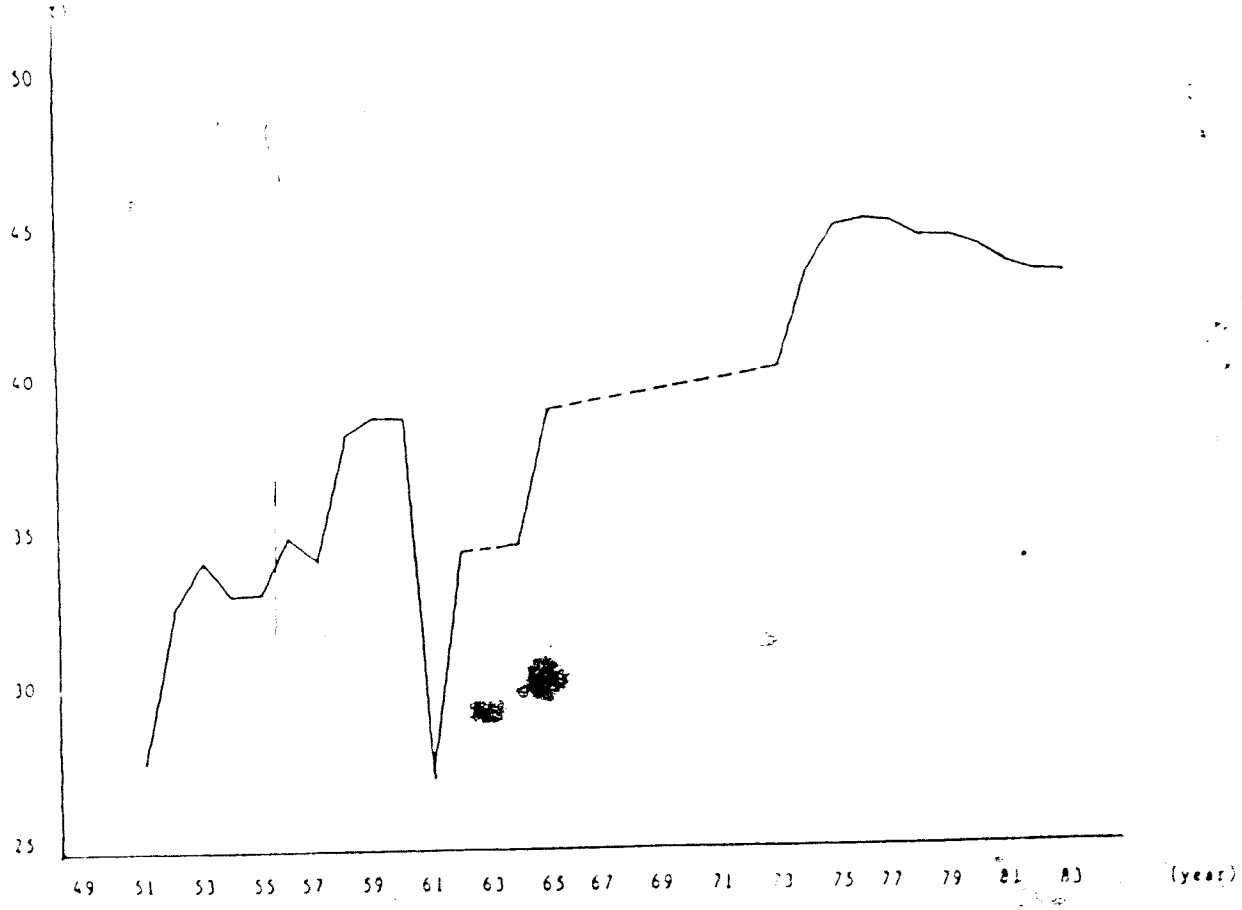
Source: WOMEN OF CHINA, July 1985. p. 19.

proportion of women is higher in each educational category. The proportion of women with higher education is 0.6%, with secondary education is 2.6%, with primary education is 9.8%, and with no literacy skills is 87%. Those in the 40 to 49 age group were educated in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when education expanded more rapidly. The proportion of women is 1% at the higher level, 9.4% at the secondary level, 23.8% at the primary level with 65.8% illiterate. Even for those in the 30 to 39 age group who were most affected by the Cultural Revolution, more have primary and secondary education, but fewer have higher education than is the case for 40 to 49 years olds, while 38.6% of 30 to 39 years olds are at the primary level and 19.1% are at the secondary level, only 0.6% have higher education. For this group, the proportion who are illiterate falls to 41.7%. A similar pattern is evident for the 20 to 29 age group who received their education in the seventies and eighties, and who also were affected by the Cultural Revolution, again the proportion who are illiterate falls to 30.4%. The proportion with only primary education also decreases to 29.1%, while the proportion with secondary education more than doubles that of 30 to 39 years olds to 40%. Little change is evident in the proportion with higher education. Improvements in the education of women are clearly demonstrated by this data but so are the vicissitudes of changing educational policy that affected higher education in particular.

The effects of changing educational policy, which is itself a reflection of ideological shifts in the PRC, are even more evident when female enrolment is examined in relation to total enrolment over the period since 1949. As Figures 13 and 14 show, the long term trend to a rising proportional representation of females in primary and secondary schools has leveled off. At the primary level, the enrolment of females relative to males rose from 28% to 34.5% between 1951 and 1954, then fell a couple of percentage points during the period when expansion of education was slowed during the mid-1950s. The Great Leap Forward brought a short period of renewed growth in the percentage of females relative to males in primary schools. Immediately after the Great Leap Forward the proportion of females fell from 39.1% to 27.5%, then recovered to the 39.3% by the year 1966. In the absense of data on male and female enrolments, little can be said about the period between 1966 and 1972. Since 1973 females have constituted more than 40% of the total enrolment. This proportion rose by some 5% in the last years of the Cultural Revolution, and has maintained some stability in the ensuing years, with female enrolment fluctuating between 44% and 45%.

At the secondary level, the proportion of female enrolment fell between 1950 and 1952, rose until 1958, levelled off during the Great Leap and then rose again just prior to the Cultural Revolution. Although data on enrolment by sex is not available between 1966 and 1972, information for 1965 and 1973 indicate that the proportion of females probably fell. From the latter part of the Cultural Revolution through the beginning of the current period,

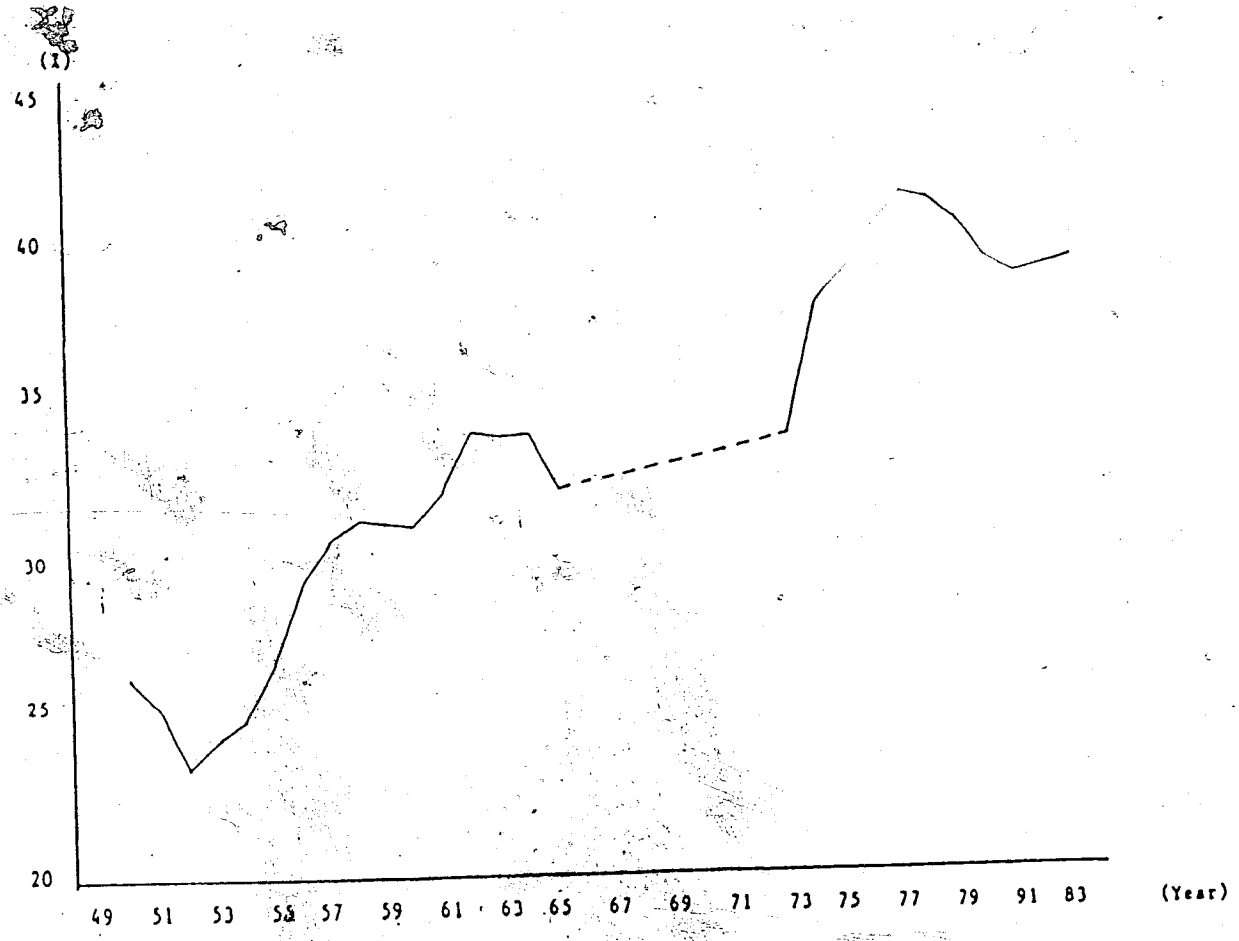
Figure 13: NUMBER OF GIRLS AS PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION (1949-1983)



Source: Achievement of Chinese Education, 1985.

Note: The percentage of 1963, between 1960 and 1972 is not available.

Figure 14: NUMBER OF FEMALES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLMENT IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (1949-1983)



Source: Achievement of Chinese Education, 1985.

Note: The percentage between 1966 to 1972 is not available.

females as a proportion of secondary enrolment rose from 38.1% in 1974 to 40.8% in 1979, then fell, stabilizing at around the 39% level after 1980.

Proportional enrolments of females at the primary and secondary levels have risen, and recent enrolment is closer to equity between males and females at the primary than at the secondary level. The pattern of the rise in female enrolment has not been a smooth and steady one. Rather the shifts in policy particularly before and after the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are clearly evident in the proportion of females in school— sometimes lurching forward, and at other times falling back. These sudden changes have had considerable effects not just on the quantity of education available for girls but also on its continuity and quality.

While the long term trends at the primary and secondary school levels have been towards more equal representation of females relative to males, the same cannot be said of higher eduation. Indeed, if the representation of women in higher education is looked at in time segments of roughly five years, an interesting pattern of ebbs and flows can be seen (see Figure 15).

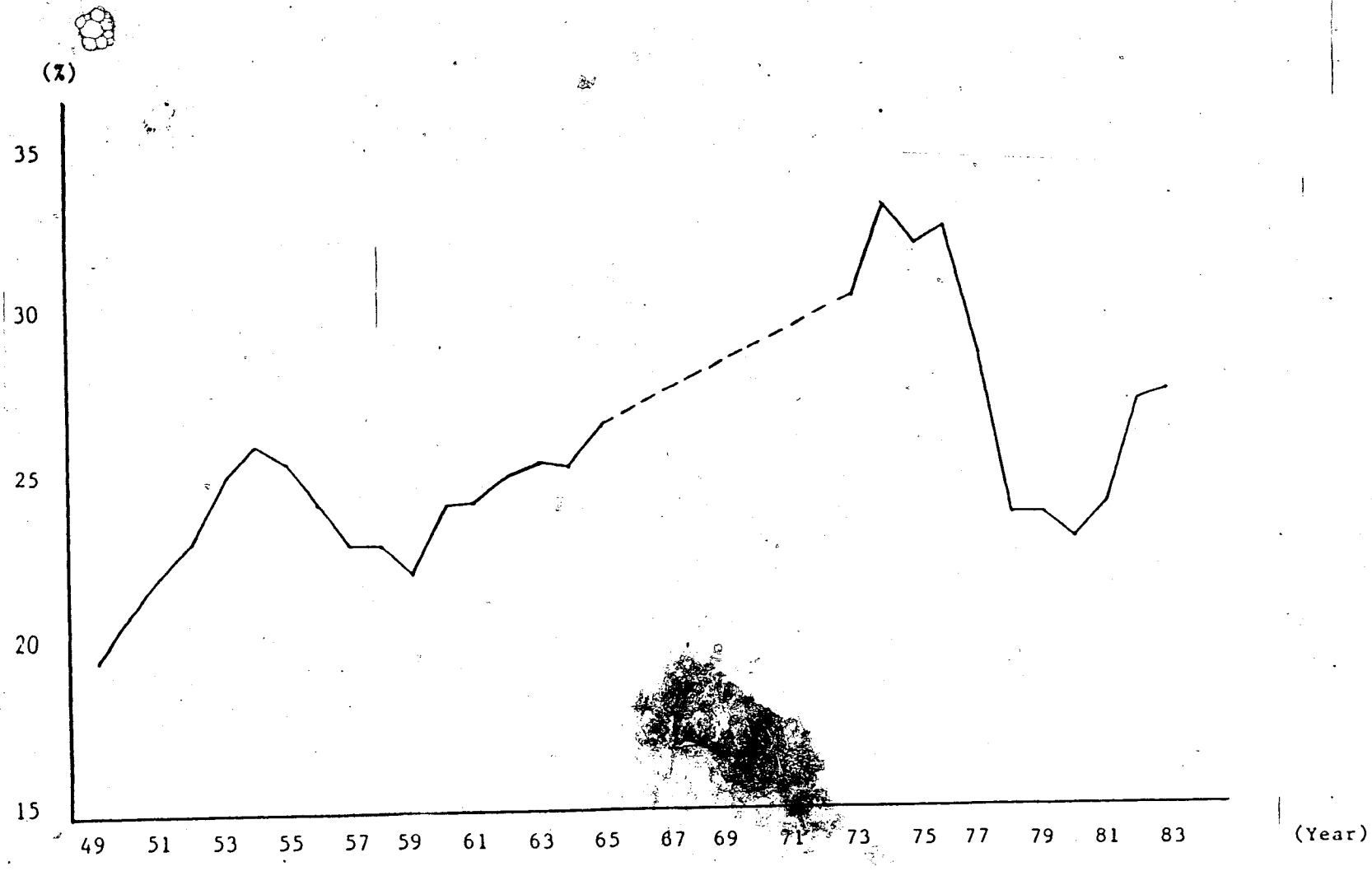
1949-1954 — enrolments of females rise from 19.8% of the total enrolment to 26.3%.

1954-1959 — enrolment of females falls to 22.6% of the total.

1959-1965 — number of females rises to 26.9% of the total enrolment.

1966-1973 — universities closed in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution.

Figure 15: NUMBER OF FEMALE STUDENTS AS PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (1949-1983)



Source: Achivement of Chinese Education, 1985.

Note: The percentage between 1966 and 1972 is not available.

1973–1976 — female enrolment rises to over 30% of the total enrolment.

1976–1980 — female enrolment declines to 23.4% of the total.

1980–1983 — gradual increase in female enrolment to 26.9% of the total enrolment.

It appears that when the emphasis has been on the quality of technical and scientific manpower, as was the case after both the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution, the proportional representation of women in higher education falls relative to men. The equalization of educational opportunity for women in higher education has been a case of [redacted] steps forward and one and three-quarters steps back so that women as a percentage of total enrolment in 1983 roughly equals their percentage in 1965.

Although in the several decades after the founding of the People's Republic, there has been more access to education for women in China as compared with the pre-1949 period, the opportunities for women remain limited. The causes of the problems are deep-rooted. Even today, age-old feudal-patriarchal conceptions continue to affect policy decisions about education and about women's education in particular. Modern education began late in China, when the Imperial Manchu dynasty was forced to accept reforms, including the adoption of an imported system of instruction, even though the resistance of the traditional conservative forces was very strong. In the early years of the twentieth century, especially after the 1919 May Fourth Movement, the popularity of western feminist ideas surged, but these foreign teachings were

not easily incorporated into Chinese society. The almost constant social turmoil and political upheaval up to the liberation in 1949 made it even more difficult to support outside ideas, new concepts and theories. Against this volatile backdrop the education system could not function smoothly.

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949 there have been further changes in the social system. China's societal transformation is incomplete; feudal-patriarchal traditions still permeate the socio-economic and educational structures. Isolation and policy fluctuations have impeded China's progress. A thousand years of Confucianism still affects the people's mentality and their social life. James Rusk, in an article in **The Globe and Mail** says:

> "With the twenty-first century barely more than a decade over the horizon, this peculiar combination of twelfth-century feudalism, nineteenth-century economic infrastructure and perverted Confucianism-cum-communism is clearly not globally competitive." 181

Confucian concepts of distinctive male and female characteristics, have been perverted to include not just female inferiority but differing female capability, and continue to exist. The belief in women's mental and social inferiority is reflected in the attitudes of officials and the public. Neither the social changes of the last hundred years nor the educational reforms since 1949 have been effective in eradicating this feudal mind-set.

181 James Rusk, "Reform in China is bedevilled by Instability", The Globe and Mail, March 24, 1987.

The current imbroglio illustrates the difficulty China faces: her needs are vast and her means limited. Increasing literacy and making education available to the masses is an essential goal, and as improvements in health care lead to rapid population increases, the need for education is a constantly growing one. It is equally important for economic development that large numbers of scientists, engineers, and specialized technical personnel be trained, but with limited finances, facilities, and availability of teachers, it is impossible to satisfy both the need for education expansion and specialized education simultaneously. The vacillations in policy between periods of increasing the number of young people attending school and increasing the availability of high quality manpower reflect the gap between limited means and increasing, often conflicting, needs.

Tension also results from the need to create stable institutional structures that can administer the affairs of such a vast nation, and the CPC's need to continue to mobilize the population through mass campaign techniques. These mass mobilization techniques have been developed and used effectively throughout the period prior to 1949 and still play an essential role in maintaining the revolutionary vision. As Dietrich observes:

> "Bureaucracy conflicts with mass mobilization. Regular, predictable hierarchies cannot easily coexist with irregular, unpredictable initiatives. A great modernized nation cannot at the same time continue to be a Yanan insurgency." 182

182 Craig Dietrich, People's China (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 81.

The periods in which mass mobilization and revolutionary vision were emphasized, were also the eras when rapid expansion of education often resulted. Periods in which the creation of stable institutional structures were emphasized, resulted in a focus on the development of high-skill, technical manpower, and concommitantly a contraction of educational participation rates, particularly at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Although improvements in the educational participation of females has been more likely in periods of overall expansion of the educational system, the pendulum swings which have occured throughout the past decades in the PRC with regard to educational policies show that neither the "radical" nor the "moderate" approach has rectified the educational problems of women. The "moderate" approach fails both in policy and practice to fully redefine female roles and overlooks the necessity for fundamental change in traditional structures. The task of achieving womens' equality cannot be equated and reduced to wiping out the "feudal remnants." The "radical" approach has not succeeded in achieving women's emancipation either. Declarations that women in the PRC are already equal to men, and therefore any talk about women's liberation is following "capitalist footsteps" does not make it a reality.

Looked at in terms of the Marxist principles of equality between males and females, education in China has not reached its goal. Looked at in terms of China's performance relative to other countries, the conclusions are mixed. When the number of females at school in China is compared with other countries, the figure

for China is lower than for advanced countries. When compared with developing countries in Asia, Parish and Whyte indicate that

> "...China's performance to be only average. Females have better access to school than in countries like India and Bangladesh, but poorer access than in places like Sri Lanka and the Philippines. China's performance in promoting equal access at lower level looks better than the college level, where women are clearly severely under-represented." 183

Looked at retrospectively China has made considerable progress in expanding education availability and some progress in equalizing opportunities. Looked at prospectively, China has a major undertaking ahead of her. By the year 2,000, China's population will reach 1.2 billion, an annual increase of 20 million. If the goal of universal primary education is to be realized, there will have to be places for 120 million primary school students, among whom half will attend junior general middle schools, and the other half will be in specialized schools. Among those who graduate from junior middle schools, 40% will go to senior general middle schools and 60% to the specialized schools. Each year there will be 4 million senior middle school graduates who go on to higher education. The proportion of females at each level will be 48.5%,— a much higher proportion than today.[184] Herculean efforts will be required to fulfil this task of China's education in general and women's education in particular.

183 William L. Parish & Martin K. Whyte, Urban Life in Contemporary China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 199.

184 This forecast is premised on the stability of the population. Qian Xue-sen, "Prospect of China's Education", Xin Hua Digest (March 1986), p. 184.

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