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EMPOWERING UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN CHINA:
POSSIBILITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
IN THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION PERIOD

by

Yan Zhou

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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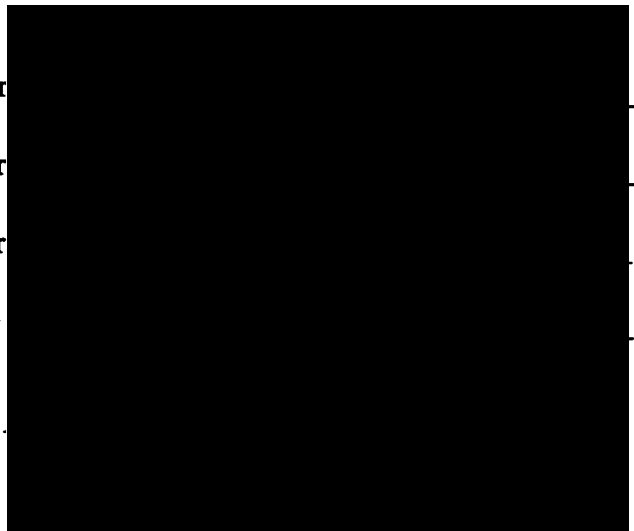
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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*To all those who are still
committed to the cause of
higher education in China*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the possibilities for and constraints on empowering university teachers in China during the transition period from a planned economy to a market economy. It focuses more specifically on the period between 1993 and 1995, the former being the year the government issued a comprehensive Program for Reform and Development of Education.

An historical review of China's cultural and ideological traditions and of the role of scholars and intellectuals in selected periods provides the backdrop for the study. Drawing on interviews with teachers and administrators, this first-hand study reveals that when universities are driven primarily by market forces, strategic planning for academic development is replaced by priority on programs that yield quick financial returns, bringing increased opportunities to some university teachers and fewer to those with less marketable skills. This, combined with other issues, such as the centralized decision-making process, deteriorating social relationships on campus, and the low esteem in which teachers are held, serves to distract teachers from their commitment to teaching. The net result of all this has been a serious brain drain from university work.

The study concludes that university teachers need to be empowered both economically and politically in order to become a more significant force in the reform of higher education and to play a greater public role for social progress in China.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Research Question

The purpose of this research is to explore the possibilities and constraints on empowering university teachers in China during the current period of economic transition from a planned to a market economy. The study puts special emphasis on the period from 1993 to 1995 when dramatic changes took place in higher education as a result of rapid and major economic changes. These changes have had serious ramifications in all parts of society, including higher education. The changes have resulted in new strains and stresses on university teachers, who consequently feel frustrated and powerless. This thesis focuses on identifying and understanding the sources of this frustration and lack of power in order to discover: first, the constraints holding university teachers back from becoming empowered; and second, those social factors and the teachers' combined strengths that could possibly serve to help university teachers overcome the constraints and achieve greater empowerment.

As a developing agrarian country with a population of 1.2 billion, China has long faced the challenge to provide adequate educational opportunities for its people. In spite of great developments in higher education since the beginning of the socialist revolution in 1949, universities in China

have not been able to meet the huge social demand. This is because they have been plagued by limited financial and human resources, a problem common to developing countries. According to official statistics, there were approximately 5,200,000 students (including those in graduate and adult education programs) enrolled in 1,054 universities in China in 1995 (Guo 3). This means that out of every 100,000 people in China, only 430 are university students. Just one year earlier in 1994, there were 538,315 university teachers (Guo 3), amounting to 45 university teachers for every 100,000 people in the country.¹

The discrepancy between supply and demand in higher education became more serious with the economic transition beginning in 1978. At the same time that rapid development in almost every aspect of the economy called for people with better educational credentials and expertise, education was receiving less and less government investment. As a result, despite steady economic growth over the years, and despite a general improvement in people's standard of living, university teachers were among the few social groups whose living standard decreased. According to reports issued by the State Bureau of Statistics in 1991 and 1992, the salary of those working in the field of education (teachers, administrators and support staff at all levels of education) ranked ninth and

¹ According to United Nations statistics, there were 6,980 university students and 236 university teachers out of every 100,000 people in Canada in 1993 (UNESCO 3-233-42).

tenth respectively among the 12 major occupational categories listed (Han 3; Lu 69; Zhang 58). Furthermore, the salaries of university teachers were lower than the salaries of high school or vocational school teachers (Lu 69). In addition to lower salaries, university teachers seemed frustrated over a variety of other problems.

The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a large number of university teachers, especially the young and middle-aged ones, venting their frustrations by leaving the profession for better paying jobs at home or for advanced educational opportunities abroad. Between 1987 and 1992, 70.1% of the teachers recruited by universities during that time period left the field of higher education. Among those who left, 78.8% were young teachers (Lu 68). One result of this has been a greatly increased workload for those who remain. Moreover, because of their low salaries, most university teachers must engage in a second or even third job to maintain a decent standard of living.

Despite reforms in higher education, the many changes do not seem to have removed the causes that led to the serious brain drain from higher education that started in the late 1970s. Nor have they served to reduce the frustrations experienced by the teachers.

It is against this backdrop that this research was conducted. Small as the population of scholars has always been in China, they not only represent the most educated

people in the country, but they also have a very long history of exerting a great influence on the shape and direction of China's social development. However, with the socialist revolution, university teachers had social and political experiences that were extremely different from those of others in China. Thanks to repeated political and ideological campaigns, they gradually became a rather marginalized group in society with little political and social influence.

However, given the economic and social changes that are occurring at an unprecedented pace in China, and given the important historical role of scholars and teachers, it is not far-fetched to suggest that university teachers will again be able to exert a significant impact on the country at the turn of the century. It is therefore important, at this historical period, to identify possible interventions in higher education that might bring teachers' initiative into greater play so that they can assume a more important role in building a stronger and better country for the 21st century. It is my hope that by exploring the possibilities for and the constraints on empowering university teachers economically and politically, this research will contribute to the reform of higher education in China.

Methodology

This research has been conducted using three approaches. The first is a theoretical exploration of critical theory and

the concept of empowerment. This forms the framework for my research. Next, I provide an historical analysis of the roles of Chinese scholars and university teachers under different social and political circumstances. The purpose of this is to lay out the background of this social group. The third is a qualitative study of the lives, work, and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of university teachers. This first-hand research, conducted through a single-site case study in one of the major urban universities in China, is the primary source of new data in this research.

Qualitative Study: Basic Principles and Rationale

The qualitative research approach recognizes taken-for-granted reality as problematic (Smith 1987). It values individual experiences in reaching an understanding of a broader social context. Accordingly, its major research techniques--participant observation and informal and in-depth, open-ended interviews--are effective and relevant forms of inquiry for uncovering different levels of institutional life. The contention of the qualitative research approach that individual phenomena are best explained and understood through the examination of their broader context (Henwood and Pidgeon 16) is pertinent to my basic philosophical understanding that individual phenomena, personal choices, and independent decisions are not divorced from the conditions of their time and social environment.

Qualitative research emphasizes the importance of the researcher's perceptiveness, sensitivity and communication skills employed in the process of the research (Shimahara 78). This is based on the belief that a profound understanding of reality is dependent on the ability of the researcher to make sense of what is going on in the researched field. And it is the responsibility of a researcher to reveal the relationship between a phenomenon and the various conditions that shape it.

I have observed three basic guidelines in conducting this qualitative research: my role has been as both a participant and an observer; the research hypothesis has evolved in the process of the research rather than being determined by a preconception; and negative evidence has been taken into full account in developing new understandings (Wilson 245-65). These guidelines have helped me maintain an open mind to new possibilities and different perspectives towards the researched reality. They have also helped me to confront and manage my subjectivity in the process.

I selected the qualitative approach as my method of inquiry based on the following research considerations: a) the issue of empowering university teachers in China could be best understood through an in-depth analysis of their status and roles in the university and in society; b) the issues under study which concern various aspects of the life and work of university teachers could be more fully explored through participant observation and informal interviews than through

other research methods; c) university teachers represent a small, educated and rather marginalized social group, who, under the social and political circumstances in China, were likely to respond better to interviews than to questionnaires; d) the experiences of university teachers in this economic transition period have not yet been as consistent and institutionalized as many other social phenomena, and therefore, the study required the exploratory and analytical approach provided by qualitative methods; and e) the emphasis on the researcher as a principal instrument in the qualitative approach allowed me, in examining the issues under study, to draw upon my 15 years of experiences and observations as a university teacher in China.

My own personal experiences in higher education have left me with a strong desire to understand what has shaped the life and work of university teachers in China into their present form. I believe that, by listening to the voices of individual teachers and administrators, a general picture of university teachers in present-day China will begin to emerge. I also feel an obligation to present the untold story of this social group as objectively and realistically as possible so that they might gain further insights into their own social and political situation and so that others might understand them, appreciate them and value them.

My original research interest centred on possibilities for and constraints on extending university autonomy during

the economic transition period. However, in the course of my interviews with university teachers and administrators, I found that they were concerned with more pressing issues that, if left unattended, would result in serious consequences for the development of higher education. My exploration of these pressing issues indicated that the expansion of university autonomy would be a fine ideal, but without much grounding in reality. A more realistic consideration was the empowerment of university teachers both economically and politically. Consequently, I adjusted my research focus. I believe that this adjustment has brought me closer to an objective presentation of the social reality.

However, gaining a better understanding of an existing reality is only part of the purpose of qualitative research. It is important for the researcher to move beyond new understandings and search for alternatives to those conditions that have inflicted problems and difficulties on the reality that people live with so that it can be changed for the better. It is my hope: a) that this research will contribute to a better understanding of Chinese university teachers, who, historically revered, have been criticized, condemned, marginalized and silenced in the last few decades; and b) that it will serve as a step in an effort to empower university teachers so that they will be able to assume a more positive and active role in promoting social progress in China.

The Research Site

The first-hand research was conducted through a single-site case study at an average-sized urban university. This university was selected as the site for my research because it exemplifies the basic features of a typical Chinese university, and it faces opportunities and challenges common in universities during the current economic transition. Therefore, although this is a single-site case study, many of the findings are generalizable to other universities in China.

A leading institution of higher learning in its own field, this university has undergone expansion and structural changes since the late 1970s. Currently, the university has its own research institutes, centres for special studies, and departments and colleges covering a wide range of subject areas. In 1996, it was selected by the State Education Commission (SEC) as one of the 100 universities in China entitled to preferential government funding in the next decade, the aim being for these universities to develop into institutions of higher learning recognized for their quality, and comparable to the best universities in the world.²

Other features of this university also contribute to the reasons I selected it as the site for my case study. Many departments in the university have a variety of direct

² This is known as the "211 Project" with the "21" representing the 21st century and the second "1" representing 100 universities.

involvements with the economy and other sectors of society. The university also has linkages with the international community through its various programs. These connections allow it to play a significant role in the larger community, both at home and abroad. In addition, the great demand for teachers and programs with the skills that this university offers has placed it among those at the forefront of the many curriculum and administrative policy changes that are occurring because of shifts in the economy. At the same time, this university also specializes in programs for which there is very little demand and, therefore, little chance for development or, in some cases, even survival. This contrast between popular and unpopular programs is evident in most institutions of higher learning in China, where some disciplines thrive, while others are threatened with extinction, depending on the needs of the market.

Data Collection and Analysis

Government documents and press coverage since 1992 are part of the sources of my research data. In addition to textual evidence, I conducted semi-structured interviews between February and March, 1995, with 17 teachers and several administrators³ working in the university where I carried out

³ I have chosen not to specify the number of administrators I interviewed. The total number of administrators at the department and university levels combined is small enough so that if I were to give the number interviewed, quotations from them might be easy to identify.

my research. The participants are a) teachers of different age groups in one of the major departments; and b) key persons in the administration both in this department and at the university level. I chose age as the basic demographic distinction among teachers because, in China, political and personal experiences at various times are often the major source of differences in people's opinions, world outlooks, and lifestyles. Thus, interviews with people from different generations provide the basis for a fuller picture of teachers' views than would selection based on other demographic considerations. Gender and political tendency have also been taken into consideration in my selection of the teacher participants. For the sake of anonymity, I cannot provide further details about individual participants. However, in Chapter 5, just before presenting their views, I introduce the teacher participants in three groups according to age and provide a sketch of the major features of each group. As for the administrators, the pool from which I could select was, as mentioned above, quite small. My major consideration was to select people from both levels of administration.

Both the teachers' and the administrators' interviews focused on their views on changes in this university since 1992; the decision-making process at both the university and department levels; their main concerns at work; and the sources of their satisfactions and dissatisfactions as

teachers or administrators. (See Appendices 1 and 2 for the complete interview guides.) The interviews, which lasted between 60 and 90 minutes each, and in some cases longer, were conducted in Chinese, taped whenever possible, and later transcribed and translated into English.

To supplement the interviews, I surveyed 127 students, who represented the total population of third-year students in the Department under study. I used a self-designed questionnaire (see Appendix 4) to uncover their perceptions of their teachers' commitment to the profession. Third-year students were chosen because they had enough university experience to make judgments about their teachers. They were also more likely to be concerned with the issues dealt with by the questionnaire than fourth-year students whose pending graduation from the university may have diminished their interest in the issues.

Ethical Considerations

When I first approached potential participants, I explained the nature and purpose of the research and their roles in it. They were assured that in gathering the data, I would give them the choice of whether or not their interview would be taped, and that they would be free to not answer particular questions if they so chose. Indeed, they could withdraw entirely from the study at any time. I told them that they could stop the tape recorder if and when they

wanted, and that if they did not want certain of their comments transcribed or used in the final report, I would respect their wishes. I made it clear that the information they would provide would be treated with great care to maintain confidentiality and anonymity: any points made by them and used in the final report would appear anonymously, as would people to whom they refer in the interview (except for public figures); their name would not appear on the tapes and transcripts of their interview, just a code known only to me; I would be the only person to handle the tapes and transcripts; and the former would be erased and the latter destroyed immediately upon completion of this dissertation. I explained that the results of the research would be used for a Ph.D. thesis and possibly for recommendations to the university and to government departments concerned for the purpose of improving conditions in higher education. I also assured all potential participants that I would not publish or distribute the work to official channels in China without their permission.

These verbal assurances were followed by a written statement in Chinese reiterating the main points of our discussion (See Appendix 3). I hand-delivered the statement to the potential participants. Once they orally agreed to participate,⁴ I asked for their consent to tape the

⁴ It was approved by the Ethics Review Committee at Dalhousie University that it was adequate to acquire oral consent from the participants for the research to avoid

interviews. In the four cases where my request for recording was not granted, I depended on my memory and wrote extensive notes immediately after the interviews. A copy of the notes was later shown to the concerned participant for verification.

My presentation, in chapter 5, of a general description of teachers by age group is relevant for an examination of the collective experiences of Chinese university teachers and allows me to avoid discussing participants individually, thus ensuring their anonymity. I have used codes for the participants' identity so that the source of a quotation is identifiable only by whether it is from an administrator or a teacher, and if a teacher, from which age group. In addition, gender pronouns referring to individual participants or cited in quotations from them have been chosen arbitrarily. I have also occasionally made minor revisions in the exact wording used by a participant. All these measures have been taken in order to ensure confidentiality and to protect the anonymity of the participants and of the people they mention in the interviews.

Like the other participants, the students were also informed of the nature and purpose of the survey, and were assured that their participation in the survey was voluntary and that their identity would remain anonymous.

With these precautions, I am comfortable that throughout

unnecessary concern that may have been caused had I requested written consent.

the research process all ethical concerns have been taken into consideration and that confidentiality and the anonymity of the participants have been protected.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of 9 chapters. The present chapter has introduced the research problem, provided the rationale for the study, and explained the research design. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework for the study, focusing on major assumptions in critical theory in relation to the issue of empowerment of university teachers in China. The next two chapters are historical, with chapter 3 reviewing the role of scholars and university teachers from Confucius until 1949, and chapter 4 examining the changing economic, social and political circumstances from 1949 to 1992 and their impact on university teachers. The major changes in higher education from 1992 to 1995 are presented in chapter 5, which also contrasts the government's views and university teachers' views of the changes. In chapters 6 through 8, we hear the voices of university teachers and administrators as they identify and discuss issues of concern to them: those that relate to the impact of the market economy (chapter 6); the centralized political process and deteriorating social relationships within the university (chapter 7); and the low esteem in which teachers are held and their changing commitment to their work (chapter 8). The final chapter

draws out some of the implications of the issues discussed and projects possibilities for and constraints on empowering university teachers in China.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework discussed in this chapter is not intended to develop a new theory, or to test an established theory through the examination of social conditions in a new setting. Rather, the purpose is to review the major theoretical concepts that have served as a guideline for the formation of my research approach and my understanding of the issues under study. Therefore, the discussion of the theoretical concepts, which revolve around critical theory, is selective rather than comprehensive.

Critical theory has helped me understand the social and economic conditions that have shaped the life and work of university teachers in China since the start of the economic transition in 1978. Its approach to power has illuminated my analysis of social relationships in Chinese universities during this period. Therefore, in this chapter, I lay out the theoretical framework for this research by discussing:

a) concepts of power as presented by major social theorists; b) some basic viewpoints of critical theory developed in response to mainstream theorists; c) relevant issues concerning the relationship of power and ideology, especially as they relate to hegemony and as they affect the role of intellectuals in China; and d) a conceptualization of empowerment.

Concepts of Power

Two divergent streams of thought characterize the development of social theory in Western social science. They have fundamentally different approaches to the problem of power, which is the central analytical focus of this thesis. The first stream, stemming from August Comte, which has become the mainstream of sociology, is functionalism. The second, conflict theory, initially articulated by Karl Marx, has sustained an uninterrupted history of opposition to functionalism. It is the latter, the conflict approach, as it has developed in its contemporary form--critical theory--that I have found most useful in my analysis of faculty empowerment in Chinese universities.

The presence and legitimacy of power in maintaining social order has been a major concern of social theory since its inception. Max Weber developed a definition of power in The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (1947) that has since become classical: "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance" (152). He later expanded this concept of power to "the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Weber, Class 64). In this definition, power means the "imposition of the will of actor A (who may be either an individual or a collectivity) upon actor B, even against B's

resistance, so that B is dominated by A" (Coser 147).⁵ Weber's definition of power has added to the development of social conflict theory. On the other hand, since Weber tends to be neutral about the justice or injustice of a system of power, his ideas have also been incorporated by many into the functionalist approach.

Talcott Parsons is the foremost representative of functionalist tradition in the conceptualization of power (Coser 147). He sees power as a "functional imperative" in goal-attainment in society (Wallace and Wolf 115). To Parsons, power serves to maintain social order. It is present and functions through a standard value system which institutionalizes the ranking system in a society. The existence of power makes the system operational, because it allows people in different social positions to have a specific relationship of control in their institutional domains (Parsons, Revised 95). Therefore, in Parsons' view, power is "the realistic capacity of a system-unit to actualize its 'interest' (attain goals, prevent undesired interference, command respect, control possessions, etc.) within the context of system-interaction and in this sense to exert influence on processes in the system" (Revised 95). Parsons' response to C. Wright Mills' The Power Elite (1956) typifies his thought.

⁵ While recognizing that power is based on force, Weber also examines its "legitimacy" in maintaining social order by identifying three types of authority--the charismatic, traditional and legal-rational(Types 121-122)--that justify and sustain power.

Mills' work emphasizes the social problems and social disorder that are generated by the American system of power. Parsons criticizes the work for focusing attention on *who* is getting what in society (Coser 155) rather than on *what* power does to facilitate the functioning of society. To Parsons, emphasizing social conflict deriving from the misuse of power "elevates a secondary and derived aspect of a total phenomenon into the central place" (Distribution 199-200).

In the functional tradition, Richard Lowenthal (1979) discusses three social conditions that ensure power and a lasting political order in a modern industrial society: the existence of a clear and consistent system regulating the procedures for decision-making; the presence of a broad consensus of values between the governed and the ruling political elites; and the confidence among the people that the procedures of the given order will normally lead to success in the direction of the common values (129). Robert Bierstedt (1982) treats power as a social necessity and a universal phenomenon in all societies and all social relationships. He believes that power "is never wholly absent from social interactions" (132) and that it "supports the fundamental order of society and the social organization within it....Power stands behind every association and sustains its structure. Without power there is no organization and without power there is no order" (138). To many theorists in Parsons' tradition (Easton 143; Hawley 422-31), power is a societal

resource that enables a social system to perform its task and achieve its goals efficiently (Coser 155).

All theorists agree that power involves elements of both legitimacy and coercion--potential or actual. For example, Dennis Wrong (1968) discusses another interesting aspect of power from the perspective of the power-holders. He points out that people in power are powerful only when they know they are perceived as such by others, and when they encourage such projection and are prepared to make use of it by intervening or punishing others who do not comply with their wishes. In other words, power is conferred upon some people by the attribution of others (Wrong 679). Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Power 144-46) elaborate upon the issue of obedience involved in a power relationship. They recognize the coercive nature of power, but also discuss the central ideas or conditions that operate as grounds for voluntary obedience, ideas that are often more implied and taken for granted than articulated and questioned (145).

Marx sees conflict over power as fundamental to the understanding and development of society, especially class society. What is distinctive about Marx is his emphasis on the centrality of economic power as it operates in capitalist societies, where workers are reduced to wage labourers. His analysis of the relationship of production, the function of money, and the concept of alienation reveals how people without access to the means of production are reduced to

powerless commodities (Economic 71). In his view, this historically specific form of powerless is conducive to the development of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary transformation, thus totally changing the relations of power. Since Marx, economic conditions as a major indicator, if not the major indicator, of people's well-being and social status has become a generally accepted fact. His theory that economic forces ultimately determine the superstructure of a society has set off an explosion of theoretical debates between traditional social theorists and critical theorists as well as among critical theorists themselves.

Lewis Coser analyzes some of the implications of a conflict theory of power (146-57). He asserts that power involves asymmetrical control and refers to characteristics of relationships rather than of persons. He says that as the exercise of power always implies potential sanctions against noncompliance, "an element of reciprocity and voluntarism is always a constitutive element of power relations" (Coser 147). Therefore, power does not simply involve the imposition of the will of one actor on another; it often means a "contest of wills in which one prevails over the other" (Coser 148). Coser points out that power does not prevail in social relationships where both parties have balanced resources and, therefore, equal strength. He argues with Marx in asserting that it is the inequality in resources that leads to a power relationship (Coser 148). According to Coser, different

social and historical conditions determine that resources employed for the exercise of power vary from society to society. "In some societies and periods, physical, coercive power may preempt the center of the stage whereas in others the power that flows from privileged position in the marketplace for goods and labor may be decisive" (Coser 148).

Not all conflict theorists agree that power is connected to the distribution of material resources. Some, like Dahrendorf, consider that power is a "lasting source of friction" in society (Dahrendorf 17) and that political division between the leaders and the led is a permanent feature of all societies. Dahrendorf's kind of emphasis generates a conservative form of conflict theory because, while it admits that conflict is important in changing society, the change becomes no more than the circulation of elites, thus negating the possibilities of movement toward social equality.

Critical Theory

Critical theory was developed in response to traditional social theories which emphasize the functional and legitimizing aspects of power in maintaining social control and social order. It rejected traditional theory because, according to Horkheimer, traditional theory "had become increasingly involved in social processes of production and reproduction, increasingly conformist, uncritically submitting

to the dominant instrumental, quantitative and capitalist values" (Horkheimer, Critical 194). Therefore, to critical theory, traditional theory was "in the service of an existing reality" (Horkheimer, Critical 215), and what was called for were intellectuals who "should not try to be objective and...separate facts from value judgement in their work" (Wallace and Wolf 98). Critical theory, then, from the beginning, provided a critique of existing theory and a strong commitment to social justice.

What is now called the Frankfurt School was first established by a group of scholars and social theorists at the Institute of Social Research of the University of Frankfurt in Germany. It engaged in an extensive effort to analyze and clarify social conditions that had not been predicted by Marx's social theory due to the changed social and economic circumstances in Germany, especially the rise and success of fascism, which brought about a rapid growth of state capitalism and the ideological assimilation of the working class. This, in turn, led to the commitment by critical theorists to developing a social theory that would "free individuals from bourgeois capitalist indoctrination and...produce a revolutionary consciousness that would confront an oppressive production process and society" (Kellner 10).

The Frankfurt School does its substantive work mainly in advanced capitalist societies, and thus, to some extent, the

work is not specifically or directly related to China. However, some of its concerns do relate to the industrializing conditions that currently prevail in China. In addition, the critical spirit that animates this work is significant for an analysis of conditions in any contemporary society.

Critical theory emphasizes the importance of culture and philosophy in revolutionary theory and practice. In discussing materialism and morality, Horkheimer states that "materialism understands itself as the effort to abolish existing misery" (Critical 103) and that human happiness is the highest ethical ideal and the proper province of morality (Kellner 32). For Horkheimer, the striving for happiness involves attempts to eliminate unhappiness and the conditions which produce human suffering (Kellner 32). Because sources of human suffering can be found in natural conditions as well as historical conditions, it is the task of social theory, according to Horkheimer, to conceptualize and encourage struggle to eliminate the social and historical causes of suffering (Kellner 32). Consistent with the critical spirit of Marx, who declared his "ruthless criticism of everything existing" (Marx, Ruthless 13), critical theory projects itself as a critique of existing conditions that produce suffering and as an instrument of social transformation to increase human freedom, happiness and well-being (Kellner 32).

The commitment to abolish social misery has been the energizing factor for critical theorists. Consequently, their

research focuses on the sources of human suffering. They examine the absence of power, social domination, and alienation, which are major contributors to human misery in modern societies. Marx saw the productive forces and the relations of production as the basic and driving force in social history. By contrast, contemporary critical theorists tend to pay more attention to the impact of personality, culture, philosophy and ideology on social change, with each playing its role in social development, sometimes independent of the influence of economic forces. I have found this kind of focus useful in conducting my study and analysing the data.

Critical theorists also make a plea for rationality. Horkheimer, for example, expresses his disappointment about industrialism which has reduced human reasoning capacity to an instrument of adaption to a changing society (Eclipse 1947). While science and technology have helped people "overcome their fear of the unknown in nature," Horkheimer says, it has also created popular deference to systems of authority (Eclipse 187) which appear rational but are not. He attributes this fundamental change in intellectual life to the rise of positivism in the social sciences as a result of the success of the industrial revolution. Interestingly, positivism has also been used as the prevailing approach to measuring the results of economic reforms in China.

Another major critical theorist, Theodore Adorno, investigates and identifies the discontinuities, disharmonies

and contradictions created within society through mass culture. He studies various aspects of mass culture, from jazz to astrology (1976, 1974), which, to him, serve to "create standardization and passivity" among their audience. It is his belief that "popular culture is a means of manipulating the inhabitants of a totally 'administered' society" (Wallace and Wolf 102). Adorno's aim is to prevent the unreflected affirmation of bourgeois ideology (Held 211).

In the same line of thought, Marcuse (1964) condemns the changes brought about by technical developments in industrialized society. He states that vast technological development and the invasion of commercial advertising into every household has created a "whole system of domination and coordination" in the industrial world. To Marcuse, technical progress has defeated all protests against capitalism and affluence has absorbed into its "existing order all those who once dissented" (Wallace and Wolf 103). China is in the process of becoming an industrialized society. It is not difficult to see the danger described by Marcuse and Adorno becoming apparent among certain groups, including some intellectuals, who are just starting to be coopted by the lure of affluence. Marcuse has drawn a bleak picture of the industrialized society where popular culture has lost its vitality to the single drive for consumption, and people, having less and less exposure to alternative ideas, are becoming one-dimensional (Wallace and Wolf 103).

This discussion of major critical theorists of the Frankfurt School has shown that critical theory has made important contributions to the understanding of advanced capitalism and how it has forced people in the system to lose their identity and become powerless in the face of the tremendous forces of industrialism, commercialism, and state bureaucracy. Unlike conventional social theorists, who stress the importance of "objectivity" in their theory and research, critical theorists reject the claim that one can obtain knowledge, make observations or reach conclusions free from the influence of the particular era in which the social phenomenon being studied is embedded. With China now facing the tremendous appeal of both Western technology and traditional Western social science, the necessity of recognizing the insights of these early critical theorists takes on some urgency.

Power and Ideology

The Issue of Ideology and Hegemony

While the Frankfurt School stresses the various social and cultural conditions that have reduced people to alienated, "one-dimensional" social objects, Gramsci's discussion of ideological hegemony reveals still another aspect of social life that has deprived people of functioning as rational beings in modern society. Gramsci points out that conflicting economic forces will find their representations in political

parties, one of which will prevail over the others through what he calls ideological hegemony (Gramsci 181). In his view, hegemony involves the ideological domination of one class by another in such a way that the dominated class views its rights, projects its expectations and forms its perspectives only to "reinforce" the position of the dominating class (Fay 138). Gramsci's concept of hegemony in a modern society was also expressed in the famous statement by Paulo Freire that the oppressor is within the oppressed. Freire points out that the dominant values, beliefs and even world views are often internalized by the oppressed who are unable to see themselves as the oppressed and therefore, who willingly cooperate with those who oppress them in maintaining social practices (Fay 106).

[A]s long as the oppressor "within" the oppressed is stronger than they themselves are, their natural fear of freedom may lead them to denounce the revolutionary leaders instead (Freire 169).

Ideological dominance, which excludes the legitimacy or the existence of alternative social theories, functions to assimilate people from all sectors of society, be they peasants or teachers, blue or white collars workers, into the dominant culture economically and politically. When people fail to find their way into the mainstream, they are led to believe that it is they themselves who are to blame for not having "made it."

The problem of ideological hegemony in general has relevance for present-day China. China has an almost

uninterrupted and very long history of centralized political authority and legitimation of that authority through an established and, for the most part, unquestioned ideological tradition. The spirit of questioning authority is a recent and sporadic historical phenomenon. The feudal roots of deference to authority are deep and enduring. Higher education in China is not exempt from this wider tradition. It is in this light that the work of Michael Apple is of some significance.

Apple (1979) analyzes ideology in educational institutions, where the dominant ideology prevails in daily classroom activities, thus serving to perpetuate ideological control in society. He declares that the impact of ideology on education should be examined from three perspectives: the school as an institution; the knowledge selected at school; and the educators. He further states that each of these three aspects must be situated within the larger social framework to see how they are determined and how they determine.

According to Apple, educational institutions (in the West) have played a role in legitimizing social differences through supposedly neutral educational activities and daily routines. He says that educators are agents in reinforcing the dominant ideology of a society when they present knowledge and make evaluations uncritically and when they label and categorize students in a seemingly neutral and scientific manner (Apple 152). Furthermore, education, he asserts, not

only serves to produce agents for the maintenance of the system, but also produces dispositions and meanings to be accepted by these agents and the rest of society as the normal, natural way of life. Therefore, a major task for educational researchers is to examine the relationship between educational institutions and other social institutions which have historically helped or hindered particular classes and groups through their control over the uneven distribution of resources. Such "relational analysis" (Apple 132) of educational and other social institutions is the key to understanding how a society is organized and controlled. In this regard, I find Apple useful in posing questions that shed light on the growing intervention of market forces in Chinese universities and their ramifications for creating new economic inequalities and new agents of social and political control.

Apple goes further and makes an elaborate analysis of the complex combination of forces at work among ideology, educational institutions and cultural capital, and states that these forces have succeeded in maintaining and keeping ideological control over every aspect of social life in modern societies. Indeed, they have been so successful that they have made most people oblivious to the very existence of ideological control, thus making resisting it highly unlikely.

The Role of Intellectuals in Society

The dominance of capitalism through cultural, ideological, and psychological control has led to great concern by critical theorists about the role of intellectuals in society. Paul Baran (1969) makes the distinction between intellectuals and intellect workers. He states that

what marks the intellectual and distinguishes him from the intellect worker and indeed from all others is that his concern with the entire historical process is not a tangential interest but permeates his thought and significantly affects his work...[T]he intellectual is systematically seeking to relate whatever specific area he may be working in to other aspects of human existence. Indeed, it is precisely this effort to *interconnect* things...[that] constitutes one of the intellectual's outstanding characteristics. [emphasis in original] (8)

In addition to the ability to "interconnect" things, Baran sees the intellectual as characterized by an "adherence to humanism," and an insistence on the principle that the "quest for human advancement requires no scientific or logical justification" (Baran 12). He defines intellectuals as people whose responsibility extends beyond their immediate individual concern to the experiences of social and historical reality. They treat searching for truth as their inescapable social responsibility and commit themselves to the critical analysis of social reality without being intimidated by the implications that might flow from their criticism. During much of this century, many Chinese intellectuals have distinguished themselves for playing precisely this role. But political pressures starting in the 1950's and economic

pressures since the 1970's have hushed many critical voices. The critics and the criticisms have not disappeared; rather they have become less audible. The concern of my research is to uncover those factors restraining the critical voices of university teachers in China and to explore possibilities that might free them to again speak up.

Building on these ideas, Chomsky makes special demands on modern intellectuals, asserting that it is the responsibility of the intellectuals to pursue and reveal truth to the public—to recognize and reveal the role of ideology in the formation of government policy and public opinion (Responsibility 343). He leaves no doubt about his position that intellectuals in universities should be able to pursue truth, examining and criticizing past events in their own country from historical and realistic perspectives, and that they should tell their students and the public the truth without fear of persecution (Thoughts 315-316). Chomsky would strongly agree with Julien Benda's denunciation, in The Treason of the Intellectuals (1969), of the changed values held by intellectuals. Benda points out that, starting in the 1920s, intellectuals in Europe, and in Germany in particular, began to follow the trend of nationalism and directed their study and research to whatever was demanded by the government (Benda 125). Under the guise of positive ideology, many people justified this switch, calling it "objective" and "value free" research. Chomsky (Thoughts 309-21) presents similar cases in the United

States where intellectuals failed in their ethical obligations and became part of the manipulating apparatus of the government to justify American imperialist policies toward other countries.

Henry Giroux (1992) continues this mode of analysis. He views critical university teachers as "engaged intellectuals" who take teaching as a form of social criticism and cultivate in the students a critical ability to understand and engage in transformative action in society. Through their collective efforts on campus, they perform what he calls "a noble public service" (105).

According to a number of critical theorists, the university's obligation is to provide an environment that is conducive to intellectuals' fulfilment of their social responsibility. Habermas (1970), for example, states that a respected and established basic principle in the university should be that decisions are based on consensus and are arrived at through discussion that is free from domination (1-12). For Chomsky, the university should encourage and protect critical and even radical analyses of the political and ideological institutions in society made by those "lonely intellectuals" who take different political stands that are different from the mainstream (Function 303). The extent to which such faculty members are protected by the university, says Chomsky, is a measure both of a society's willingness to subject the prevailing ideology to critical scrutiny and of

its commitment to genuine democracy (Function 303).

According to Giroux, the university is "deeply political and unarguably normative" (90). He states that university is not simply a place for students to accumulate knowledge in exchange for decent employment and upward mobility; nor is it a place only to cultivate and produce social elites. Rather, the university legitimizes existing views, produces new ideas, and shapes social relations through its practices (90). In the Chinese circumstance, where intellectual life is confronted with great obstacles to the free play of critical ideas, a focus on the forces that restrain or potentially facilitate the development of critical ideas takes on special importance.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

The present conceptualization of empowerment is built on the issues addressed in this chapter so far: concepts of power, especially the conflict theory of power; the critical approach to understanding social domination that leads to the absence of power for most people and their need for empowerment; and the central role of intellectuals in unmasking ideological hegemony, thus opening the way for progressive social change.

When an individual or a group of people is powerless, their awareness of the idea that they can strive for happiness while detesting misery is a basic condition for the

possibility of achieving greater empowerment. Since the 1980s, a fairly high level of dissatisfaction seems to be present in almost all societies, West and East, North and South. There is a growing frustration and anger among ordinary people when they find that the social apparatus does not protect their needs in time of economic recession, that their government is responsive only to the interests of the rich and powerful, and that their pride and dignity are subject to the needs of corporate competition for profits and the growing control of state bureaucracy. It is in such economic and political circumstances that the need for empowerment at both the individual and the group level is perceived to be most urgent. Yet its realization often seems remote.

The concept of empowerment rests on the understanding that some few have power, while most do not. The conflict theory of power discussed previously suggests that people are reduced to powerless conditions because of their lack of control over basic economic resources. The problem is compounded when their experiences are effectively individualized due to their limited consciousness of the interplay of social forces, and when there is little or no communication among them. These conditions, in turn, guarantee that they will be unorganized or ineffective in their organization. As power is ultimately maintained by force, people can become absolutely powerless when they are

faced with force, even if they are large in number, have some control over resources, and have social or organizational support from the larger society.

Based on such an understanding of conditions leading to the absence of power, three types of empowerment can be conceptualized. In the first type, empowerment means conditions of economic security in the life of an individual. This kind of empowerment is essentially individual social mobility. In North America, many people associate the concept of empowerment exclusively or primarily with individual social mobility. In China, individual empowerment through the quest for financial security is a recent phenomenon, and in the case of university teachers, many are now facing the problems associated with this quest: they still remain powerless and marginalized as a social group.

The second type of empowerment relates to people with similar experiences. Paulo Freire (1972) provides crucial insights into group empowerment. He examines many issues, including the concept of dialogue through which oppressed people can come to identify and understand the nature of their oppression and gain insight into their relationship to the oppressor. Through dialogue, they also develop trust in each other and in the dialogue process itself, self-confidence, and hope for their collective future. Thus, channels of communication are necessary so that people can share and understand their problems and find commonality in their

conditions. This process can lead to the idea (new to many people) and to the confidence that the causes of their unhappy experiences can be removed through joint effort. According to Fay, the very act of organizing is empowering. "Power exists not only when a group is controlled but also when a group comes together, becomes energized, and organizes itself" (130). He sees this empowerment as "one of enablement in which a disorganized and unfocused group acquires an identity and a resolve to act in light of its new-found sense of purpose" (130).

The process of group empowerment is at a more advanced stage when a group collectively achieves a critical understanding of their experiences as they relate to the broader social and historical context. Group empowerment proceeds even further when transformative actions occur. This is not a linear process. Each successful advancement helps to solidify earlier stages. Thus, at all points in the process of empowering themselves as a collective, people's understanding of their oppression increases as does their confidence in their ability to make changes.

In the third type of empowerment, like the second, people are able to view their group experiences in perspective and understand the conditions that sustained their powerlessness. Beyond that, however, they are also able to apply the same kind of critical analysis to other sectors in society, to gain an understanding of conditions that inflict

misery on other people, and to develop strategies for transformative action. Such tasks generally fall to intellectuals who are in the unique situation of having the knowledge, skills and often the leisure to develop the necessary critical analyses. This third type of empowerment can be, but is not necessarily, revolutionary. Although the concept of empowerment as such is unheard of in China, it was precisely this process that was the engine for both the republican revolution of 1911 and the socialist revolution of 1949.

These three types of empowerment do not necessarily lead from one to the other. Indeed, the first type can well be at odds with the other two. It is very often the case that when individuals experience upward social mobility--the first kind of empowerment--they have less or no interest in the oppressive conditions that once affected them and still affect others. As Chomsky points out, some intellectuals, having found their position of power, having achieved security and affluence, have no further need for ideologies that look to basic social change (Responsibility 345). In such cases, people who are individually empowered economically may no longer have a passion for social change, which is necessary for movement toward the second and third types of empowerment. The improvement of the economic status at the individual level has proved to be a barrier for group empowerment in many advanced industrialized societies. In a developing country

with a long tradition of political centralism, economic empowerment of individuals can lead in one of two directions: toward individual political empowerment without any concern for group empowerment, or toward efforts for group political empowerment. For example, in China, the economic empowerment of many individuals has made more people feel keenly about their insufficient political empowerment, thus leading to a more conscious demand for political empowerment and for greater collective efforts to achieve it.

It should be pointed out that empowerment as a democratic concept and practice is subject to the economic, social and political conditions of the time. Generally, in the West at least, a degree of empowerment is more readily endorsed and often easier to achieve in times of economic prosperity. In developing countries, where scarcity and poverty are commonplace, the need for collective and realistic efforts to improve the economic and political status of the unempowered is more clearly and widely recognized. However, it is more challenging for people from countries with a centralized political tradition to strive for empowerment, as the use of coercion or even force is often the ultimate means of maintaining order when conflicts of interest arise. Apart from such differences between countries, becoming empowered in any society entails resisting the pressure to voluntarily and blindly succumb to prevailing conditions and rejecting what is often the easier choice of avoiding change at all costs. It

is, therefore, crucial that university teachers in China realize that the path to empowerment is not a smooth one and that if they are to achieve an acceptable degree of empowerment, they need to look and think carefully in order to identify and avoid the pitfalls and barriers in their path.

It must be reiterated that my use of critical theory in this analysis is specific to my needs. China has not had a tradition of social theory. In the past, and to some extent the present as well, the approach to understanding problems of power has been implicitly rooted in a tradition that unquestioningly accepts established authority. Obviously, the great revolutionary upsurge against authority resulting in liberation in 1949 questioned authority, but this questioning was itself still connected to a taken-for-granted acceptance of feudal forms of authority. Thus, the introduction of a critical and many-sided approach to empowerment, one that scrutinizes existing power in all its arbitrary and oppressive forms while still identifying with the relative powerlessness of marginalized and silenced groups, is, I think, somewhat new. By doing a critical analysis of power, I have been able to better understand university teachers' lack of power. Critical theory's commitment to social justice and to the removal of sources of human misery has helped me identify and analyze problems faced by university teachers. Thus for my purposes, I rely mainly on the generally sensitizing qualities of the critical tradition. A detailed analysis of the many

debates and controversies within modern critical theory is not necessary. It is in this light that the ideas of critical theory have become the conceptual tools in the analysis that follows.

I have chosen as my task as a critical researcher to describe the life and work of university teachers in China, to analyze the conditions that have led to their present level of unempowerment, and to identify the constraints and possibilities that must be considered and dealt with if their collective empowerment is to be achieved. It is my hope that through my examination of the fundamental issues facing universities and university teachers in their economic, social, political and ideological contexts, a realistic picture will emerge of what has happened and what is happening under the impact of the economic and ideological changes since 1978. It is also my hope that this examination will substantiate my argument for the necessity of university teachers to become empowered, which, in turn, might open up possibilities for even wider reform. It is with these purposes in mind that I have conducted this research.

CHAPTER 3

CONFUCIANISM AND ITS MODERN CRITICS UP TO 1949

This chapter discusses the ideological tradition of Confucianism and major efforts under the influence of Western culture to challenge the tradition during the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It illustrates a consistent theme in modern Chinese history: that all historical efforts at empowering the people failed due to the strong influence of the feudal tradition.⁶

Influence of Confucianism

Although Confucius (551 - 479 B.C.) exerted tremendous influence through his teaching, he did not succeed in convincing any of the rulers in his time of his ideas. He spent many years preaching his ideas to his disciples. His teaching covered a wide range of subjects, but Confucianism

⁶ There are four aspects to feudalism as commonly understood in China: economic, political, social and ideological. The central one is the relations of production in which the landlords owned the major means of production--land--and appropriated the produce of landless and land-poor peasants, who depended for their livelihood on the little they might be allowed to keep. This aspect of feudalism was irrevocably eradicated by the socialist revolution. The political structure of Chinese feudalism was its centralism in which the rule of kings and later of emperors was absolute and unchallenged. The social structure basically consisted of a patriarchal family system in which "inferiors" owed obedience to their "superiors": the wife to the husband; the younger brothers to the elder brother, the sons to the father. The ideological system was based on Confucianism, which is the focus of this chapter.

was built upon his basic political and ethical axioms which were later interpreted and expanded to suit the needs of rulers at various times. The fact that Confucianism prevailed for over two thousand years before being seriously challenged by modern scholars indicates the conservative nature of Confucianism as well as the conservative tendency of Chinese culture. In the words of Feng Yu-lan, a well-respected historian, Confucius "was a conservative who upheld tradition" (Feng, Short History 39).

Confucianism served as the primary ideological foundation for centralism in China for centuries. It was first announced as the official doctrine among many contending schools of thought during the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 23 A.D.). Since then, it has evolved into a far more systematic and comprehensive body of ethical and political thought than it was during Confucius' time.

The development of Confucianism is seen to be divided into the following stages: 1) the early Confucian teachings in the pre-Qin days;⁷ 2) the establishment of Confucianism as the only officially recognized school of thought during the Han dynasty; 3) the development of what many Chinese scholars refer to as neo-Confucianism by rationalists between the Song and Ming dynasties (960 - 1644); and 4) the Confucianism of

⁷ The pre-Qin period refers to the years before 221 B.C. when the warring states were first unified into a central kingdom called Qin by Emperor Qin I, who determined, by decree, to "burn all books and bury all Confucianists alive."

contemporary society.⁸ The present discussion focuses on a critical analysis of the basic concepts of the Confucian school of thought during the first stage and their impact on social values in present-day China.

Basic Concepts of Confucian Thought

The rectification of names

Confucius believed that everything and every person in this world had its proper place and proper responsibility and existed under a proper name.⁹ In Confucius' mind, there were clear classifications among people, each with different social obligations attached to their status. If a ruler lived up to the qualities assumed to be inherent in his name, and if the minister, the father, and the son did likewise, then an ideal social order was presumed to exist. When asked for his principle of government, Confucius replied: "Let the ruler be ruler; the minister, minister; the father, father; and the son, son."¹⁰ He attributed the social turmoil of his time to

⁸ The first three stages are based on the views of Tang Yijie, a professor at Beijing University. The fourth stage is my own addition.

⁹ "Name" here refers to a person's social role, be it teacher, mother, peasant or ruler. But the formal title for this role suggests a lifetime obligation of the social role a person is destined to fulfil. Therefore, "name" carries more weight than a name in its usual sense in the West.

¹⁰ It is no accident that the last two examples refer explicitly (and the first two implicitly) to males. Other than being wives and mothers, women were non-entities, who were not considered by Confucius. Even today, especially in

rulers and subjects who had no respect for their names and, consequently, failed to fulfil their responsibilities that were to be carried out under their names. To Confucius, the rectification of names was the first important step for a good king to right the wrongs in society. It was a central concern for Confucius to let the rulers as well as the common people know what and how things were supposed to be.

The concept of "rectification of names" left a deep-rooted idealistic yet passive mentality among the Chinese in that they tend to be more concerned about what things "ought to be" in some abstract sense rather than "what they are". When things are not what they ought to be, there is a greater social expectation for a wiser and better ruler to rectify the names and to right the wrongs than for a realistic analysis and for efforts to make social changes.

Confucius believed that everything had been clearly and

rural areas, if someone knocks at the door of a house and a woman is there alone, she is likely to respond by saying, "Nobody is home." Even though Confucius was referring only to men, I often use the words "people" and "person" in the pages that follow. The Chinese character for "person" - the one that Confucius and other Confucians have often used, does not distinguish gender. If I were to consistently use the word "man" in English for the Chinese word "person," it could be taken by Chinese readers as a misunderstanding of Confucian ideas. North American readers will bear with me, and understand that, in this case, I must use "person" and "people" when I really mean "man" and "men." On the other hand, sometimes it is so obvious that the people referred to are men that it would sound odd to Chinese readers if I were to use the word "person" or "people." Therefore, I have chosen "man" or "men" sometimes and "person" or "people" at other times, my choice being based on the smoothness of the translation to the Chinese ear.

appropriately established by the virtuous kings of the Zhou dynasty (1066 - 771 B.C.) and that their rulings were well presented through a specific body of rituals. In order to restore the social order, what was urgently needed, in his opinion, was to show respect for the old values through "rectification of names" and to urge the rulers to follow the *li* of the good old days.

The essence of *li*

Li has often been translated as "rituals" or the "rules of propriety" by Western sinologists. However, this translation tends to direct people's attention to the observable etiquette and rituals of the official courts rather than to the moral values underlying *li*. As recorded in *Li Ji* (Records of Rites), "Ritual is humbling oneself to pay respect to others; putting others first and oneself second" (qtd. in Feng, *Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* 18). This is a definition of the moral significance of *li*.

In response to one of his disciples' questions about the essence of *li*, Confucius explained by citing an example of a funeral. He said that it was better that mourners felt true grief than that they be meticulously correct in every ceremonial detail (Creel 30-31), his point being that the essence of *li* lay in commitment to the moral values behind the rituals. Nevertheless, to Confucius, *li* was seen to consist of both aspects: conduct based on rituals and etiquette

appropriate to specific occasions; and respect for the moral values that guided the observation of the rituals. Confucius believed that it was the observation of *li* in both aspects that helped sustain proper social relationships between the king and the ministers, the father and the sons, and the ministers and the subjects,¹¹ thus ensuring a better social order. He was dismayed to see, in his own time, that meticulous rituals were followed without substance, and courtesy was paid without genuine respect for the rulers.¹² He pointed out that it was a distortion of *li* when rituals were followed by people with no respect for or even understanding of *ren*¹³ (qtd. in Ren 1: 74).

So to be a man of *ren* is the precondition for being respectful of *li*. The way to become a man of *ren*, to Confucius, was for a man "to restrain himself into the proper conduct of *li*," and the way to do this is to "read nothing that is not *li*; listen to nothing that is not *li*; say nothing that is not *li*; and do nothing that is not *li*" (Yan Yuan, qtd. in Ren 1: 72). He believed that once a person really achieved this quality, he would be recognized as a man of *ren* by all the people around him. It is clear from Confucius' words that

¹¹ These relationships were considered by Confucius to be the most important ones for maintaining social order.

¹² Overemphasis on rituals to the exclusion of the underlying moral substance is still a common occurrence in China.

¹³ *Ren* roughly translates as human-heartedness. The concept is addressed more fully in the following section.

li and *ren* were complementary qualities in his philosophical concept of a person with moral integrity. While *li* served as the social sanction of a society in which everyone, rulers and subjects, "put others first and oneself second," *ren* served as the moral sanction of a person by which one was to observe *li*.

Ren and yi

According to Confucius, *ren* and *yi* were virtues that a good king must have if he was to rule successfully, and that a person must have if he was to become a superior man (similar to a Western gentleman in its traditional sense). *Ren* has been translated in the West as "human-heartedness", and *yi* as "righteousness". While both translated versions seem adequate enough to grasp the basic meanings of *ren* and *yi*, *ren* seems to contain much richer content than "human-heartedness" conveys. On one occasion, Confucius approved the understanding of *ren* by one of his disciples: "Our master's teaching consists of the principle of *chung* and *shu*¹⁴ and that is all" (qtd. in Feng, Short History 44). As a result, *ren* turned out to be a rather inclusive and general concept representing the virtuous qualities a person should have. The essence of *ren* is a set of moral values guided by human-

¹⁴ This is another pair of major Confucian concepts comparable to the Golden Rule in the West. They are addressed in the following section (where the spelling of "Chung" is changed to "Zhong", the latter being the standard form of the spelling system in use today).

heartedness that anyone should observe in dealing with others. It is the most important and basic concept in Confucius' thought.

Confucius said, "Human-heartedness [ren] consists in loving others" (qtd. in Feng, Short History 42). He believed that a man knew how to perform his duty in society if he knew how to love others. To Confucius, human-heartedness was a basic condition for fulfilling other social responsibilities. Only when a person knew how to love others could he perform all his duties well and become a righteous person. "Love for others" was the centre of all other human virtues. However, Confucius did not specify who these "others" were, though he cited as examples that a father should love his son in the way a father was supposed to love his son, while he should love his king in the way a subject was supposed to love his king.

The understanding of this concept of "love for others" later became one of the major differences between Confucianism and other schools of thought. Mencius (372 - 289 B.C.), the most influential of Confucius' disciples, elaborated the Confucian concept of "loving others" through his understanding of this concept. He argued that one's love for others was differentiated by degrees based on one's different social relationships with others. It was natural, according to Mencius, for one to love the children of one's brother more than those of one's neighbours (qtd. in Feng, Short History 72). Such gradations in love are typically expressed in the

following passage:

I cannot practice all-embracing love. I love the men of Tsou [a nearby state] better than I love those of Yueh [a distant state]. I love the men of Lu [his own state] better than I love those of Tsou. I love the men of my own district better than I love those of Lu. I love the members of my own clan better than I love those of my district. I love my parents better than I love the men of my clan... (qtd. in Feng, Short History 71, brackets in original).

It is clear that the essence of human-heartedness in Confucianism was not only geographically graded, but also socially graded based on people's social relationships. In Mencius' opinion, it was proper to have graded love for people in different relationships, but it was also important for one to extend such love to the most distant members of society (Feng, Short History 72). He believed that people without respect for their fathers and the sovereign, the most important people in this graded love view, were like birds and beasts; both misled people and blocked their way to human-heartedness and righteousness (Feng, Short History 71).

Over time, this underlying concept of graded love according to social relationships seriously limited the basic generous nature inherent in the idea of human-heartedness, and became a narrow love only for people within one's own family clan or within physical or emotional proximity. While it has been a source of cohesiveness in the face of indifference from other cultures or forced invasion from foreign countries, it has also led to indifference to the sufferings of those who are unrelated by blood or social bonds. A typical

contemporary Chinese story illustrates this point. A man was heard yelling for help from the bottom of a well. His cries were ignored until someone finally called down the well: "Which work unit are you from?" annoyed that others from that man's unit had not come to save him. This story is perhaps made up by people who are critical of the narrow Chinese concept of love, but it clearly shows that the quality of human-heartedness has been severely distorted by the graded love concept.

Compared with the concept of *ren*, *yi* is an idealistic and unconditional moral concept for Confucius. By *yi*, or "righteousness", Confucius expected a person's life to be guided by his moral obligations and to take action only when it was deemed to be the right thing to do for its own sake. There are two important points to be raised here. First, Confucius believed in absolute and unconditional moral values. To him, everyone had certain things that he ought to do under any and all circumstances. If a person based his actions on the moral rules, then he was behaving as a righteous person was supposed to behave. Secondly, Confucius stated very clearly that if a person did what he ought to do, but did it for non-moral motives, the action could not be regarded as righteous (Feng, Short History 42). The motive was essential; righteous conduct meant the absence of ulterior motives for personal gain.

Another basic criterion for determining if an action was

righteous or not was the number of people who would benefit. The more people who would benefit from an act, the more righteous it became. Confucius emphasized that only when a person freed himself from all self-interest was it possible for him to engage in righteous conduct. He believed that when a king was virtuous and his conduct righteous, all people in his state would benefit from his rule. Such a king, in Confucius' opinion, not only won respect from the people, but also performed his duty to the Will of Heaven¹⁵ as well. To Confucius, this connection between being a righteous king, winning the support of the people, and fulfilling duties to the Will of Heaven was important.

Confucius discussed the concept of *yi* or "righteousness" in contrast with the concept of *li* which means "profit" or "gain".¹⁶ He held those people as superior men who viewed being righteous as the most important principle in life and despised others as small men who acted only for profit and

¹⁵ The Will of Heaven (*ming*), another important Confucian concept, was seen as the most overwhelming and irresistible power in nature. When a commitment to a belief or an action is perceived as a service to the Will of Heaven, the legitimacy of the work and confidence in its success seems to be guaranteed. According to a popular Chinese saying, in pursuing a goal: "Exert all your efforts, but leave the result to the Will of Heaven." Even today, many Chinese, when they commit themselves to a long-term pursuit, see it as their duty to do their best, but believe that the outcome is in the hands of destiny.

¹⁶ This *li* is a different character from the *li* which means putting others ahead of oneself, respect, and the accompanying rituals. The latter *li* is pronounced using the third tone \ / (*li*) and the former the fourth tone \ (*li*).

gain. He said: "The superior man comprehends *yi*; the small man comprehends *li*" (qtd. in Feng, Short History 42). According to the Analects, Confucius seldom talked about "profit" or "gain"; he would abide only by *ren*, which included *yi*¹⁷, and *ming* (qtd. by Ren 1:79). This contempt for profit became a prevailing value among Chinese rulers and scholars in the centuries to follow.

In this tradition, as concerns valuing life and valuing morality, the latter was more important (Fang 3). "No superior men would seek life at the expense of *ren* but many of them would give up their lives to observe *ren*," Confucius said (qtd. in Ren 1: 75). That was the essence of "righteousness" in Confucius' mind. Only when a person saw "righteousness" as a higher command in life would it be possible for him to become a man of *ren*--an ideal status of human character, worth dying for. It was important to do everything one could to observe *ren*, even if it meant giving up one's life.

When a person was truly able to see the significance of *ren* and was ready to give up his life for the observation of the moral principles embodied in *ren*, he became a righteous man, a man of *ren* and *yi*. When a person became a man of *ren* and *yi*, he was seen to embody a "sageliness within and kingliness without" (Feng, Short History 8). Such a person should be the king, and even if he could not literally become

¹⁷ To Confucianism, *yi* or "righteousness" is an integral part of *ren* and a person's virtues are all embodied in his behaviour only when it is guided by "righteousness".

king, he deserved respect from others for being a man of *ren* and *yi*. As time went by, this ideal status of "sageliness within and kingliness without" evolved into the belief that all kings, since they were able to become rulers of the country, obviously had the quality of "sageliness within," were righteous and loving to their people and, therefore, deserved the respect of the people. It was the Will of Heaven that they became kings. This traditional belief in the "sagely" nature of political authority is still quite pervasive in the back of the minds of the majority of Chinese today.

Zhong and shu

Zhong and *shu* comprise another pair of important values in the practice of *ren*. They are moral principles guiding interpersonal relationships. *Zhong* means doing only those things to others that you wish to have done to you, whereas *shu* means not doing anything to others that you do not wish done to you (Feng, Short History 43). Confucius was once reported as saying:

The man of *ren* is one who, desiring to sustain himself, sustains others, and desiring to develop himself, develops others. To be able from one's own self to draw a parallel for the treatment of others; that may be called the way to practise *ren* (qtd. in Feng, Short History 43).

People, then, should use themselves as the standard to decide what things they should and should not do to others. Confucius' idea of *zhong* and *shu* was further elaborated to

include specific relationships: the son should serve his father the way he expects his son to serve him; he should serve the ruler the way he expects his subordinate to serve him (Zhong Yong [Doctrine of the Mean]). In doing so, he is practising *zhong* and *shu*, and he is practising *ren* as well. The principle of *zhong* and *shu* suffuses the principle of *ren* (Feng, Short History 44).

Classification of people by ren

Confucius classified people by social status and their presumed commitment to the moral principles of *ren* and *yi*. What made his classification problematic, even dangerous, was his assumption that people with low status had no moral standards. Throughout his dialogues with his disciples, it was clear that Confucius assumed that only people with high status were people with human-heartedness and high moral principles. To Confucius, the virtuous people were naturally the kings, ministers and aristocrats who did what they ought to do in their duties as fathers, sons, ministers and subjects. He placed his hopes for a better society in the moral qualities of these people.

Limited by his time, he did not have any understanding of the powerful material forces at work that divided society into rich and poor, powerful and powerless. Consequently, Confucius could only conclude that people who did not observe *ren* and *yi*, who did not follow the rituals and *li*, were people

without moral standards. And it was assumed that virtually all common people belonged to this category. It is important to notice that Confucius never trusted the common people--the small men¹⁸--as he called them. Confucius said: "There can be superior men who don't observe *ren*; but there can never be small men who observe *ren*" (qtd. in Ren 1: 72). To him, the common people were without moral values. They were people who knew not how to love, nor how to respect their superiors, nor how to understand the Will of Heaven. Therefore, the only wise thing to do was to make the common people do what they ought to do without expecting them to know why they ought to do it (Lun Yu [Analects of Confucius]), because it was impossible for them to understand it anyway. Women, in Confucius' mind, belonged to the same category as the small men. He once commented to the effect that there were only two types of people who were hard to deal with: the nobodies and women. Women received even less attention in his teachings than did the nobodies. He was concerned, for the most part, with superior men and secondarily with small men. Women were not present in his classification scheme. They were nonetheless expected to be unquestioningly obedient--as were men--to the king, the ministers, the father and the elder brothers. In addition, women owed total obedience to their husbands above all.

When Confucius talked about having *ren* and *yi*, then, he

¹⁸ This term connotes the sense of "nobodies".

was referring only to men with high social status, men within the ruling class. The common people, the slaves, and all women had no place in the concerns of Confucius, and small men were of concern only insofar as their potential disobedience might make them rebel against the rulers. When Confucius classified people into superior men and small men based on what he claimed was their innate ability or inability to become men of *ren* and *yi*, he was casting people in their destined roles as rulers and ruled. Naturally, these ideas were heartily welcomed by subsequent ruling classes, who made much of his concept of *ren*. People from all sectors of society were made to believe that their way to abide by *ren* was to subject themselves to the absolute rule of their superiors, be they the king, the ministers, the fathers, the elder brothers, or the husbands.

Obviously, the concept of *ren* has far-reaching implications. As a way to classify people based on their social status, it has, since Confucius' time, cast hundreds upon hundreds of millions of common people to their destiny of being ruled by a small number of "superior" men. It has served as the philosophical foundation for China's feudal centralism as well as for elitism in present-day society. It has been the root of the general belief that a person in a leadership position--a government or a ruling party--is always more righteous, more moral and more caring than those in subordinate positions. The ideological consolidation of

inequality based on presumed natural superiority and inferiority occurred in Chinese society the moment Confucius began teaching his belief in human-heartedness and righteousness. It has been and remains a formidable barrier to the empowerment of the Chinese people.

Confucius as an Educator

There were four major concerns for Confucius in his teaching, namely, knowledge of classical Chinese books, exemplary moral conduct, loyalty, and honesty (Ren 1: 81). Of these, three concerned the cultivation of moral character, which, in Confucius' opinion, should come before the transmission of knowledge. He believed that only when a person was morally responsible and established, would he be able to use his knowledge appropriately. He cited numerous historical examples to compare and contrast good kings with bad kings and used daily life stories to demonstrate what a man of *ren* would do under given circumstances. The primary place that Confucius gave to moral education has survived to the present time. Moral education has always been and still is a paramount concern in the curriculum, from primary school to university. It is a common social expectation that teachers are always to be models for their students, not only in their fields of knowledge, but in their moral character as well.

Another important impact of Confucian teaching centred on

the purpose of education. For Confucius, the main purpose revolved around political commitment to state affairs. Thus, he prepared his students to serve the rulers by teaching them the meaning and significance of *ren* and *li* as they related both to public and private life. He showed his students what he saw as the right way to run state affairs so that when they served rulers in the future, they would be able to give the right advice. The links between education and political career became systematized when royal examinations were introduced at the beginning of the second century B.C. during the Han dynasty. Under this practice, any man who wanted to become an official in the government had to pass long and difficult examinations on the classics set by the royal court. Since then, education for political commitment has remained a prevailing understanding of the nature of education in Chinese culture, even up to the present day.

Other important aspects of Confucius' educational thinking have also had a strong impact on contemporary Chinese society. Confucius emphasized appreciation of classical writings by the ancient scholars. He called himself a "transmitter" but not an "originator" (Feng, Short History 40). He believed that the classical writings represented the best thinking and the best minds, and that it was his work to make them known. Confucius saw an inherent relationship between knowledge in existence and knowledge to be developed. He believed that learning occurred only when existing

knowledge was fully reviewed and appreciated. In his lectures, in addition to explaining the texts, based on the syntax of the classical writings, he interpreted them according to his understanding of the social context. Thanks to his personal efforts as well as encouragement of his disciples' work, earlier writings by ancient scholars were collected, annotated and compiled into books, which grew to become part of the Chinese cultural heritage. Confucius gave little encouragement to original thought, and even less present was the encouragement of creative thinking in his educational philosophy. Under his influence, an uncritical acceptance of the written word and the teacher's expertise, as well as a mechanical approach to teaching, and a rote approach to learning were developed. These practices still remain a significant influence in the schools, even at the university level.

In contrast to his enthusiasm for the ancient classics, Confucius demonstrated a deep contempt for and ignorance of knowledge of production. His scornful attitude was a natural result of his distrust of the common people, who of course, engaged in physical labour. Thus, the education he promulgated was strong in book knowledge, but gave virtually no attention to practical ability or to solving problems related to everyday reality. Confucian education was clearly an education for the elite and the privileged.

While Confucius deserves credit for his contribution to

the preservation of China's cultural heritage, the negative impact that his teachings had on Chinese culture should not be overlooked. Apart from his conservative political philosophy that helped to establish and legitimate the feudal centralism that ruled China for centuries, his total acceptance of classical knowledge left an educational tradition that encourages passive learning and non-creative, non-critical thinking. His emphasis on book knowledge, along with his rejection of knowledge of production contributed to the creation of generations of scholars whose knowledge did not help improve the material life of the people, but only served to guarantee their own career advancement. Confucian education could only lead to a widened gap between those who ruled and those who were ruled.

The Intelligentsia¹⁹ before the 20th Century

Centuries of Confucianism and the existence of an imperial examination system created a sizable intelligentsia in China. In a country where the great majority of the people was illiterate, the imperial court depended heavily on the scholars. In return, it granted them a privileged and well-

¹⁹ The intelligentsia in China embodied all scholars, including the scholar-officials who were functionaries close to the emperors and those who ran the affairs of state at all levels. Scholars without official appointments or without much private property also belonged to this group. These people served as the foundation of the ancient political structure in China and enjoyed great social respect for their knowledge of the Chinese classics.

respected position in society. In traditional Chinese culture, knowledge literally meant power. A classical education was the stepping-stone to officialdom. The tradition of classical knowledge sustained the political structure of feudal centralism. Subsequently, educational issues were always intertwined with the political concerns of the time.

The function of the intelligentsia is quite well defined in the following observation:

Under the empire Confucian scholars were incorporated into the business of the state by virtue of their monopoly of skills essential to the governing power, but not of it. They were the masters of the traditions of literacy and ritual, the educated manipulators of the symbols of value in the society and the culture. As such, their function was not to rule, but to legitimate the authority of those in whose hands the power to govern rested, and to assist them in the administration of their realm. (Grieder 30-31)

This traditional function of scholars as handmaids of the imperial court remained a unique and prominent feature of Chinese culture²⁰. Clearly, during much of China's history, scholars were an empowered stratum in society. Even though many scholars did not get official appointments in life, they were sustained by the dominance of Confucianism. They were direct beneficiaries of China's centralism for centuries.

Two thousand years of the scholar-official system created

²⁰ Even though their status has been fundamentally changed by the socialist revolution, this feature is still visible in present-day China.

certain prominent features in the culture: a) knowledge was closely related to political needs; b) traditional knowledge was preserved to maintain the centralized political structure; and c) scholars depended on imperial patronage for their privileged status, and, consequently were hardly ever prepared to dissent from authority. These special features, plus scholars' frustrations over Confucianism, contributed to the complexity of the Chinese intellectual's role in modern history. On the one hand, the intelligentsia class helped to sustain political stability under the feudal system for centuries, but on the other hand, outstanding individuals from this elite group challenged the system and brought about historic social changes.

The Challenge from the West

The Chinese cultural tradition remained unchallenged until the mid-19th century when Western influences began to penetrate Chinese society as a result of China's defeat in its first war with Britain (1839-1842). The influx of opium and foreign missionaries shocked many scholars who found themselves humiliated by the impotence of their government. The defeats that followed led the Qing government to sign one treaty after another with foreign countries compensating the wars with territorial concessions, permission to expand the opium trade and to establish churches, schools and hospitals run by foreign missionaries. By the end of the 19th century,

according to incomplete statistics, there were more than 3300 foreign missionaries from Europe, the United States and Russia in China (Chen J. 47), bringing to an end China's centuries of insulated self-absorption and self-centredness.

During this period, scholars became powerless like other Chinese. Serious efforts were made to search for means to strengthen the country--a central concern for scholars since the middle of the 19th century. It was soon concluded that a major barrier to becoming a strong country resided in China's own tradition: many of China's values contributed to its defeat by Western powers. The national crisis forced many scholars to challenge the Confucian system of knowledge and to reevaluate this tradition, which was seen, to a large extent, as a source of stagnation for the country. A group of imperial officials strongly recommended that the court face reality and learn from the West's advanced technology. In 1872, China began to send students abroad to study subjects in natural sciences and technology (Chen J. 85). But the traditionalists in China insisted that engagement in Western learning was composed of nothing more than "trifling skills and tricks" and "violated the duty of the Chinese scholars" (Chen J. 79). Alarmed by the increasing penetration of Western culture through the support of what they called "foreign admirers" in the court, the traditionalists asserted that "in a world where there was no lack of talent, why must we seek help from foreigners? Why must China follow the

practice of foreigners?" (Chen J. 79) This debate between the value of traditional education in the Chinese classics vs. the increasing influence of Western culture and technology was carried out as a political issue throughout the rest of the 19th century, and has still not been completely settled.

Due to their traditional relationship to government, scholars and university teachers have never been able to obtain a distinctive social identity of their own, even to this day. However, because education has been so closely linked to the politics of the country, the impact of the political and academic work of scholars traditionally led to some policy changes in the imperial courts. One result of this in more recent times was that many scholars, perhaps the majority of them, hoped for social change through education rather than revolution. The major concerns debated among the officials and other scholars since the middle of the 19th century were: a) why was China defeated by foreign powers; and b) what should China do to become stronger. These issues signified a strong desire among scholars for the country to be able to stand up to the threat of foreign powers. Meanwhile, the very fact that these issues were being debated showed that the scholars were in a position to believe that they could effect change.

Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Crusaders against Chinese Tradition

The success of Western technology and power set off the first generation of scholar crusaders against Chinese cultural traditions. Regardless of differences in their political attitudes and family backgrounds, these crusaders shared a common critical attitude towards tradition and a common commitment to bringing about change in China that would make it strong enough to stand up to foreign encroachment. Ironically, however, they also shared the common fate of harbouring within themselves much of that same ideological legacy against which they attempted to revolt with such resolute determination.

The Taiping Rebellion

The Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) led by Hong Xiuquan (1814 - 1864), a former school teacher, was the earliest rebellious movement against the feudal tradition. Hong's program for equality and justice for the common people immediately won the support of millions of Chinese peasants who had suffered from heavy taxation since China's first defeat in the Sino-British Wars. Within a short time, the peasant army had swept through 14 provinces, demolishing the feudal land holding system wherever they went (Ren 4: 184). Hong stated his program:

Distribute land according to the number of people in each household regardless of whether they are men or women. Households with more members are

assigned more land than those with fewer members....The land, fertile or barren, belongs to all members of the kingdom. All people in the kingdom are blessed by the benevolent Emperor God, sharing with one another their land, food, clothing and money so that nobody suffers from inequality anywhere, so that everyone is well fed and clothed in this kingdom. (qtd. in Ren 4: 194)

Confucianism was condemned as the root of all human sufferings. Wherever it went, the Taiping army destroyed temples and all symbols representing feudal superstition and the political control imposed on the Chinese peasants. Hong had learned about equality before God from a Christian missionary. Although rejecting some Christian concepts, he declared that there was only one God--"the God of Emperor"--before whom all people were equal beings like brothers and sisters (Ren 4: 187). In his "Kingdom of Heavenly Peace," which lasted for more than 13 years in what is now the city of Nanking, human beings were valued as the most precious and remarkable of all creatures in the world (Ren 4: 189); equality between men and women was upheld, while all feudal practices that dehumanized women, such as foot-binding and prostitution, were outlawed; and Confucius was condemned as the source of all social evils, whose teachings "led people astray" (Ren 4: 190). In place of the Confucian classics for learning, Hong ordered that his revised version of the Old and New Testaments be compulsory reading for the soldiers. For the peasants, he had popular readings compiled as textbooks designed to repel superstitious beliefs and to teach knowledge of farming. In this "Kingdom", people formerly at the bottom

of society tasted empowerment, seeing what it was like to rule their own lives as equals. They also grew from peasants to staunch fighters for the anti-traditional and anti-government cause they believed in. So deep was their commitment that when "the Kingdom of Heavenly Peace" finally fell in battle to the Qing army, none of the soldiers surrendered (Grieder 64).

In addition to the cruel suppression of the Qing government and its support by foreign powers, more important causes which led to the failure of the Taiping Rebellion were the internal corruption and conflicts among the peasant leaders that fatally fragmented the army. In the last few years, Hong ruled his kingdom in the same way as all feudal emperors before him. Because he would not tolerate any challenge to his authority, he started brutal, but also self-destructive purges, even among his loyalists.

The Taiping Rebellion shook the foundations of the Qing dynasty and speeded the collapse of the feudal system. When the Qing government resorted to foreign powers and local armies to help put down the peasants, it allowed expansion of the local forces, which inevitably weakened the central power of the government. Because the Rebellion was anti-Confucian, there was considerable aversion to this peasant movement among scholars. Nonetheless, the Taiping Rebellion contributed to the increasing doubt among scholars about the legitimacy of the Qing government and the value of traditional Chinese culture which had led the country into what they saw as a

chaotic and inferior relationship to the foreign powers in China.

Introduction of Western Thought

Yan Fu (1853 - 1921) was the first Chinese scholar to introduce Western thought to China. While receiving his education in England, Yan realized that, in addition to the absence of modern technology, many traditional Chinese values and beliefs had hindered the development of the country. He pointed out that the differences between "Chinese scholarship" and "Western learning" could be identified in "the Chinese preoccupation with the past to the neglect of the present" as opposed to "the Western emphasis on the present to surpass the past." He found that "the Chinese entrusted themselves to the Will of Heaven, while the Westerners depended on the power of man." Yan also saw a difference in the philosophical understanding of progress: "The Chinese believed in progress through cycles alternating between order and disorder, prosperity and stagnation, while Westerners upheld the evolutionary process of progress without limits and prosperity without decline" (qtd. in Ren 4: 212). Other basic differences he identified, obviously romanticized, were: Chinese society was rigidly hierarchical while the West emphasized equality; the Chinese favoured people by blood bondage while Westerners admired people for their competence; the Chinese maintained social order by piety, whereas

Westerners ruled the world by fairness; the Chinese revered the ruler, while Westerners respected the people (Ren 4: 210).

In introducing Western philosophical and political thinking to China, Yan published translated works such as Evolution and Ethics by Thomas H. Huxley; An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith; The Study of Sociology by Herbert Spencer; On Liberty and System of Logic by John Stuart Mill; and later, materials on science and technology (Ren 4: 209). These works, whose ideas were in direct conflict with prevailing Confucian beliefs, became the major source of intellectual enlightenment for many scholars in China. While introducing Darwinism, Yan pointed out that it was not the Will of Heaven that made people more advanced than other creatures; rather it was the human will to survive that kept them improving themselves to become the fittest. Otherwise, they would disappear like many other species. Yan used the example of human survival in the natural world to warn that China, as a country, would not survive in the world of technology without genuine constitutional reforms and technological development.

In his later years, Yan became more and more politically conservative until finally he turned his back on the Western ideas of freedom and liberty that he had once so vehemently advocated. He decided that the Confucian classics overshadowed the many other philosophies he had read (Ren 4: 225). In the later parliamentary debate on the value of

Confucian learning, he took the lead in voting for the reestablishment of Confucianism as the official doctrine of the first Republic in 1912.

A Failed Effort to Reform Confucianism

Many reformers failed miserably in their efforts to make structural changes in China. The most well-known was Kang Youwei (1847-1927), who is remembered in Chinese history for his vision of China's future and for his failed reform. As a staunch Confucianist, Kang acted on his conviction that political action should be taken only when appropriate to the needs of the time. He wrote:

The present time...is the Age of Approaching Peace.²¹ It is therefore necessary to promulgate the doctrines of self-rule and independence and implement parliamentary and constitutional rule. For if the laws are not transformed, great disorder will result. (Feng, History 683)

In 1898, Kang set forth on his mission to establish a constitutional monarchy with the support of the court. The reform lasted only three months, but its failure created a considerable impact on many scholars at the time. It discouraged any hope of change through imperial support and confirmed the belief in some of the more progressive scholars that fundamental change would not be possible without a revolution.

²¹ The Confucian scheme of history saw the development of society in three stages: the Age of Disorder; the Age of Approaching Peace; and the Age of Universal Peace (Ren 4: 234).

Kang's vision of a utopian world had a greater impact on scholars than his actual attempts to change the existing world. He worked out his vision of the Age of Universal Peace, the final stage of social development in Confucius' scheme. This world of *da tong* (variously translated as great unity, great community, commonwealth, etc.) became a blueprint for the future of China in the minds of many scholars, reformers and even revolutionaries.

In the Age of the Great Community...the family will have been abolished, its social maintenance functions (childrearing, education, care for the ill and aged) assumed by public institutions. "Marriage" will remain, but only as a voluntary, short, and fixed-term relationship. Homosexuality will be socially as acceptable as heterosexuality. Women will have achieved absolute equality in social, economic and political status. Upon marriage the woman will retain her own family name rather than assuming that of her husband's family--he will be, after all, only a temporary mate. Nation-states will of course have disappeared. Instead, the world will be divided into one hundred degrees of longitude and latitude, creating a grid work of "degree territories"...which will form the basis of regional government. (Grieder 126)

While Kang's utopian vision was far ahead of Chinese reality, his political position at that time was more conservative than his ideas. Kang had fiercely attacked the feudal system in many of his writings; yet after the 1898 reform failed, he, like other visionaries before him, lapsed back into becoming a staunch defender of Confucianism, and opposing the revolution of 1911, which brought about the Republic, "a great destructive force without the power to create values or institutions which would replace those it had

overthrown" (Grieder 129). This inconsistency between Kang's thought and action led him to be "hated first by the conservatives because he was too radical, and later by the radicals because he was too conservative" (Feng, Short History 325).

The Aborted Revolution against Tradition

The short-lived imperial reform convinced Sun Zhongshan²² (1866 - 1925), a medical doctor, of the need to resort to more drastic means to abolish the centuries-old feudal political system. He led the revolution to overthrow the Qing government and was key in founding the first Republican government in 1911. Hoping to build China on the model of American democracy, Sun criticized the Chinese people for lacking national spirit and compared them to "a plate of scattered sand." Soon after the Republic was established, he advocated a national educational program emphasizing nationalism, republicanism, democracy and modernization.

Although Confucianism had been significantly undermined in the previous decades because of the increasing presence of Western culture and technology, Sun was ill-prepared for the strong resistance of the traditionalists to the newly established Republic. He had naively believed that the fall of the Qing dynasty represented the victory of the Republic over the feudal system. Sun's Republican government was soon

²² Known as Sun Yatsen in English.

usurped, not only politically, but ideologically as well, by an alliance of his political opponents, feudal warlords and the remnants of the Qing government.²³ Before long, Sun Zhongshan was forced to live the rest of his life with a shattered dream.

The above examples show that scholars in this period were strongly dedicated to active political participation in change, be it reform or revolution. In spite of the fact that their efforts all ended in failure, a feature common to them all was the empowering conviction that they were able to change China through their political programs. However, none of the reformers could fully appreciate the weight of tradition, which contributed so significantly to the destruction of their programs. The experiences of these early crusaders for change demonstrate that the force of feudal ideology, when internalized by the people, could become a more persistent barrier to their empowerment than the more apparent feudal economic and political structures. The latter two were always the focus of attention in their programs while the force of ideology was often overlooked. The failure of these reformers illuminated the minds of the next generation of university teachers, who were thus able to see the importance

²³ Ironically, when the Constitution of the Republic was drafted in the first parliament, Yan Fu and followers of Kang Youwei succeeded in including within it an official endorsement of Confucianism. (Feng, Short History 325)

of education and to place their hope for change in transforming people's minds as a fundamental condition for social progress.

Modern Efforts to Save China: Reform or Revolution?

By the first half of the 20th century, Western influences on Chinese culture were becoming stronger. The struggle over whether to maintain or change the existing political structure during those years was often reflected in the on-going debate between the relative value of Chinese scholarship and Western learning: which one should constitute the foundation of Chinese education? In 1898, Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), the most influential Confucianist representing the interests of the landlords and emerging compradors at the time, promoted the idea of taking "Chinese classical scholarship as the foundation and using Western learning for practical purposes" (Ren 4: 268). He presented himself as a champion for change, but what he really recommended was how to efficiently utilize Western technology to maintain feudal centralism. He said:

The...cardinal guides are our sage's teaching for generations. They are the essence of China's government by *li*...They won't change just as Heaven and *dao*²⁴ won't change...What cannot be changed in China are the moral principles, not the form of the system; the ruling of the sages, not the means and the weapons; the ethical standards, not the technology...The form of government can vary according to the times, but *dao*, as the essence of

²⁴ *Dao* refers to an overwhelming and irresistible force that governs the development of everything in the universe, including the way to run a government.

how to rule, cannot change over time. (qtd. in Ren 4: 207)

As Zhang's view rejected the growing reformists' movement for constitutional change, it was immediately welcomed by the mainstream of conservatives, and was officially endorsed by the government. It remained the official policy and the predominant intellectual doctrine right to the end of the Republican government in 1949.

Beijing University, Cradle of Intellectual Enlightenment and a New Kind of Empowerment

Many reformers became disillusioned and disgusted with the imperial politics that led to the quick end of the 1898 reform. Some scholars began to pin their hopes for saving China on transforming people's outlook through education. Cai Yuanpei (1868 - 1940) resigned from his imperial appointment when the reform in 1898 failed and went back to his home province to engage in education. In his teaching, he exposed his students to the political issues of the time and organized them into various societies to promote the rights of the people in general and of women in particular. In his own words, he was "apparently conducting education, but promoting revolution in secret" (Zheng D. 1).

He went to Germany to study philosophy, aesthetics and psychology in 1907. Nine years later, when he was promoting educational and work-study programs for Chinese students in Europe, he received an offer from the central government to

become President of Beijing University²⁵. He could not resist this offer, as he had seen possibilities of a revolution in consciousness through education during his brief tenure as Minister of Education in Sun Zhongshan's first Republican cabinet.

Soon after Cai became President, he started making changes at *Beida* based on models of universities he had seen in Europe. As later proved, through his efforts, Beijing University became the centre of intellectual enlightenment as well as the cradle of the Chinese Communist Party. It remains the leading liberal arts university in China today.

Roundly rejecting the traditional idea of educating young men to become officials through royal examinations, Cai made it clear to the teachers and students at *Beida* that the purpose of education was to cultivate students in four respects: physically, intellectually, morally and aesthetically. None of these was to be overlooked if education was to develop well-rounded character (Cai, Universal 6). His attention to physical and intellectual education represented a great shift from the traditional emphasis on moral education. Cai embraced the Western belief

²⁵ Beijing University (commonly referred to as *Beida*) was established in 1912. It was the first modern Chinese university and had initially been proposed in 1898 as part of the reform program for a new type of institution of higher learning to train students in foreign languages and Western technology to enable them to help China against any future foreign interventions. Yan Fu had been the first president of Beijing University.

of the time that a healthy body was the precondition for a well-developed character. To ensure that the students developed their intellectual capabilities, he created an academic environment in which freedom of thought and tolerance of differences were prevailing educational principles. He firmly opposed allowing any one school of thought to become authoritative doctrine while silencing others, as had been the case for so long with Confucianism.

He suggested that an emphasis on aesthetic education would help dissolve the superstitious and slavish mentality of the Chinese people. At a time when religious education was beginning to exert a major influence in the Chinese curriculum, Cai advocated replacing it with aesthetic education. He believed that the only permanent value of religion was the aesthetic value embodied in religious paintings, music, architecture and literature, and that religious education had no place in the moral and intellectual development of the students. He argued that aesthetic education should replace religious education because the former encouraged freedom, while the latter imposed obligation; the former was progressive, while the latter was conservative; the former was universal, while the latter was restricted (Cai, Replacing 20). In the course of promoting aesthetic education, Cai changed the traditional Chinese concept of it by expanding the program to include courses on opera, fiction, music and painting, all of which had formerly

been regarded as insignificant entertainment, not appropriate for university study (Xiao 3).

Also breaking with tradition was Cai's administrative policy of hiring faculty members based on their academic standing regardless of their political background. Consequently, many outstanding scholars with different political beliefs found a forum at *Beida*, thus exposing students to a wide range of ideas and viewpoints. It was in this kind of free academic setting that Marxism was included in the curriculum, leading to the growth of the Chinese Communist Party at *Beida*.

However, Cai was not completely free from traditional ideas. Based on his deep conviction in the Confucian teaching that all social reforms must begin with the clarification of one's own virtue, Cai organized a "Society for the Promotion of Virtue" in 1918²⁶. The Society required its members (70 faculty and about 300 students) to pledge themselves to "eight abstentions", which included abstention from visiting brothels, gambling, taking concubines, and accepting government appointed official positions²⁷. Cai believed that a moral society was not possible unless each of its members was armed with great learning and virtuous conduct.

²⁶ Many members of the Society became active participants in social movements in the years that followed.

²⁷ Cai believed that learning should be for the purpose of education alone. When learning was directed toward personal gain, such as becoming an official, the purpose of learning was corrupted, and it was, therefore, immoral.

Cai believed that everyone should be entitled to receive education. He pointed out that "only university students used to have the right to higher education; no one else did. This is inequality" (Xiao 3). He set up night universities for staff members at *Beida* and for the common people, thus opening access to higher education, for the first time in history, to ordinary people. As a result, hundreds upon hundreds of people who normally would never have dreamed of higher education became night university students at *Beida*. Cai was also the first person to break the Chinese tradition that denied access to higher education to women. He clearly stated that women were as educable as men, and that whatever men could do, so could women (Cai, Universal 10). Therefore, *Beida* became the first institution of higher learning in China that enrolled female students.

At the time when Cai Yuanpei was reforming education, China was ruled by warlords who tried to control education through high-handed coercion. In response, Cai advocated the independence of education from the control or influence of any political party. He wrote:

Education is to enable the educated to develop their potential and their character so that they will be able to contribute their bit to human civilization. It is not meant to turn the educated into tools to be used by people with ulterior motives. Therefore, education should be left entirely to education specialists, so that it will maintain its independent identity without being influenced in any way by different factions of political parties or religious denominations. (Cai, Independence 12)

Cai argued that while education was to ensure equal development in both individual and social character, a political party promoted only social character and denied a person's individual development. Education policies aimed at long-term benefits; party policies strove for immediate returns. Furthermore, party policies and leadership were neither stable nor consistent. As for religion, churches were conservative and exclusive by nature, and therefore education should remain independent of their influence (Cai, Independence 13).

In his efforts to maintain an independent identity for education, Cai established an administration committee of elected university professors who formed the highest decision-making body in the university. It was the first time in China's history that a democratic decision-making process was formally put into practice. It was the first time that educators were empowered to take control of their own affairs.

Cai eventually became the most visible source of inspiration for the New Culture Movement at *Beida*, which led to the famous May Fourth Movement in 1919²⁸ (Schwarcz 47) and the preparation for the founding of the CCP. Cai Yuanpei's contribution to Chinese intellectual enlightenment was best

²⁸ The New Culture Movement was characterized by an intellectual critique of Chinese tradition and by debate among professors on social and political issues in China. The May Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialist and anti-government student movement, which marked the beginning of Chinese enlightenment.

described by his successor:

If you throw a stone into a body of still water, rings of waves begin to rise and travel further and further, ever widening and extending away from the centre. In Peking, capital of China throughout five dynasties and more than ten centuries, ...the brief tide of the reform [of 1898] had ebbed and vanished into history; only a few shells remained witnesses to the vicissitudes of fortune in that placid ancient capital. But the university, in which were clustered the living shells that contained pearls, was destined to make a valuable contribution to culture and thought within the short span of one generation. The man who threw the stone of intellectual revolt into that placid water was Dr. Tsai Yuan-pei [Cai Yuanpei] (Schwarcz 47)

Cai Yuanpei's contribution to modern Chinese education has been compared to that of Confucius in ancient China (Xiao 3). Thanks to his policy of "incorporation and tolerance of different schools of thought", there developed in *Beida* an academic atmosphere characterized by great diversity and vitality.

As the centre of progressive thought, Beijing University attracted many other professors who introduced new and enlightened ideas to China. Chen Duxiu (1879 - 1942), a professor and dean of Humanities, is better known for his leading role in founding the Communist Party than for his earlier contribution to starting the New Culture Movement at *Beida*. His concept of a "new culture" developed from his alliance with Liang Qichao²⁹, who saw the need for a new type

²⁹ Liang Qichao was a student of Kang Youwei, active in the 1898 reform, who spent most of his life in exile campaigning for the creation of a "new people" after the imperial reform failed.

of thoughtful, anti-traditional people in China. Chen, however, believed that this was not possible without a complete denunciation of the old traditions. He declared that "Chinese tradition resided in an antiquated Confucianism that did not go beyond the privilege and prestige of the few rulers and aristocrats and had nothing to do with the happiness of the great masses" (Gasster 34). It stifled the freedom of thought that people needed in order to bring about Republicanism. Chen advocated his anti-traditional position through his journal New Youth and appealed for mass participation and popular initiative for political action. He asserted that "if we expect to establish a Western type of modern nation, then the most basic step is to import the foundation of modern Western society--the faith in the equality of man" (Gasster 35). Chen urged young people to assume responsibility for eliminating "the old and the rotten" from Chinese life and replacing it with science and democracy. His journal enlightened many young students, including several who later became founding members of the Chinese Communist Party.

Hu Shi (1891-1962), the first professor with a Ph.D at Beijing University, had studied under John Dewey at Columbia University. This educational experience enabled him to see more clearly the lack of vitality in China's cultural traditions. In 1917, when he was Chair of the English Department at *Beida*, he became a committed advocate for

language reform. It was clear to him that many of the old traditions and values were sustained by the classical or official language. He pointed out that it was impossible for people to break away from outmoded ideas without abandoning the classical language forms. Classical Chinese, he maintained, had become a barrier between Chinese officials and intellectuals on the one hand, and the common people on the other. He took the lead in popularizing Western works and the Chinese classics in the vernacular through his publications and lectures. However, his language reform, as an integral part of the New Culture Movement, met with strong opposition from both conservatives and progressives. Conservatives condemned the new "common language" as being "unChinese", while progressives declared that it was not really applicable to the spoken language of the common people in their daily use. Defending his position on the new language in relation to the New Culture Movement, Hu Shi stated the purpose of the New Culture Movement was to lay bare to people a proclivity toward being fooled by so-called ancient wisdom. As language and thought were inseparable, Hu Shi insisted, the new language reform was essential in bringing about a cultural awakening among ordinary people to the new ideas.

Lu Xun (1881-1936) was the most explicit defender of enlightenment through the language reform started at *Beida*. Critical of the traditional literati's contempt for "the stupid common people," he appreciated their experiential

knowledge and identified their forced silence as oppression due, at least in part, to their illiteracy and ignorance of new ideas. He reaffirmed the need for a new common language, but made it clear that genuine reform could be achieved only through the efforts of self-conscious intellectuals who were not swayed by the political convictions either of the right or of the left (Schwarcz 212).

Lu Xun had a strong commitment to enlightening ordinary people. Although he started as a medical student in Japan, his observation of Chinese reality led him to believe that his skill in medicine could not accomplish much when the whole country was being stifled by a feudal tradition that had shaped a national character of subservience to authority and to foreign powers. He gave up his medical career to turn to literature, believing that he would thus be able to awaken more people to struggle for their own existence rather than waiting to be saved.

Lu Xun wrote his first short story, "A Madman's Diary", in the vernacular, unique for an author at the time. In it, he depicts a young man who wakes up from sleep only to discover that the loftiest values of his family and village amount to nothing but cannibalism. The author goes on to say that only a madman in China dares to read between the lines of the Confucian classics to discover that on each page the words "virtue" and "benevolence" really conceal the hidden message: "Eat People!" Through this story, Lu Xun is crying out for

the need for more "madmen" to see the truth of Chinese reality. The only hope to be found in these murderous circumstances is expressed towards the end of the story: "Perhaps there are still children who have not eaten men? Save the Children" (Lu 18). It was in the "children" of China that the early generation of Chinese intellectuals placed their hope for a new country freed from over two millennia of feudalism.

Li Dazhao (1889 - 1927), a history professor and head librarian at *Beida*, was also a chief editor of the journal New Youth on campus, which carried Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary" and served as a forum for students and intellectuals. In addition, Li gave his full support to the student journal Citizen through which students denounced the old cultural traditions and exchanged views on emerging ideas. As head librarian, he exposed students to Marxism and the experiences of socialism in the Soviet Union by organizing a study group which met regularly in a building named the "Red Chamber". Mao Zedong (1893 - 1976), who was then on a work-study program at the library, became involved with the study group, thus starting on his life-long career as a Marxist, thanks largely to the enlightenment of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. Li was also an active participant and organizer of the May Fourth Movement and a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party. He was later arrested and executed for his leading role in another student demonstration in 1926.

The May Fourth Movement and the Beginning of the Chinese Enlightenment

Following the example of their professors, the first generation of *Beida* students formed their own societies, thus joining their mentors' efforts to awaken people to the need for change. The two most active societies were New Tide and Citizen; their members became the chief organizers of the famous May Fourth Movement. Compared with their professors, the younger generation was more concerned with the issue of imminent national survival in the face of foreign annihilation and was more radical in their attack on the traditional culture and mentality that were seen as the source of China's predominantly feudal and partly colonial status. While the earlier generation of intellectuals could not fully free themselves from the influence of tradition in their denunciation of it, the younger generation seemed less attached to tradition and more optimistic about transforming China through their dedication to modern ideas and technology. While the older generation was more committed to the academic and educational transformation of culture through their efforts on campus, their followers were more oriented to political action for broader social change.

The May Fourth Movement broke out on May 4, 1919, when news came that another in a series of humiliating treaties was to be signed by the government at the Paris Conference. The port city of Qingdao, which had been a German naval base since 1897, was to be handed over to Japan by agreement among China,

Japan, France and Great Britain. The country was outraged at the news and students from *Beida* called for a public demonstration denouncing the government's betrayal of the people. In spite of warnings by the university administrators and government threats of suppression, 3000 students, led by leaders of the *New Tide* and *Citizen* societies, marched to *Tienanmen Square* protesting the *Paris Treaty* and demanding severe punishment for the national traitors. The demonstration attracted thousands of onlookers, who showed support and sympathy for the student protest. It was the first time in Chinese history that so many people publicly voiced their protest against a government; it would have been inconceivable without the consciousness-raising activities of professors at *Beida*.

The "Manifesto of All Beijing Students," written by *Luo Jialun*, one of the founders of the *New Tide Society*, declared the position of the students from *Beida*:

This is the last chance for China in her life and death struggle. Today we swear two solemn oaths with all our countrymen: 1) China's territory may be conquered, but it cannot be given away; 2) the Chinese people may be massacred, but they will not surrender....Our country is about to be annihilated! Up, brethren! (Schwarcz 15)

Student demonstrators set out towards the *Foreign Legation* quarter, broke into the house of *Cao Ruilin*, Minister of *Communications* and chief spokesperson for Japanese interests within the Chinese government, smashed his furniture and set the house on fire. The incident led to the arrest of 32

students and the resignations of both Cai Yuanpei and the Minister of Education.

John Dewey, who happened to be in Beijing, witnessed the students' outpouring of anti-government and anti-imperialist feeling and praised them for awakening China "from a state of passive waiting," and for showing "what an educated China can do, and will do in the future" (Dewey 191). The May Fourth Movement has become a milestone marking the beginning of China's awakening to its national sovereignty, its need for national enlightenment, and its strong desire for modernization. It can be credited with helping its participants realize that the sovereignty of the country would not be possible without a true national awakening. Students began to see the need to bring the issue of national survival to the common people, who were mostly unaware of the country's crisis. One of the many activities carried out by Citizen members was lecturing on various issues in the night schools on campus to people from many fields of work in society. They expanded the night school lecture format to Sunday street corner lectures in Beijing, attracting people with topics of general concern. They also went to villages and mines near the city and explained modern ideas and the need for change in traditional thinking to peasants and workers.

Observing the life of the common people enabled the students to see the tremendous discrepancy between the concerns of people on the *Beida* campus compared to those in

the villages and mines. Many students acquired a more realistic understanding of Chinese reality through their direct contact with the realities of working-class life and became further committed to the cause of emancipation of these people. The prevailing anti-imperialist mentality at *Beida*, and the increasing suffering of the labouring people under oppressive landlords and mine owners (who were protected by the warlords), helped intellectuals begin to develop a critical attitude towards feudalism in government and culture.

The Chinese Communist Party and Mao Zedong

The founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which occurred in 1921, two years after the May Fourth demonstration, showed a deep commitment of the intellectuals in China to a cause that aimed at emancipating the majority of the Chinese people from the oppression of feudalism and imperialism. It became the first effort by progressive intellectuals in modern Chinese history to strive for a social revolution that would benefit the majority of the people in the country. The establishment of the Party would not have been possible without the preparation of its members through the New Culture Movement at Beijing University, the Marxist study group at the Red Chamber building, and the May Fourth demonstration in Tienanmen Square.

Mao Zedong did not have formal educational experience at a modern university like the intellectuals who preceded him.

Coming as he did from a peasant background proved later to have provided Mao with a different perspective on many issues from the mainstream thinkers of the time. Consequently, it took him a long time to establish himself in a leadership position within the CCP: until 1935. During the years of the CCP's resistance to the repressive Nationalist Party, Mao demonstrated his deep understanding of Chinese reality and his courage to press his beliefs at critical moments.

The early years of the Party's history were dominated by the influence of the Soviet Union and the Communist International (Comintern), which supervised the founding of the Party and its programs for action. The Comintern insisted that the CCP base itself in large cities, where industrial workers--the proletariat--were concentrated. After some detrimental setbacks in the cities, however, Mao developed the position that, in China, the Party should base itself in the rural areas and form an alliance with the peasants rather than only with workers in the cities. Even before his view was understood and accepted by the Party, Mao went to the countryside where he set up training institutes for peasants, and gave lectures to interested peasants, explaining the critical conditions in China and their implications for the peasantry. His strategy proved to be effective in raising the awareness of millions of Chinese peasants. Along with an effective and popular program, the CCP saw armed revolution as essential in order to overthrow the Nationalist government and

establish a new China. When the Red Army under the CCP was faced with the threat of annihilation because of repeated assaults by the Nationalist government, Mao developed the strategy of setting up revolutionary base areas in the countryside. It was due to the popular support of the peasants that the army was successfully sustained during the 1930s, very difficult years that were further complicated by the brutal invasion of China by Japan in 1937.

With Mao's unique ability to apply Marxist theory to Chinese circumstances, he and the CCP led their armed forces in the Anti-Japanese War and the war that followed against the Nationalist Party to repeated victories. During the long years of political and military struggle, Mao won enormous popularity among ordinary people and within the Party through his critical thinking and remarkable political and military strategies. By the time a new China was founded in 1949, Mao had proved himself to be the unchallenged leader of the CCP, which had grown into a Party for the people and was facing the incredibly daunting task of economic and social transformation in the country with the largest population and the longest history of feudalism in the world.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIALISM IN CHINA: MORE EMPOWERMENT FOR WORKERS AND PEASANTS, LESS EMPOWERMENT FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

The Socialist Revolution and Education: 1949 to 1978

The socialist revolution led by Mao Zedong and the CCP was a profound and powerful challenge to over three thousand years of feudalism. In spite of the tremendous efforts of the Party, since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, it has become clear that the influence of Confucianism and feudalism on the minds of the Chinese people is much wider and far more profound than was recognized and addressed by the CCP. Although the economic structure of feudalism was revolutionized³⁰ and many feudal practices were outlawed, the revolution did not and could not uproot the ideological tenets of Confucianism from the Chinese mind. While the majority of people embraced the new socialist ideas enthusiastically, the influence of feudalism did not disappear. Rather, it temporarily receded into the background.

Even the CCP, which claimed Marxism as the guiding theory in its revolution against feudalism, could not completely break itself away from certain feudal ideas and practices.

³⁰ All previous efforts paid attention primarily to ideology and culture and occasionally to the political structure. Mao and the CCP were the first in China's long history to pay any serious attention to transforming the feudal economic system.

The basic feature of feudalism--centralism--was sustained by the CCP in its mode of governing. Many political and economic developments since 1949 have shown that the prevailing ideology of the Party was characterized by the unlikely combination of Marxism and feudalism. Repeated political campaigns after 1949, which aimed at maintaining the central political control of the CCP, reinforced rather than challenged the basic feudal ideological assumptions of centralism. What was called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) between 1966 and 1976 climaxed the many political campaigns since the beginning of the socialist revolution in which the feudal tradition showed its great staying power both within and outside the Party. Consequently, socialism, the most revolutionary and popular movement ever seen in China, envisioned and implemented by Mao,³¹ lost its vitality and legitimacy in a political system that allows no political differences and breeds in its leaders the inability to tolerate challenge to authority--a repetition of the fatal mistake made by all rulers under China's long history of centralism.

The economic changes since 1978, two years after Mao

³¹ Socialism as used in this work refers to a social system in which the interests of the great majority of people are served. It is a system dedicated to the collective ownership of social wealth and to justice and equality. In China, this also means the elimination of unequal differences between workers and peasants, urban and rural areas, and mental and manual labour. The CCP agrees with the Marxist idea that socialism is a transitional period between the old system and the future classless society--communism.

died, have led to great ideological confusion. For example, along with the recent growth of popular interest in various religions,³² Confucianism, which was rejected and condemned throughout the early years of the socialist revolution, is presently being reinvigorated, especially by the media (Fang 1995; Tang 1995; Shao 1995; Yang 1996). The revival of the basic values of Confucianism reveals a lack of critical understanding of Confucianism and its negative impact as a sustaining power of feudal ideology against the socialist revolution. When Confucianism is held up by the media and some scholars as part of the remedy for the present ideological and moral crisis, it shows that feudal ideology, with its incredibly long history, overshadows the nearly five decades of socialist revolution in its grip on the minds of many people and on the present political system.

Mao Zedong's Educational Thought and the Party's Policies

An examination of university teachers in the socialist period would be incomprehensible without a discussion of Mao Zedong's basic educational concepts and the Party's policies toward intellectuals during this period. As education in China has never been divorced from politics, the experiences of university teachers are closely related to and influenced by the political and educational programs of the CCP.

³² This has caused much interest and concern both in academic fields and among Party officials, because China has never been a religious society.

Epistemological foundations of Mao's educational thought

Mao stated: "Man's knowledge depends mainly on his activity in material production..." (Practice 1: 296). He believed that through the act of producing goods, people become conscious of their relationship to nature, to other people and to themselves (Hawkins 58). According to Mao, it is the interaction between people's understanding of their experiences and the environment that forms the source of knowledge. And only by applying knowledge to practice can one claim the validity of the knowledge and advance it to a higher level. Hawkins observes after his review of Mao's works, "On Practice" and "On Contradictions":

Clearly, Mao Tse-tung conceives the acquisition of knowledge as comprising a cyclical chain: from sense perceptions to conceptualization; back to practice and then to theory; back to practice for revision and so on. For Mao this represented an endless chain, each level of knowledge qualitatively higher than the other, thus accounting for human progress. (60)

This relationship between theory and practice forms the foundation of Mao's educational thinking. Mao criticized the education system for dwelling only on the former:

It takes a total of sixteen, seventeen or twenty years for one to reach the university from primary school and in this period one never has a chance to look at the five kinds of cereals, to look at how the workers do their work, how peasants till their fields, and how traders do business. In the meantime, one's health is also ruined. Such an educational system is very harmful indeed. (Talk 52)

He emphasized the need for school education to be combined with productive labour and suggested that schools develop

part-work, part-study programs which encourage students to study and to apply what they learn. He believed that education should serve as a link between workers and peasants, between mental and manual work, and between rural and urban areas.³³ It was Mao's belief that the age-old gaps in Chinese society could be bridged through socialist education, with the result that inequalities in society would be effectively reduced, if not eliminated.

Mao took a Marxist approach to the relationship between theory and practice, and in so doing, he deepened Marx's view that material production was not the only factor that influenced the formation of people's consciousness. The other aspect of Mao's epistemological outlook showed some influence of Confucianism in its emphasis on moral education as a powerful means for shaping people's minds. Mao believed that people's world outlook was strongly influenced by their political engagement in class struggle as well as by moral and ideological education.

He categorized Chinese intellectuals into three groups according to their attitude towards the socialist revolution: those who were resolutely in support of the revolutionary cause; those who wavered; and those who stood in opposition. He pointed out that this difference among intellectuals would remain for some time (Speech 5: 425) and that eventually the

³³ These differences are known as "three big differences" to be removed in order for socialism to be realized.

wavering elements would accept Marxism through painstaking education efforts (Problems 2: 228). These educational efforts took the form of ideological campaigns, which demonstrated a continuity of the traditional educational thinking that emphasized the power of education in the development of moral character.

These two aspects of Mao's epistemological understanding, namely that knowledge comes from productive practice, and that ideological transformation comes through education, formed the basis of the CCP's educational policies.

Education for politics

The traditional emphasis on moral education was developed and revived in a new form through the CCP's policy to make education a means for serving the political agenda of the Party and for producing successors to the cause of socialism. It has been shown as a central concern in Mao's educational thought as well.

Mao developed his views on education in the early years of the revolutionary struggle during which the CCP retained political power first in Jiangxi (1928-1934) and then in Yen'an (1935-1945)³⁴ while the rest of China was under the

³⁴ Jiangxi is in the south of China where the CCP formed its first Soviet government in the Jinggang Mountains, a revolutionary base that was besieged by the overwhelming forces of the Nationalist Army five times in two years. Yen'an was the second revolutionary base, this one in northern China, after the army survived the "long march" as a result of being forced out of the Jiangxi base.

rule of the Nationalist Party. Mao's educational policies clearly reflected the needs of the political and economic circumstances of the time. When the CCP was not yet well accepted by the people in its early stages, and when the revolutionary bases were faced with threats of imminent extinction, Mao emphasized that the aims of education must be to win popular support for the Party, to raise the political consciousness of Party members and the army, and to encourage self-reliance through productive labour in order to break through the Nationalists' economic embargo. The successful experiences in the base areas convinced Mao that education must "cultivate firm and correct political orientation, an industrious and simple style of work, and flexible strategy and tactics" (To be Attacked 162). This became a central idea of Mao's educational thinking and served as a guideline for the Party's educational policy.

The political orientation of education became an increasingly prominent feature in Mao's educational policies after the founding of the PRC. He often referred to the earlier educational policies in the revolutionary bases as his blueprint for education in the PRC. He wanted formal classroom teaching to be extended to include informal educational experiences in factories, villages and army camps, and knowledge from books to be applied to the practical needs

of production³⁵. When his ideas were finally implemented at all levels of education as a result of the drastic social upheavals during the GPCR³⁶, the political significance of the victory over the "capitalist roaders" overshadowed the significance and values embedded in educational practice based on Mao's educational thought.

Opening Access to Education

Soon after 1949, the CCP began to universalize basic education (grades 1-6). Mao pointed out that education had always been the exclusive privilege of the rich in old China and declared that "the moment the power of the landlords was overthrown in the rural areas, the peasant movement for education began" (Report 1: 53). He emphasized the importance of educating particularly those people who, more than others, had been denied access to education in feudal society:

³⁵ Educators in authority and the Minister of Education tended to follow a more conventional approach to education: their goal was to provide in-depth treatment of traditional subject matter, what they considered to be the essentials of knowledge (Hawkins 74). These two lines of thought were frequently a point of contention among policy makers between 1949 and 1978, especially in regard to the issue of priority in higher education: ensuring popular access to universities or maintaining high academic standards. As there was little possibility for public debate on such matters, let alone discussion of different opinions on important issues within the Party, the merits and problems of the educational system were not fully addressed.

³⁶ The Chinese educational system was paralysed when the GPCR began in 1966. Elementary schools and high schools formally resumed functioning three years later, but universities did not reopen until 1971.

children, youth and women (Coalition 3: 288). A series of national campaigns against illiteracy was started among a population in which an estimated 80 percent were illiterate. Great progress has been made in universalizing basic education in the nearly five decades since 1949. According to educational statistics published by People's Daily in 1996, basic education has been achieved among 91% of children and youth, 36% of whom have completed nine-year compulsory education in China ("Vigorous" 4).

While expanding access to basic education was the priority, the CCP also made a conscientious and vigorous effort to make higher education available to ordinary people as well. It announced, after the founding of new China, that tens of thousands of workers and peasants would soon be educated and be able to stand side by side with intellectuals from more traditionally privileged family backgrounds (Lu 89). To achieve this goal, secondary schooling was accelerated, and candidates for university education were selected from among workers and peasants who had shown promise of becoming leaders. Universities were directed to change their admission standards for working-class candidates (Pepper 51). Meanwhile, new universities were established to train Party cadres, many of whom came from humble backgrounds, through courses in Marxist theory. These efforts showed the CCP's strong commitment to making education a right for all the people rather than a privilege for a small elite class. Obviously,

education was seen by the Party as an important means of combatting feudal ideology.

University Teachers between 1949 and 1978

The majority of the working people had remarkably empowering experiences in the new China through their greater access to education, their active participation in the socialist revolution and construction, and a new position of respect in society. By contrast, university teachers, along with other Chinese intellectuals, experienced a long period of confusion in their efforts to engage in the cause of socialism. As is demonstrated later in this chapter, the empowerment of university teachers was hampered by the Party's conflicting and inconsistent policies towards education and intellectuals.

In order to ensure that the university graduate would become "a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture" (Mao, Correct Handling 5: 405), repeated ideological campaigns were waged in universities to transform the outlook of university teachers. Mao stated that

our writers, artists, scientists and technicians, professors and teachers are all educating students, educating the people. Being educators and teachers, they have the duty to be educated first. (Speech 5: 425)

His emphasis on educating the educators as a means of maintaining a revolutionary orientation for higher education became the theoretical justification for the repeated

transformative efforts starting in 1950 to imbue the minds of university teachers with a socialist ideology in line with Party policies.

The Party's policies on intellectuals³⁷

When the socialist revolution began, many intellectuals embraced the building of New China as enthusiastically as the rest of the country, but others expressed reservations or even resistance to some Party policies. Because of this range in attitudes towards its policies, the CCP did not trust the intellectuals as much as the working people, who clearly supported its programs. Consequently, the Party developed policies toward intellectuals that focused on transforming their outlook rather than motivating their initiative for socialist construction, even when the majority of intellectuals aligned themselves with the socialist cause. Although intellectuals have never formed an independent identity of their own, they have always been treated by the Party as not part of the basic alliance of peasants and workers.

There are a great many new members in our Party...who are intellectuals...They admire bourgeois liberalism and are against the leadership of the Party. They favour democracy and reject centralism. They are opposed to what is essential to the realization of a planned economy, that is,

³⁷ "Intellectuals" in China refers to people who have received university education as well as people in certain occupational categories, such as university teachers, writers and artists.

leadership, planning and control in the cultural and educational (journalism included) fields, which are indispensable and at the same time not unduly centralized. (Mao, Things 5: 441)

Under this general assessment of intellectuals, there were constant campaigns and movements aimed at transforming their ideology throughout the socialist revolution period.

In September 1951, soon after the socialist revolution started, a study campaign among 22 institutions of higher learning in Beijing and Tianjin was launched to transform the outlook of university teachers and to reform higher education. Two months later, Mao called for extensive participation by intellectuals in a "self-education and self-transformation" campaign, which ended by purging some teachers from schools and universities. In addition to direct calls from the Party to carry out "thought reform" within the universities, there were three nation-wide ideological campaigns between 1951 and 1955 in the form of literary criticism; these had an enormous political impact on campuses. In May 1951, for example, the criticism of the film "The Story of Wu Xun"³⁸ which was said to be advocating a slavish mentality among people, was extended to university campuses where it became an ideological campaign against the educational thought of Tao Xingzhi (1891-1946)³⁹. One of the other campaigns ended up with the

³⁸ An historical figure known for his servile behaviour to foreigners and to authority.

³⁹ A famous and influential Chinese educator who had received his graduate education under John Dewey at Columbia University, and initiated many progressive educational reforms

demotion of an author, and the third escalated into a political and organizational purge of a "counter-revolutionary clique". Much later in 1985, Hu Qiaomu, a high ranking Party official in charge of the Ministry of Propaganda, conceded that those early campaigns were "very one-sided, very extreme, and even very rude" (Zhao and Yan 293).

In January 1956, at the "Working Conference on Issues Concerning Intellectuals," Zhou Enlai, Premier of the State Council, admitted that the Party had overlooked the tremendous political and academic progress made by the intellectuals and underestimated their importance to the socialist cause. At this Conference, it was declared that the majority of intellectuals had become part of the working class. Subsequently, efforts were made to improve the living and working conditions of intellectuals, to train new artists, scientists and professors, and to require Party members and Party committees at all levels to acquire scientific knowledge and become experts in particular fields.

It was also in 1956 that the Party announced the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." This new policy encouraged millions of intellectuals to become actively involved in the national campaign for "Marching toward Science." However, the Anti-Rightist Movement soon followed in 1957 and was devastating to Chinese intellectuals' enthusiasm for socialist construction.

between 1930 and 1945.

Of the 550,000 people who were labelled as rightists in the Movement, 57% were intellectuals, many of whom were well known and well established in their fields. It was not long before intellectuals were again cast into the class of the bourgeoisie. At the Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party held in September 1957, it was stated in the document "Report on the Movement of Rectification" that "the bourgeoisie, especially its intellectuals, were the major contending force against the proletarians" (qtd. in Zhao and Yan 289).

Between September 1957 and February 1958, university campuses became sites for a debate on the relative merits of "red and expert"⁴⁰ and for an "Anti-extravagance and Anti-conservatism" campaign, which focused on "thought reform" among senior professors. This campaign escalated into an organizational purge called "uprooting the white flags".⁴¹ In *Beida*, 33 of the 76 professors and associate professors across the seven social science and humanities departments were subject to severe public criticism, demotions and firing. The person who bore the brunt of it was the President of Beijing University, Ma Yinchu, a well-established demographer and educator, who disagreed with the Party's population policy and predicted a population explosion in twenty years (Zhao and

⁴⁰ "Red" referred to socialist consciousness and "expert" to technical knowledge.

⁴¹ "White flags" refers to those intellectuals considered bourgeois and counter-revolutionary.

Yan 290-91). In May 1958, the majority of intellectuals were identified as being part of the exploiting class (Zhao and Yan 289).

At the CCP Conference in January 1959, it was admitted that mistakes had been made in the Party's emphasis on transforming the intellectuals without recognizing their value and tapping their initiative for socialist construction, and that the 1958 campaigns, which had criticized almost all professors in the social sciences, were strong in momentum, but weak in modesty, evidence and reasoning (Zhao and Yan 293). It was declared by the Party that it was necessary to differentiate political struggle from academic debate. Three years later, the Party again admitted that mistakes had been made and had to be corrected. There was a Party effort to "remove the hat of the bourgeoisie from the intellectuals and crown them with the hat of intellectuals of the working people" (Zhao and Yan 295). However, before long, in 1964, "intensive class struggle" was extended to political criticism of works of art and literature, and in the following year, to philosophy, economics, history and education.

When the GPCR was underway, the Party made "two estimations" on education from 1949 to 1966. It declared that 1) during the past 17 years, education had been controlled by a "black line";⁴² and 2) the majority of teachers and

⁴² This means counter-revolutionaries all along the line, from top to bottom. There were referred to as "revisionists" and "capitalist-roaders."

students trained after liberation were bourgeois intellectuals (Zhao and Yan 339). These two estimations led to drastic mass struggles against intellectuals and teachers at all levels of education.⁴³ The extent to which teachers became objects of "struggle meetings" can be illustrated by the 14 institutions of higher learning under the Ministry of Health: out of a total of 674 professors and associate professors in these institutions, 560 suffered at "struggle meetings" and were personally humiliated; 36 of them died as a result (Zhao and Yan 339). During the GPCR, which was dictated more by emotion than rationality, Mao's earlier assessment of intellectuals as belonging to three different groups was reduced to one group: enemies of the socialist revolution. Therefore, public "struggle meetings" were sanctioned and became the typical method of "reeducation".

It should be noted that the public condemnation of intellectuals during the GPCR was not a random act or the result of mob mentality; rather it was an escalation, in the form of a mass movement, of organized antagonism against a group of people based on their occupation and presumed political attitudes. It was a reflection of the Party's long-standing distrust of intellectuals' commitment to socialism, in spite of the fact that many of them remained in the country when they could have left and many others had returned from

⁴³ According to incomplete statistics, 14,260,000 school and university teachers and administrators were victims of mass criticism during the GPCR (Zhao 340).

abroad when the CCP came to power.

Mao's educational thought in practice: An unprecedented experiment between 1971 and 1976

Great changes took place in education when universities started to reopen in 1972. Mao outlined a complete blueprint for reform in higher education based on his vision of socialist education:

... the period of schooling ought to be shortened, the education [curriculum] revolutionized, proletarian politics put in command, and the way of training personnel from the ranks of the workers advocated by the Shanghai Machine-Tools Factory adopted. Students must be selected from workers and peasants with practical experience, and after their study at school for several years they should return to practical production. (Scientific 154)

In line with this, major changes took place in university enrolments, curriculum development and student participation in administration. In contrast with the traditional university selection process through entrance examinations, students were selected from among workers, peasants and soldiers with at least three years' work experience through a step-by-step recommendation process starting from the grassroots. The period of university education was shortened from the former 4-6 years to 3 years, and the examination system was abolished. A new curriculum was developed to ensure that students would spend one month of each school year learning from workers, peasants and soldiers at the grassroots. Accordingly, university-run workshops were set up so that students could apply their knowledge gained from books

to practical production skills; students went to the countryside to help with the harvest; and army officers were invited to universities to conduct military training.⁴⁴ Many more hours were spent on political education through criticism and self-criticism using the "little red book" of Quotations from Chairman Mao. At a time when everything Western was considered to be bourgeois infiltration intended to sabotage the socialist cause, teaching materials reflecting the life of working people and Party policies were compiled to replace texts that related to Western culture.

Another prominent change was student involvement in running the universities. Because the "worker-peasant-soldier" students were selected by their peers and considered the most outstanding of the working class, they were expected to play an active role, on behalf of the working class, under the slogan of "managing and reforming the universities while engaging in studies." Meanwhile, leadership of university affairs was taken over by a Party Committee headed by representatives from various sectors of the working class. These changes sent out a clear signal that the teachers and educational authorities were to be transformed through their experience with the workers, peasants and soldiers in their regular trips to communes and factories.

When students were encouraged to take part in the

⁴⁴ It should be noted that similar curriculum reforms occurred at the lower levels of education as well.

administration of the universities, they found themselves caught in a rather perplexing relationship with their teachers. On the one hand, students indeed felt empowered, at least on a theoretical level, as masters of the universities, which they could develop into great centres producing successors to the cause of socialism. But on the other hand, traditional respect for teachers, which had survived even the GPCR, led many students to be far more receptive than critical of what was going on in the universities. Many were more grateful for the opportunity to make up lessons they missed while universities were closed than for the honour of becoming the first generation of students to participate in running and reforming the universities.

What happened to the university teachers as a result of the reforms? The political signals sent out through the reform put the university teachers in a rather confusing situation as well. While they still commanded respect from the students in their classroom teaching, they were also well aware of their status as objects in need of reeducation by workers and peasants.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, teachers were

⁴⁵ Mao believed that the transformation of the ideology of intellectuals resided largely in productive labour through which intellectuals learned to merge themselves with the working class. He stated that all their shortcomings could be overcome once they integrated themselves with the labouring people.

The intellectuals most in need of such re-education at the hands of the proletariat (including peasantry) were those who were products of a Western-type education (especially those educated in Europe, America, and Japan) and who did not

delighted by the reopening of the universities and threw themselves wholeheartedly into the work of teaching and compiling new texts to suit the changed political conditions. During their trips with the students to factories and communes, they shared friendly "criticism and self-criticism" with the students on a daily basis. As a result, they got to learn more about their worker-peasant-soldier students and to develop a genuine understanding of them. It was also a time when students learned about the traumas and personal tragedies of the teachers during the earlier years of the cultural revolution and the years before 1966. Never before had there been a warmer and closer relationship between students and teachers in the university setting thanks to their close interactions made possible through the extended periods of time spent together in factories, villages, and army camps. This was a rather unexpected change to the damaged student-teacher relationships that prevailed at the beginning of the GPCR.

Putting the 1971-1976 educational reform in perspective

The significance of educational reforms between 1971 and 1976 has been viewed far more positively by some educators from abroad than by those in China. In fact, the reforms have been renounced in China as the product of the nationally

understand the new culture which...the workers and peasants were creating (Mao, New Democracy 64).

condemned GPCR, which should never have happened and should never be repeated. The question is why those educational reforms were so easily and totally rejected by millions of Chinese educators. Can this be explained simply by the strong force of tradition or because of the popular repugnance toward the GPCR?

Recalling the Party's policies toward intellectuals since 1949 should put present attitudes towards the educational reforms of 1971-1976 in another perspective and, perhaps, shed some light on their negation. As we have seen, the Party's policies toward intellectuals show that "intensive re-education efforts" in one form or another were never relaxed in the universities from the beginning of the socialist revolution until after the GPCR, and that Mao's assessment of intellectuals did not substantially change over the years.

It should be noted that when Mao urged teachers and intellectuals to increase their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and actively engage in political affairs, there was indeed a need for these educators to enhance their political consciousness in order to participate in the socialist revolution. When Mao remarked that teachers and intellectuals were often out of touch with society and that their world outlook was basically bourgeois, it is possible that he was making a realistic assessment. When he suggested that intellectuals make periodic visits to factories and farms, or settle down for more sustained periods of time to conduct on-

the-spot investigations or to increase their knowledge of Chinese society in some other way (Speech 5: 426), he was making useful suggestions.

However, differences in people's political commitment to socialism should not be a basis for Party policy nor for mistrusting a group of people. Socialist revolution was so far the most progressive and the most difficult task in human history, and therefore it demanded a concerted effort from the broadest alliance of people, excluding only those who resorted to subversive actions against it. The CCP should have adopted an understanding and facilitating role in attempting to transform the views of those who were yet to identify themselves with the cause of socialism. Even though productive labour and intensive educational efforts would not have changed some people, so long as they did not take action to overthrow the government, the Party should have had the courage to tolerate differences of opinion. However, the tradition of centralism deprived the CCP of the ability to face challenges from those who differed politically, thus displaying a lack of confidence in the cause with which it claimed to identify. By declaring war on people with differing opinions, thus alienating the Chinese intellectuals, and by isolating them from the working class, Mao antagonized a social group that was as much needed for the success of the socialist revolution as any other sector of society. His legacy of distrust of intellectuals has had perhaps the most

devastating effect on university teachers' commitment to the reform of higher education, to say nothing of their political engagement in general. It also provided grounds not only for the total rejection of the GPCR, but also for the present popular doubts about socialism.

Mao's educational reforms were implemented in an historical setting in which university teachers were silenced. Educators were turned into underdogs overnight at a time when the entire nation was ideologically paralysed by a blind faith in Mao. It was possible for this to happen partly because the traditional concept of inequality as natural had not been sufficiently repudiated as a feudal leftover that would hold back socialism. Therefore, the traditional superior-inferior relationship was redefined as a class relationship: revolutionary and counter-revolutionary. Under these circumstances, university teachers were thrust into an inferior status both on campus and in society. As objects of suspicion and mistrust, they were left with little opportunity to become involved in university affairs and remained passively obedient, doing what they were told. Taking their place as the major force in educational reform was the university administrative leadership headed by representatives from the working class and enthusiastic students who knew little about education other than their own experience as elementary and high school students.

In addition to denying the involvement of such a

qualified sector in these unprecedented reforms, many other social factors contributed to the failure of the reforms. Some of the new educational practices backfired, going contrary to their original intention. This, in turn, led to a popular rejection of them when the GPCR was over. For instance, selecting university students from the ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers was an effort to break away from the traditional selection process which encouraged education for an elite, but in a society where favouritism and nepotism had developed unchecked, the selection process was seriously tampered with by powerful officials at all levels who did their own selecting, leaving many candidates who had been recommended honestly by their workmates helpless and hopeless. Eliminating most examinations within the universities was intended to free students from being slaves to their grades, and combining learning in the classrooms with productive labour was meant to encourage study for the application of knowledge in actual production. However, it was not unusual that these attempted changes bred a popular attitude that mocked serious learning, and instead encouraged politicking and pragmatism, with the result that many graduates were either mediocre in their academic fields or political opportunists who despised serious learning. The shortened period of schooling and the revised curriculum that often gave more time to practical experience outside of school than to classroom learning, confirmed a prevailing belief that

formal knowledge was useless and education was not important.

All these problems, combined with the absence of teachers' involvement, could not but result in the failure of the reforms, and a total rejection of educational reforms of this nature for many years to come. It was Mao who initiated the reforms, but it was also Mao who guaranteed their failure by imposing them on a society that was not yet ready for them. This experience has proved that educational reforms of this nature and on such a scale can be accomplished only after serious educational groundwork has been laid at the grassroots and only when those most directly involved conduct a critical examination of both the merits and problems of the proposed reforms.

Although quotations from Mao's educational thought are still visible on the walls of educational institutions, the concepts themselves have largely disappeared from schools and universities. Like their designer, the educational reforms carried out during the GPCR have become part of history. In present-day China, where education seems to be back to "normal", people sometimes joke about their unique educational experiences during the reform years. The "worker-peasant-soldier student" of those days has become a symbol equivalent to "disqualified university graduate" and "a product of the GPCR". In fact, the great majority of these graduates selected to become teachers upon graduation were later asked to leave their institutions.

In the present historical period of national aversion to the cultural revolution, it has become easy to avoid reflecting on events in those days by dismissing everything as irrational, including the bold experiments in education. While it is natural for people to resist dwelling on memories of countless tragedies and suffering, there is the danger that the absence of reflective thought will result in history repeating itself. If educational reform is to be carried out to benefit more people, a critical analysis of the strengths as well as the problems of Mao's educational thought is needed. Otherwise, some of his ideas will be adopted or seemingly adopted for utilitarian political purposes while others will be rejected without justification.

University Teachers between 1978 and 1992

Party policies on intellectuals changed again when Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1975. He emphasized the need to improve the status of teachers, pointing out that the "two estimations" made by the Party were inappropriate. Between 1977 and 1978, Deng spoke on several occasions that "we must create within the Party an atmosphere of respect for knowledge, and respect for trained personnel" (Respect 54) and that intellectuals and teachers should enjoy great respect in the society (Speech 125).

Soon after the GPCR was declared to be over in 1976, China launched a national program of economic reconstruction

to turn itself "into a powerful modern socialist country." The importance of education in this economic campaign was officially confirmed at the 1978 National Education Work Conference which called on universities to "master and advance modern science and culture and the new techniques and technologies of all trades and professions" (Deng, Speech 123). Tremendous changes began to take place in higher education in response to the drastic economic and social changes that were again beginning to occur. Great efforts were made to right the wrongs done to intellectuals during the cultural revolution, and there started a gradual recovery and development in the field of higher education.

The Opportunities and the Dilemma

When universities resumed operation in 1972, major educational efforts focused on a revival of the policies and practices of the 1960s, when higher education followed the Soviet model and featured centralized administrative leadership, meticulous division of fields of specialization, standard regulations for entrance and regular examinations. The two official documents issued before the cultural revolution were "rectified" and became guiding principles for the development of higher education in the post-GPCR era. Four changes made in one of the newly re-released documents (Sixty 237-239) suggested that: a) universities should pay equal attention to both teaching and research; b)

intellectuals are to be recognized as part of the working class; c) more decision-making powers should be given to the presidents of universities rather than to the Party Committees; and d) the meaning of political education should be redefined and expanded (Hayhoe 40). Many teachers took the release of this document as the beginning of a new era in higher education, and some even designated the official recognition of intellectuals as part of the working class as the "second liberation" in their lives.⁴⁶

While most of the educational practices from before the GPCR, such as centralized administration, standard entrance examinations and job allocation by the state, were re-introduced, curriculum development and teaching materials were two areas that did not duplicate the past. University teachers seemed to be given more flexibility in making changes in the curriculum and in selecting teaching materials. However, many of them consciously avoided the numerous issues that had been condemned in the GPCR and added new texts in response to the current demands of economic development.

Meanwhile, the drastic changes brought about by economic reconstruction starting from 1978 created tremendous opportunities as well as serious problems in the universities. Many new programs, especially in law, economics, finance, political science, and public management, were introduced for

⁴⁶ Liberation in China commonly refers to 1949 when the Communist Party came to power.

the first time or further developed, and many vocational schools opened to meet the new social and economic demands. It was estimated that between 1980 and 1985, the number of post-secondary institutions increased from 675 to 1016 (Hayhoe 42).⁴⁷ Many disciplines, such as sociology, political science, and journalism, which formerly were regarded as "bourgeois sciences", were now able to develop, thanks to a more open political environment.

On the other hand, exhaustion from the ten years of ideological and political campaigns as well as the drive for faster economic development created an unusual yet prevalent endorsement of economic pragmatism, which resulted in contempt within society as a whole for the traditional respect for knowledge. Education, in this social atmosphere, was valued as nothing more than a means to obtain a training certificate for better job opportunities. The drastic economic changes from 1978 on made a tremendous impact on the minds of university teachers. When knowledge was devalued for the advancement of business, the social prestige of teachers and professors, which had just begun to recover from the damage of the GPCR, was once again seriously challenged. The irresistible tide of commercialism now washed away much of the remaining ground for honest teaching and research, and

⁴⁷ During this time, a great deal of official attention was given to higher education, which was considered an urgent need for an economic take-off. Although not proclaimed officially, the priority in education in fact was shifted away from basic education.

demeaned the value of academic distinction in universities.

In addition, economic development yielded growing material incentives in most private and public sectors, but the salaries of university teachers remained largely unchanged. Teachers found themselves more and more strained financially by the salary freeze because, starting in the early 1980s, the price of staple foods and other daily necessities increased steadily for the first time since liberation.⁴⁸ Under these circumstances, taking on a second job became a necessity rather than a choice if teachers were to maintain their standard of living. Consequently, most university teachers and professors have had to teach another four to eight class hours after finishing their normal weekly eight hours of teaching. Many teachers, especially the younger ones, decided to leave the field of higher education because of low salaries and long working hours.

The decline in both the social and economic status of university teachers has resulted in an outstanding social dilemma. On the one hand, there has been an unprecedented demand for higher education to meet the needs of rapid

⁴⁸ This problem was faced by teachers at all levels. According to figures released by the State Bureau of Statistics in 1991, the average annual income of those working in education was 2262 yuan (\$377 Cdn.), which was 8.7% lower than those working in the civil service, and ranked ninth out of all 12 occupational categories (administration, army service, civil service, commerce, entertainment, farming, law enforcement, medicine, private business, production, service trades, and teaching). In addition, the average income for teachers in universities showed a decreasing tendency compared to that of the previous year (Guan 2).

economic and technological changes; but on the other hand, there has been a continuous brain drain from all institutions of higher learning.

Since the early 1980s, universities have been struggling to keep going under these conditions. In addition to the crisis of a shrinking corps of qualified teachers, tight government controls on funding, enrolment, programs offered, and job placement of graduating students have aggravated the plight of the teachers, who find themselves completely powerless when it comes to these issues, issues that are directly related to their work. They are caught in the structural conflict between persistent government control and the increasing need of the university for greater decision-making power if it is to make adjustments to the changing society. The teachers know where the problems are and have ideas about how to deal with them. However, they have few opportunities to make their voices heard at any level of the decision-making process. Consequently, things needing improvement have usually remained unchanged, and things that should have been preserved have sometimes changed for the worse in the name of educational reform.

Although the need for a full-scale reform of higher education had long been recognized by people in both the universities and the government, little progress was recorded between 1978 and 1992, during which time university teachers witnessed in despair their academic world turn into a bleak

wasteland. Statements about the need for educational reform became merely political rhetoric by the government and a sad joke made by frustrated and disillusioned teachers at their weekly political study sessions.⁴⁹

1985 National Education Work Conference: A short period of opportunities

For a brief moment, things began to happen after the official document "Decision on the Reform of the Education System" adopted by the Party Central Committee was introduced at the National Education Work Conference in May 1985. This document called for changes in higher education that were quite in tune with changes taking place in the economy. These included more autonomy and responsibility at the university administrative level, thus giving more decision-making power and flexibility to the universities (Hayhoe 40-41). Universities, according to this document, would have:

[the] power to readjust the objectives of various disciplines, formulate teaching plans and programs, and compile and select teaching materials; the power to accept projects from and cooperate with other social establishments for scientific research and technological development, as well as setting up combines involving teaching, scientific research, and production; the power to suggest appointments and removals, to dispose of capital

⁴⁹ A product of the cultural revolution, the weekly political study sessions had been abandoned by most institutions in China, but the practice was carried on in many universities to maintain political control. It later became more of a formality or a session for exchange of grievances rather than what was intended to be sessions for a better understanding of new government policies, or discussions on issues concerning educational reform.

construction investment and of funds, allocated by the state; and the power to develop international educational and academic exchanges by using their own funds (Decision 1985).

The decision-making powers granted to universities by the central government through this document were by far the most encouraging to university teachers since 1949, and the changes that followed helped create perhaps the least restricted political environment on campuses since 1949. However, it did not last long.

Towards the end of 1985, there was an increasing demand among university students and some intellectuals for political reform. When the movement for political reform was brought to a close by the resignation of Party Secretary Hu Yaobang at the beginning of 1986, the Party tightened its control on the universities, revoking its proclaimed policy that allowed university presidents greater power in internal administrative decisions than the Party Committees. This was followed by a political campaign in the traditional Party style of "intensive educational efforts" among university teachers against what was called "spiritual pollution", claimed to have resulted from the increasing influence of Western culture and ideology. In 1989, after another student movement was put down by army tanks, university teachers were again made to bear the brunt of the responsibility for having "incited and directed the students" to engage in the "counter-revolutionary" movement. In the Party's efforts to comb out what they believed to be the "black hands" behind the

students, university teachers were subject to the same "educational" procedure that prevailed in the GPCR of informing on each other and reporting who had been with the students for what purpose on which day. Under this political pressure, many teachers had no choice but to comply against their will. The intensive political clean-up persisted for more than two years in universities, during which time some of the most dedicated teachers were deprived of the right to teach for having supported the students; and publicly honoured "outstanding model teachers" were all but expelled from the Party, a severe disciplinary punishment in China, for having sent soup to students during the hunger strike. Under such extremely high-handed pressure, university teachers once again became victims of political pressure and power.

Brain drain from the universities

Because university teachers were again targets of political accusations, and because their financial situation had not improved since 1978, many chose to leave teaching. For example, of the 22 top students selected in 1977 to become teachers in a particular department at the university under study, only 3 remained on the university payroll in 1994. In 1981, another 20 top students were selected by this department to become teachers; thirteen years later, only 1 remained. The other 38 "promising teachers", over 90%, had left the university to study or teach abroad or to work for foreign

companies at home.

Many people who were sent abroad to study by the government or their university did not return. Between 1982 and 1992, more than 30% of those officially sponsored in Shanghai to study abroad failed to come back ("Breaking" 2). A university in Zhejiang province could hardly maintain one of its disciplines in basic sciences between 1989 and 1992 because, of the four faculty members in 1989, one did not return as promised from studying abroad, and two left the university for positions with businesses which offered them an income ten times their university salary plus generous bonuses. The one remaining professor had reached retirement age, but he was the only one available to teach the entire program ("Speed" 2).

In addition to those who studied abroad through official channels, a far greater number managed to leave for universities abroad through private sponsorships or university scholarships. The state policy of "opening up to the outside world" created many more opportunities for teachers to establish contacts with people in universities abroad. Since the young teachers had been among the best students at school, they were often welcomed with generous scholarships by universities abroad.

To stop the serious brain drain from universities, the State Education Commission (SEC) devised various policies in the 1980s (Deng, Z. 1992). One of them required that those

who wanted to leave university teaching before working at least five years after graduation had to pay back a service fee of 5,000 yuan (\$833 Cnd.) to cover the cost of their earlier university education in China.⁵⁰ Although the charge was far beyond the means of most newly graduated university teachers, it did not stop them from leaving. Many took up extra teaching jobs to earn more money, or borrowed from family and friends. Many of those who did not have an opportunity to study abroad tried in every way possible to leave for enterprises which offered them salaries three or four times higher than what they earned as university teachers.

Meanwhile, universities were left with little choice in recruiting new teachers from among good students, as few of them were willing to become teachers. Even if the universities did manage to recruit new teachers, it often did not take long for the young teachers to become disillusioned and to start looking for ways to get other employment. Many of them were preoccupied with money-making or with preparing for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language examinations so that they could leave their jobs as soon as they were admitted by universities abroad.

Universities were thus often left with teachers mostly in their fifties to take up the teaching overload. Long-term

⁵⁰ The fee had to be paid before the person left his or her employment.

overwork combined with poor living conditions and psychological stress took a heavy toll on their health. The number of university teachers and scientists who died in their early fifties and sixties started to increase phenomenally. According to a study reported by China News Digest, the average life-span in China was 73 in 1990, but the average life-span of intellectuals was 53.34 compared to that of 58.52 ten years earlier ("Life-span" 1995). A popular saying, borrowed from the well-known Japanese policy of "burn all, kill all and loot all" during the invasion of China between 1937 and 1945 described what was happening in universities and research institutes in the 1980s: "Retired the old⁵¹--all; died the middle-aged--all; and gone the young--all." Indeed, universities in China were faced with a crisis of survival.

⁵¹ This refers to the government's mandatory retirement policy for professional men and women at ages 60 and 55 respectively. Many university professors who are in good health are reluctant to retire as they are in great need.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION FROM 1993 TO 1995: TWO VIEWS

The changes in higher education began to occur shortly before the introduction of the Program for Reform and Development of Education in China in 1993. These changes are perceived in a certain way by the government. University teachers sometimes share the same perceptions, but not always. They may agree with each other on many of the facts about what has happened, but they do not necessarily give them equal weight. The different reactions that I personally experienced from reading official positions in the newspapers and listening to teachers express their opinions impressed upon me the obligation to report both perspectives. In this chapter, both views--differences as well as similarities in concerns and emphases--will be revealed. It is my hope that a fuller picture of what is actually happening will thus emerge.

First, however, I will briefly outline: (a) the economic changes occurring at the time and their impact on higher education; and (b) the main contents of the Program for Reform and Development of Education in China.

Economic Changes and Higher Education

The dramatic economic changes in society have challenged almost every aspect of university life, including some basic ideas about higher education. The increasing influence of the

market economy has drawn attention to such issues as the economic value of university education, the worth of a university student, and university efficiency, concepts that had never been in any way applied to higher education in China.

The universities' struggle for survival yielded little hope for improvement until 1992 when the government decided to take further and bolder steps in the country's economic transition to a market economy. The growing number of private and collectively owned enterprises as well as joint ventures with foreign companies created many more job opportunities for university graduates who, until then, depended for their future employment solely on the government, which guaranteed jobs. The emergence of free labour markets and talent markets⁵² resulted in the government's loosening of its control on student job assignments and on university curriculum development and on personnel management. Programs on technical and managerial skills replaced outdated disciplines. University teachers, who had formerly been regarded as "worthless real estate on campus",⁵³ now found

⁵² It was possible for professionals, teachers, and people with university degrees to change their jobs independently in the labour market only after the establishment of what was called the "talent market" in the late '80s. This was a market specially designed for the employment of intellect workers.

⁵³ University faculty members were not free to change their jobs under the government's earlier personnel policies. Thus, many faculty members jokingly used this phrase to suggest that they were fixed property that could not be moved

themselves in great demand in the market, where they had many opportunities to earn a second income by teaching in non-curriculum programs⁵⁴ or by doing private tutoring. With the growing expectation for better educational credentials in the labour market and an increasing demand from the universities to enrol more self-paying students,⁵⁵ the government began to recognize the benefits of admitting self-paying students: such a practice would not only satisfy certain needs in society, but would also help to ease the financial strain on the universities. As a result, the tight government control on the number of self-paying students was relaxed. These changes on university campuses, which were quite beyond the expectations of both university teachers and the government, were brought about by the great impact of the economic transition rather than the long perceived need for educational reforms in higher education.

from their university and did not fetch a high price.

⁵⁴ This refers to a second job on or off campus that is unrelated to a teacher's regular work in the department.

⁵⁵ Formerly, enrolment for each university was strictly controlled by the state, because university education was fully financed by the government. Students did not begin to pay for room, board, and textbooks until the mid-1980s, and they did not pay tuition fees until 1994, when six key universities were selected to test the idea of charging students subsidized tuition fees. Since then, more universities have followed suit. "Self-paying students" refers to those students whose admission is not entirely based on entrance examinations, but who might be admitted into universities if they pay full tuition fees themselves. Self-paying students were admitted starting in 1991.

PRADEC: A Program to Revive Education

Finally, in February 1993, the Program for Reform and Development of Education in China (PRADEC) was issued to the public by the State Council. It was a long overdue recognition by the government of the need for change in education. A result of the growing discrepancy between the rapidly increasing demand for education and the limitations of educational institutions in meeting social expectations, the document lays out the strategic development of education in China for the coming decade. It states that in modernizing the country, education should always be given first consideration, and that the emphasis should be on basic education and on vocational and adult education so as to "turn the heavy population burden into tremendous human resources." Another reason vocational and adult education are emphasized is in order to provide alternative access to education at a higher level to those who do not have opportunities to go to university. As for basic education, the objective is to achieve a nine-year compulsory education throughout the country and to eliminate illiteracy among youth and those in their 30's and 40's before the end of the century.

PRADEC states that the development of higher education should aim at meeting the needs of the rapid economic development. It suggests structural and curriculum reforms in higher education so as to increase university efficiency, expand university services and produce more practical

specialists needed by the country. It declares that the country will pool resources to build 100 "key" universities⁵⁶ comparable to the best universities abroad. The document points out that the structural reforms in higher education should aim at establishing an appropriate relationship between the government and the universities. Accordingly, it asserts that the government should change its function from direct participation in the administration of universities to supervision through such means as legislation, funding, and strategic planning. It states that the separation of government and university administration should be guaranteed by legislation, and that strategic planning of higher education should be worked out through a scientific, democratic decision-making process that involves consultation and evaluation by experts in education. The document also indicates that with commitment to clearly defined rights and obligations, the universities should be given more power for self-determination in their own affairs so that they will eventually become independent legal entities fully responsive to the needs of society.

On the financial side, PRADEC promises an increase in government investment in education by the end of this century. Acknowledging that the level of government investment in

⁵⁶ Key schools and universities are considered to be better than ordinary schools. They are designated to receive priority in funding, which also results in better teachers and facilities.

education has fallen far short of the need, the government encourages schools at all levels to find ways to meet their own financial needs, including fund-raising, financial investment and tuition fees. The document states that as higher education is not part of the country's compulsory education program, universities should charge tuition fees while establishing scholarships and student loans for students with financial difficulties. While there will still be some government effort to provide graduates employment in remote areas, the government will no longer guarantee jobs. Thus, the majority of the students will be responsible for their own search for employment opportunities. The document says there is a need to improve the social and economic status of university teachers. It declares the government's commitment to significantly increase the average income of all teachers in the next five years and specifically states that efforts should be made to ensure that the average income of those working in higher education is higher than those working in other state-run institutions and enterprises.

The hope of revitalizing our nation lies in education [at all levels]. The hope of revitalizing our education lies in our teachers. Therefore, it is fundamental for the reform and development of education to establish a relatively stabilized and rationally structured population of teachers with good ethics and competent professional abilities. It is determined that major policies and measures will be worked out to raise the social status of the teachers at all levels, to improve their working environment and living conditions so that teaching will become a respectable profession in our society ("Program").

Compared with the other official documents on education since 1949, PRADEC, theoretically at least, offers institutions of higher learning in China greater room for self-determination and opportunities for development.

Government-Sanctioned Views

What changes actually resulted with the issuing of PRADEC and the changing economic conditions? Which ones are considered most important? The government's answers to these questions can be gleaned from reports in the media, which not only report, but also reflect official government positions and the positions held by others but officially sanctioned. Therefore, in presenting the government's perceptions, I quote generously from the press.

Structural Changes

Structural changes within the universities were a major aspect of the reform proposed by PRADEC. It should be noted that Chinese universities had undergone major structural changes in the 1950s in their effort to follow the Soviet model. Many comprehensive universities were broken down into finely divided specialist colleges and institutes, each of which was placed under the direct administration of the central ministry in the field. Consequently, similar basic courses had to be offered at a number of sites, resulting in program overlaps and repetition of basic educational

resources. Even though they had managed to do good work in fulfilling the demands of socialist construction in the early years, graduates of these specialist colleges tended to have a rather narrow range of knowledge.

Although the government did not identify structural changes to be made, many universities voluntarily amalgamated with one another to increase their efficiency and competence compared to other institutions in their search for scarce funds. In Beijing, five institutions--the University of International Trade and Economy, the University of Chemical Industries, the Institute of Chinese Medicine, the Institute of Finance, and the Institute of Costume Design--joined hands to establish a combined or united university. According to Zhu Kaixuan, Director of SEC, the change to integrate the smaller institutions constitutes a major reform and is not simply an historical repetition (Chen 5). The media reported that in the united university, participants benefit from the expanded human and material resources, and they cooperate in teaching, research, support services and university-run industries. Students enrolled in any of the participating units can take courses from any of the others for credits and even for a combined degree (Yi 3).⁵⁷

Media attention is often devoted to the many other joint undertakings between universities and other government

⁵⁷ Combined degrees are more highly regarded because they incorporate different areas of specialization and are therefore viewed almost as two degrees.

agencies, social institutions, and corporations. For instance, Jilin University, the provincial government, and several industrial corporations established new research institutes, while Fudan University in Shanghai signed an agreement with the Chinese Academy of Natural Sciences to run joint graduate programs, cooperate in research projects, and share human and material resources in teaching and research (Liu 3). Joint programs have also extended to cooperation with universities abroad and foreign corporations in China. Shanghai was the first city where universities established educational and professional training programs with foreign corporations and universities.

In addition to such initiatives of individual universities, SEC (which formerly had total control of the key universities) accepts local governments as partners in the administration of the universities. The government sees these structural changes as easing its financial burdens while making universities more responsive to the social and economic demands of the moment.

The establishment of the Board of Directors system was another structural change sanctioned by the government. Members of Boards of Directors were representatives from any social institution interested in working with universities. Anhui University was the first to set up a Board of Directors in 1988. Six years later, 63 members, representing state and private enterprises, local governments, arts and financial

institutions from six provinces, were listed on the Board of Directors. The Board attended to matters such as university funding, capital construction and even paving roads on campus. Members also opened their workplaces to students as second classrooms, which expanded the students' knowledge and enhanced their production skills. It is interesting to note that not only was the Board to assist the University; the University was also to assist the Board. So, for example, Anhui University provided graduates and technical support to members of the Board. It engaged in activities such as helping a factory, represented by one of the Board members, to avoid imminent bankruptcy and make a profit turnaround of 1.86 million yuan, and sending teachers to another Board member's production unit to help mechanize production and quality test the products (Yang and Liu 3).

University Involvement in Economic Affairs

Given China's millennia-old ivory tower tradition, the university's new search for multiple funding sources was a development unexpected by all. Unlike universities since the start of the socialist revolution, whose finances were totally provided by the government, universities in the 1990s face diminishing government funding and have turned to selling their technical knowledge and skills. Thus, universities and departments within universities are establishing their own businesses, usually, but not always, directly related to their

fields of expertise. They are also linking up with existing enterprises outside of the universities. The government encourages these developments, as is evidenced by the extensive press coverage. As one example, according to incomplete statistics, 29 universities in Jiangsu province signed 2,327 contracts worth 160 million yuan in 1993 to provide technical assistance to factories (Li 3). This university involvement with business is occurring on a large scale and developing at a rapid rate.

Promise of material rewards has also stimulated a competitive environment for inventiveness, which is a new tendency also accepted and supported by the government. It was estimated that in 1993, 13,314 items produced by universities in China were patented, a practice new to China (Liao 3). That same year, Beijing University offered prizes in the form of cars, money and apartments to nine teachers whose work accelerated scientific and technological innovation in their university-run industry, which yielded revenues of over one billion yuan (Jiang and Li 2).

Student Fees and Funding

Starting from September 1994, when universities began to charge tuition fees, only those who enrolled in normal universities and programs in agriculture and forestry were

exempted.⁵⁸ However, government has not withdrawn all financial support from the universities. According to the Director of SEC, the amount charged to students is only 10 - 20% of the total cost of preparing a university graduate (Zhao and Xu 2). However, this is important to the government, because it relieves it from the obligation of fully financing the students. For the students, who formerly were fully subsidized by the government, the fees range from 1500 to 3000 yuan a year, roughly equivalent to one fourth of the average university teacher's annual salary. The media report that about 20% of the students experience some financial difficulties as a result of the tuition charges, with 10% of this group being especially strained financially (Yi and Bi 3). To ease the burden, scholarship and student loan programs have been established by the universities. Funding for these programs comes from the tuition fees.

Efforts to Keep a Stable Supply of Teachers

The government has expressed concern about the diminishing ranks of the teachers. Since 1992, much media coverage has focused on outstanding teachers, especially those in their 30's and 40's who are teaching in the key universities. They are the beneficiaries of the new

⁵⁸ They receive full funding from the government in order to ensure a steady supply of graduates in these fields.

"unconventional promotion" policies⁵⁹ made to reward dedicated young teachers and to attract and stabilize their numbers in the universities. Thus, in some universities, teachers in their 30's have been promoted to positions of full professors and department chairs.

Another encouragement to keep young teachers from leaving the universities has been to improve their housing conditions.⁶⁰ Li Lanqing, the Vice Premier in charge of education, listed teachers' housing as one of the three major obstacles facing the development of education (Zhao, Zhang and Bi 3).⁶¹ Thus, it has been an officially recognized fact that, as part of the reform program in higher education, great effort had to be made to build more and better housing for the teachers. There has indeed been great improvement in the living conditions of the teachers since then. It was reported that in 1995, government investment in residential construction for teachers at all levels throughout the country was 11.7 billion yuan, 37.08% higher than in 1994, and

⁵⁹ Promotion in universities has traditionally been based on seniority and experience. In the past, it was quite impossible for anyone under 40 to be promoted into the senior academic ranks, regardless of performance in teaching or research.

⁶⁰ Teachers generally live on campus and their housing is provided by the university. Housing with nominal monthly rent had been a feature of social welfare in China from liberation until the 1990s. However, because of the chronic shortage of funds, there had been little improvement in teachers' housing.

⁶¹ The other two were lack of investment and poor treatment of teachers.

completed construction was 41.59% higher than in 1994, making 278,000 new apartments available for use (Chen X. 5).

The government has often pointed out that other special policies have been worked out as well. For example, policies have been developed for funding research and publications in order to create a more friendly academic environment for young teachers. Medical care and social pension plans are being made more beneficial to intellectuals.

Development of Private Universities

Another area receiving a great deal of government attention is the drastic increase in the number of new schools and universities, which is due to the great demand for education and the still very limited access to universities. These new institutions are run by well-known people, social organizations, and enterprises throughout the country. It was reported that the number of private schools jumped from 551 in 1990 to 1200 in 1992 in Beijing alone (Wang X. 2). In Shanghai, there were more than 750 private schools in 1993, enrolling more than 450,000 students (Jin and Guo 3). That same year, there were about 40,000 privately run schools in all of China; 800 of them were universities approved by provincial and city educational administrations (Shen 3). These private schools and universities are characterized by extensive and practical curricula designed to meet the needs of society. They enrol people who are preparing for the

university entrance examinations as well as those who wish to learn specific skills for better job opportunities. They provide vocational training in areas not covered by the formal university curriculum.

The media have been glowing in their reports of the many changes in higher education since 1993, including the financial condition of university teachers. The question that remains to be answered is whether these reports actually reflect positive developments in higher education in reality. Are the reported salary increases and housing improvements effectively stopping the brain drain from higher education? Has the teachers' social and economic status changed to the extent that they are becoming economically and politically empowered to assume major roles in reforming higher education in China? Perhaps the voices of the teachers themselves will help us find the answers.

Introducing the University Teachers

Before presenting the perceptions of university teachers, I must introduce the group whose views are to appear here. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I interviewed 17 teachers in a major department which is in a major university in urban China. Teachers were categorized by age group because, in China, seniority is considered the most decisive factor in determining people's social and political experience and consequently their perspectives and positions on the subjects

that were discussed during the interviews. By listening to the voices of teachers in different age groups, we can piece together a somewhat representative mosaic of university teachers in general. For the sake of anonymity, participants in the research are identified by assigned codes. As teacher participants are grouped according to age, the codes I have given them are ST, meaning senior teachers; MT for middle-aged teachers; and JT for junior teachers.⁶²

As the first-hand research was designed with the idea of examining the collective experiences of university teachers as a social group during the economic transition period, I will briefly outline prominent characteristics of each of the three groups of teachers. ST participants refer to the 7 teachers who were born between 1930 and 1945 (aged 50-65 at the time of the interviews). These participants represent approximately 19% of their age group. Having been in the field of higher education all their working lives, they experienced all the political campaigns since liberation and have become somewhat well established in the field. Many of them enjoy an academic and/or financial security that is available only to teachers in their age group. Their many years of university experience have enabled them to see very clearly what the problems in higher education are, and therefore, in the interviews, they

⁶² Because of the size of the group interviewed and the fact that they know each other well, any further designations specifying participants or colleagues to whom they occasionally refer could well compromise my promise of anonymity.

showed a great deal of concern about the present state of higher education as well as its future development.

The MT participants include 4 teachers, 57% of this age group.⁶³ Aged 35 to 49, they were born between 1946 and 1960. They do not yet have the established status of their senior colleagues, and so they are still under great pressure to achieve academic recognition and financial security. However, since they have been in the field for a substantial period of time, many of them have clear ideas about the goals they have set for themselves and how to strive to fulfil them. They are involved with establishing themselves and seem to show confidence in coping with the difficulties they face.

The JT participants refer to 6 teachers representing approximately 24% of their total group. They were born between 1961 and 1970, and when interviewed, were aged 25-34. With the steady retirement of senior teachers and the small number of middle-aged teachers, these young teachers are taking up much of the workload in the department. Although top of the class when they were students, these teachers feel insecure in their status and disappointed about working in the field of higher education. The sharp contrast between their experience as university teachers compared to that of their former classmates who work in other social sectors make them frustrated and unhappy at this stage of their lives. The

⁶³ I am also a middle-aged teacher. Obviously, my views are present in this study. Therefore, if I count myself, we represent 71% of the age group.

absence of experience in the earlier ideological campaigns and political movements contributes to their dissatisfaction with being university teachers. As a result, they are the least stable group in the university faculty, and therefore, unless measures are taken to prevent it, it is likely that their numbers will diminish.⁶⁴

University Teachers' Views

In some ways, there has been a fair amount of unspoken agreement between the teachers and the government. For example, in 1993, a public forum on how universities were to adjust to the market economy involved some university educators and administrators who gathered to discuss issues that had newly emerged under the impact of the extensive economic changes. The prevailing positions were reported by the press ("Public"), thus indicating government sanction.

The forum participants concluded that adjusting to the market economy did not mean encouraging all people in

⁶⁴ The reader will recall from chapter 1 that I also interviewed several administrators (coded as A) from the department and from upper university administrative levels and that the administrative groups at both levels are relatively small, with those interviewed comprising a significant percentage of the total. Thus, I cannot specify the exact number or percentage at each level, because by so doing, individuals would be even more identifiable than in the case of the teachers. The administrators are in charge of a great variety of university and department affairs. Their views appear in the next 3 chapters. The remaining participants are students, who, through a questionnaire, provided their perspective on teachers' commitment to their profession. This perspective is offered in chapter 8.

universities to go into business; nor did it mean leaving universities alone to finance themselves by whatever means possible. Rather, it required training qualified graduates through expanded programs in different fields to meet the new economic demands, and redesigning the curriculum at all levels so that people in various specialties would be exposed to a range of ideas, enabling them to become more competent and adaptable. It was claimed that universities that adjust to the market economy should be able to combine teaching, research and application of research findings to practice, which would provide better service to society while reaping financial returns to improve educational activities on campus. The forum suggested that universities in a market economy should be financed by a joint commitment on the part of representatives from government, society and the universities themselves, and that they should become centres of knowledge and culture for the long-term benefit of society. The point was made that the market economy had given universities an unprecedented opportunity to become better connected to the needs of society and to provide knowledge and service to a much larger audience than before. It was also pointed out that lack of funds had directed many university programs to pragmatic and financial considerations rather than to the maintenance of academic standards.

Although some of the teachers' concerns are covered by the press as shown above, some others do not get any media

attention. The teachers I interviewed identified somewhat (although not totally) different areas as their main concerns. As we have seen, the government sees the following as the major changes in higher education since PRADEC: structural changes, new funding sources for universities, measures to stabilize the supply of teachers, and the appearance of private universities. The teachers, on the other hand, most often talked about: university restructuring and curriculum expansion, the continuing threat of brain drain from the universities, and a new salary policy for university teachers.

Institutional Restructuring and Curriculum Expansion

In the present market-oriented economy, more and more universities have become aware of the need to promote themselves through images that are appealing to the public. Unlike before, when universities received the same amount of government funding regardless of the number of students they enrolled, with the economic changes larger enrolments not only mean more funding from the government, but also, more significantly, more revenue from the tuition fees that will help ease the financial crunch faced by every university.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ While the cost of training a university student was estimated to be about 5,000 - 8,000 yuan, the government stipulated that tuition fees for students should be between 1,500 and 3,000 yuan. According to an instruction from SEC, 30% of the tuition fees is to be used to update educational facilities in the universities, 30% is to improve the living and working environment of the teachers, and the remaining 40% is to be returned to the students in the form of scholarships and loans. (A)

Consequently, since 1993, many institutions of higher learning have expanded their administrative structures from colleges or institutes to universities. From an administrative point of view, the subsequent program expansion in many of these institutions occurred in response to an increasing social demand for professional and vocational training and a need to attract more students. They believed that the structural upgrading in these institutions would make the universities more compatible with their counterparts abroad, allowing for more opportunities for cooperation and academic exchange with universities in the international community.

The institution involved in this study expanded its original administrative structure in 1994. Eight colleges and institutes were established within the university based on existing programs and disciplines. According to the observation of an administrator participant, this program expansion showed that the university was "committed to catering its work to the needs of society" (A). Since then, several new programs in the fields of international commerce, economy and trade have been started in the newly established institutes. However, in spite of structural and curricular expansion, the university received no extra funding from the government, and thus found itself with an acute shortage of human and financial resources. As a result, while administrators claimed that the expansion provided more educational opportunities for society as well as more

financial benefit to the university, teachers viewed the change with clear reservations.

It's a trendy thing to change names nowadays. They have set up a series of "institutes" and "colleges" for this "university structure", but I doubt if they have worked out a detailed plan for the actual operation of these institutes yet. For instance, at a meeting held for teachers in charge of teaching at various levels, it was announced that they planned to set up an "Institute of [specific field named]", before they had qualified teachers trained in this field. Yet they claimed that they would start training undergraduates in the new institute right after it was established...What it meant to us was nothing other than adding a heavier teaching load to the already overworked teachers in our department.⁶⁶ (JT)

Other teachers also held quite cynical views about this upgrading process. One declared: "Some deputy directors have been promoted to directors; that's the only thing I can see that has changed. I don't see much need for it" (ST).

When I asked an administrator how they were to manage the lack of human resources for the new courses in the expanded programs, I learned that they planned to "borrow some intellectual assets from other programs."

We have found that it is not necessarily more efficient to expand our faculty while expanding the program. When we bring in new members to the faculty, there is no guarantee that they are able to offer the best courses needed for the program. But if we invite visiting scholars to our program,

⁶⁶ It may be noted that quotations drawn from participants interviewed seem somewhat smoother than is usual for spoken language. The interviews were conducted in Chinese. Therefore, the quotations are translations which cannot fully replicate the false starts, hesitations, etc. common to spoken language. However, I have attempted to capture not only each speakers' meaning but the tone and personal style of presentation as well.

we can have them when we need the course for a particular term and have the choice not to invite anyone if the course is not offered the next term. This is also economically more efficient...as payment for travelling and lectures is more affordable. But if we bring in a new faculty member, we have to be responsible for everything: the housing, the medical care, the bonuses, etc....It is far more expensive than the cost of inviting a visiting scholar. (A)

Many teachers expressed their concern about this strategy, which is built on the need to save money rather than on academic needs. However, under the present economic transition period where whatever works goes, this plan has been highly regarded by administrators for its merit in "efficiency".

While efforts have been made to initiate new programs with courses that look more appealing to the market, some courses that were strong in intellectual and educational value disappeared from the program because of their lack of practical significance, or the unavailability of qualified people to teach them. One teacher who has been concerned about the problems of curriculum development for some time described his⁶⁷ effort to revive some lost courses in the curriculum:

When I came back from abroad, the Chairperson told me that there had been some new developments in our curriculum. Then I learned that [a particular course] was gone, so was [another course] and I don't remember if [a third course] had gone by then. But these were all the best courses we had ever offered....I have made repeated suggestions to

⁶⁷ In referring to particular participants or people to whom they refer, I use female or male pronouns arbitrarily so as to obscure the person's actual sex. This is a precaution to protect anonymity.

the department that we need to re-introduce some of these courses...by making good use of our human resources such as Prof. X, who is still around and in good health. We can also arrange for some teachers to follow up from him later....When I mentioned this to our Chair, I was told that it took money to invite those retired teachers back, and it was too expensive. (ST)

Thus, when education is driven primarily by market forces, there is a lack of interest and effort on the part of administrators to revive courses that are not so appealing to the immediate demands of the market. Such an environment encourages young teachers to choose their fields of specialization based on market value rather than on academic value or interest. Academic interests end up being determined by the practical consideration of monetary gain rather than by intellectual curiosity.

However, many courses that have lost their popular appeal in the changing market are still highly regarded by teachers in universities. These are sometimes used for face-lifting and promotional purposes.

In compiling the handbook for...our department, the Chairperson insisted on keeping [a particular course] on the list of courses that we were offering. I suggested that it be crossed out because we no longer offered it....In spite of my repeated protest, it was still listed there when the handbook was issued. (ST)

This teacher wanted the handbook to honestly reflect the curriculum rather than to serve as mere window-dressing. She also believed that it was a good course and should, in fact, be offered. She persisted:

When I asked around among young teachers...if there

was anyone who was interested in teaching this course, I could find nobody....I once thought that while Professor X is still alive we should resume the course and tape all the sessions so that in future it would be easier for the young teachers to teach the course. I also talked about this to Professor X, who was very happy to hear this and said: "This is a good idea and I will keep myself in the best of shape." But now, he has passed away and we still have not been able to resume this course...I feel very strongly since his death that we have to have people follow up what we are doing....It is a pressing issue.⁶⁸ (ST)

The efforts of this teacher to revive a course that was believed to be important for a well-developed curriculum was unsuccessful because it was of concern to neither the administrators nor the young teachers.

While many professors keenly feel the unbalanced development between what is marketable and what is academically valid yet not as marketable, few believe that they can do anything about it. It was clear to many teachers I interviewed that the development of subjects in the humanities and social sciences had hardly any room to flourish or survive under the prevailing social environment where economic success was the only criterion for all endeavours.

The Continuing Threat of Brain Drain from Universities

When I interviewed them in 1995, many of the participants mentioned that there were not as many people leaving the

⁶⁸ As in many departments in most universities in China, a large proportion of the teachers is in the senior group and close to retirement. In this particular department, the senior teachers comprise about half the total faculty.

university as there had been before 1993. This was later confirmed by an administrator participant, who stated that "in recent years, we have nearly 100% return rate from the teachers who went abroad to study."⁶⁹ However, the satisfactory return rate for those going abroad through official channels does not suggest an absence of the threat of brain drain at home. It was recognized by administrators at both university and department levels that the threat of brain drain from universities to other sectors in society is still present.

Now there is a tremendous demand in society for people in [a particular field]. If the teachers [in that field] are not happy with what they get in the university, it is very easy for them to leave. When they go to work in any other social sector, they usually have a great increase in their salary along with many other incentives. It is true. So teachers are often tempted to weigh leaving vs. staying. Many companies try to attract these teachers with impressive offers, such as a three-bedroom apartment, or a salary in US dollars, etc....It is natural for teachers to be attracted by these incentives, but so far, most teachers in this university are quite happy staying here. (A)

While this participant showed a rather disturbing contentment with the situation, another administrator seemed to be more aware of the teachers' predicament.

⁶⁹ Teachers who are sponsored by the government to go abroad keep their employment while studying abroad, but those who go abroad through private channels have to give up their jobs before leaving the university. Teachers sent abroad through official channels from the mid-1980s into the early 1990s were more often than not senior teachers. Many younger teachers in the same period went abroad through private channels and few returned.

During the vacations, the teachers...have chances to compare their lives with those working in companies. When they find themselves at such a big social and economic disadvantage compared with others, they are greatly disturbed. There is no comparison between their life and that of others in almost every aspect: housing, car, salary....There is a great difference in all these areas when compared with those working in companies or even with those in government agencies. Our full professors get a little over 1,000 yuan a month,⁷⁰ and associate professors get about 400 yuan a month. [Those working in companies] make at least two or three thousand a month....From what I know of our graduates, they make an average of 4,000 a month. You can see how much of an income difference there is. (A)

As shown in the above two quotations, administrators recognize the strong possibility for teachers to be attracted by the better financial and other material offers from other sectors. However, it was generally agreed that there was less brain drain either domestic or abroad from this university after 1993 than before. Since other countries and other work sectors in China have claimed many teachers over the years, it is obvious that the brain drain cannot be maintained at the same rate. Even taking this fact into consideration, there has been a decrease in the number of teachers leaving the university.

The questions then become: What has made people more settled with their circumstances than they were two years before? What has kept people from leaving when there are so many more material benefits and opportunities in non-

⁷⁰ When the interviews were held in 1995, 1,000 yuan was roughly equivalent to \$167 Cdn.

university settings? When I presented these questions to the participants, various reasons were given by people from different backgrounds. One young teacher said:

I am sure all people in my age group have thought about leaving, although with varying degrees of commitment to the idea. The reasons are somewhat complicated. I somehow had some sort of attachment to this setting, and I was not ready to leave here without any accomplishments. I couldn't pinpoint what it was that made me finally stay. I can't say that I love this place or this occupation any more. I'm not that noble. I wanted to leave, but did not look into it seriously. Perhaps it was because I'm not a decisive person to begin with. Years just went by while I was in the middle of this hesitation. But mainly I was still hoping that I could get a chance to go abroad for professional development. Upon graduation, we were promised opportunities to go abroad in a year or two. Then three or four years went by, and then came "June 4",⁷¹ when all the exchange programs were frozen. For a time, there was a recession when nobody even talked about the possibility of studying abroad unless they wanted to leave through private channels and agreed to pay the penalty for not completing their five-year service. I couldn't afford so many thousand yuan then. I felt completely helpless and hopeless for about four or five years. (JT)

Another teacher had different reasons:

Perhaps it is my personality that I tend to think more than I act. Also, after so many years in university, I was afraid I might not be able to get used to a non-university setting. In addition, as a female, I knew there were many places that didn't want to have women employees, and I was afraid that I might not find an ideal job. (JT)

A third young teacher questioned the likelihood and value of great financial gain outside the university setting:

⁷¹ A common way of referring to events in *Tiananmen Square* in 1989.

People have begun to see that it is not true that there is gold to be picked up anywhere in the US, and there are not as many opportunities there as people expected. After all, not many people got very rich or found great opportunities there. So people are becoming more realistic now, and are beginning to see there are more opportunities at home. If you don't like this place, you can leave and work somewhere else....But when everyone jumped into the sea of commercialism, only a few people managed to net big fish, while most of them only got small shrimps; so people began to reevaluate life in universities and find a more positive side to it...As far as I can see, the tide of judging everything by the face value of money has subsided....It looks like the emphasis on knowledge...will be revived again. (JT)

Compared with the junior teachers, those in the middle-aged group seemed to be more conscious of their needs and more secure about their choices in life when faced with great material incentives from other sectors:

I am used to this style of life working as a university teacher, and it is very difficult to change it overnight, although it is not unchangeable...People our age are used to arranging our time in a way that is most appropriate to our habits and schedule. I can control my pace of life, work because of interest without being controlled by office hours, or the interests of the bosses, etc.... If you work in a government agency,...there is no getting away from the annoyance of interpersonal relationships if you can't develop a smooth relationship with other people in the office. The same is true when you work in a company. But there is no such problem in the university as you don't have to deal with each other on a daily basis. So long as you do a good job in your teaching, you can be well left on your own. It's simple....Teachers...still want to do something that interests them academically, which I guess is my wish too. In addition, from a financial point of view, teachers in universities can manage to live on the little money they make now. But if the financial strain gets even worse, I think all the other considerations I mentioned just now would have to give way to the economic consideration...I think teachers in this

department...can have an average living standard or a little below average compared with the other occupations in society. That is my estimation of the bottom line that teachers can still live with, but I am afraid there will be more people leaving if our income gets even lower than it already is. (MT)

When I asked this participant if the supplementary income from the Training Centre⁷² was included in her estimation of teachers' living standard as being "average or a little below the average," she explained:

It is very, very difficult to live only on our salary without income from the Training Centre...Take myself, for example: if the two of us made a little over one thousand just from our official paychecks every month for the three of us in the family, I could not survive, and I would have to leave, however much I am used to this style of life, because I have to take care of my family's needs. There is no way to survive only by being on the university payroll. This is clear to everyone. (MT)

For those who care more about the non-material benefits of being a university teacher, frustration over their financial situation has been managed by taking on extra hours of work on non-curriculum related activities. However, when this extra workload becomes a necessity in order to maintain an average, or even somewhat below average, standard of living, it takes a toll on their morale, health and quality of teaching.

The participants' reflections on reasons for still being

⁷² The Training Centre conducts an ongoing program in the department designed in response to the demand for continuing education. It also provides teachers with extra income through teaching courses unrelated to the official curriculum.

on the university payroll provided a better understanding of the decreased brain drain from the university since 1993: it is a result of many compromises made by teachers themselves based on various considerations. Unfortunately, these compromises made by the teachers have not been fully appreciated by some administrators, as shown by the following quotation:

I believe it is natural to have a mobile faculty. If you want to leave...you just leave your apartment behind. If one of the couple...quits, leaving the other to stay here for the sake of keeping the apartment, sorry, it won't do. If you want to leave, you should both be leaving, so that I can use the apartment to attract new people. I think it is a reasonable policy. I don't think people should assume that they are entitled to stay here for the rest of their lives. That would not work. It is natural to move. So long as you have served your term of service, you can leave. But you can't let the government cover the loss for you. As a result, there are not many people who want to go. (A)

University teachers find this policy offensive as it shows that many administrators have little understanding of the teachers' predicament and undervalue the teachers' importance. However, other administrators are sympathetic to the teachers:

I find the teachers more at ease now than they were a few years ago...There are various reasons for this. Some might feel that they have "been through it all" [and therefore will be able to cope with the problems and not leave]. But there are also a few other factors that have helped to stabilize our faculty. First, the general social environment is relatively stable; so is the economic environment. Secondly, some other teachers... are not interested in leaving because it is not easy for people over 50 to change jobs; and some middle-aged and young teachers who have not left did not intend to leave

in the first place because they don't want to give up their specialties. Besides, if one starts a new job and finds people in the same age group all in leading positions, it is not easy for them to take it...so... those who intended to leave have gone, and those who did not want to leave, have stayed.
(A)

New Salary Policy for University Teachers

As discussed in the previous chapter, economic changes since the late 1970s have led to an unprecedented boom in business and many more economic opportunities. It has also led to a double-digit, and sometimes even triple-digit, price hike in goods as a result of steady inflation over the years. Under these circumstances, people in the private sector and in non-state-run enterprises have received salary increases in various forms,⁷³ leaving university teachers, whose salaries have remained unchanged over the years, in a chronic financial predicament. Low salaries had been one of the chief reasons that so many teachers left for other opportunities at home and abroad. As a result, it was clearly stated in PRADEC in early 1993 that the government was committed to increasing teachers' salaries and ensuring that their income would be at a level that was above the average income of government employees.

New salary policies, under the name of "salary reform" for university teachers, were implemented in the summer of 1994, one of the changes most mentioned by teachers in the

⁷³ These include mostly money bonuses and staple food, but sometimes other material goods as well.

interviews. Instead of getting a total sum of money from the government every month as had been the practice since liberation,⁷⁴ a teacher's official monthly income under this policy is made up of three factors, namely, 70%, which is based on rank and years of service, + 30% for performance, + an additional amount of money translated from points derived from rank, seniority and administrative service. This means university teachers are guaranteed only 70% of their salary, leaving the other 30% to be determined by their department administrators. A teacher with satisfactory performance gets the full remaining 30%, whereas a teacher who is deemed to have not done satisfactorily gets either part or none of it.

The assessment of teachers' performance has not been an easy task for administrators, as there are few objective standards by which they can make judgements on teachers' performance on a monthly basis. As a result, "assessment of the teachers' performance" is based on whether teachers show up at all their classes rather than actual assessment of performance in the classroom. For those who fail to be present for the committed hours, the deducted amount from the 30% of their salary is redistributed among others as a bonus over and above the 30% they already get for doing a

⁷⁴ The salary of university teachers used to be determined by the government and was based solely on academic rank and years of service. Thus it was public knowledge how much each individual teacher made. In the early 1980s, full professors were known to be entitled to a monthly salary of 300 - 350 yuan and lecturers were known to make 105 - 115 yuan per month.

satisfactory job. As it turns out, those who cannot be present in the classroom, for whatever reasons, are financially punished. This policy, though not helping much to increase teachers' salary, has caused a great deal of anxiety and distress for the teachers.

It is said that teachers should make at least as much as government employees, but in fact, they are making more than we do. Since the salary reform, 70% of our salary is paid by the government, and the rest of it is paid by the university⁷⁵....If...teachers are not absent due to sickness or don't take a business trip within the month, they get the full remaining 30%, but if they miss classes for some reason, a certain amount is deducted. However, a state employee does not have this 70:30 percent ratio and is fully paid, sick or well. This is unfair. Why are state employees guaranteed their full pay while the teachers are not? (ST)

The idea of a fluctuating teachers' salary based on "performance" is not far from the practice in many factories where workers punch their time in and time out so that their hours of labour can be calculated. In the university, this practice has had a chilling effect on the minds of many teachers.

As a young teacher, I have not felt any physical challenge from my workload, because I'm still young

⁷⁵ After further investigation, I discovered that the 30% is also paid by the government. It is simply reallocated by the university departments. However, it is not clear what the policy is, and many teachers and some administrative staff believe that the university receives only 70% of the teachers' salary from the government and has to come up with money to cover the remaining 30%. This could be either a misunderstanding on the part of the teachers, or a created justification on the part of the university to motivate teachers to support money-generating projects.

and healthy. But there is no financial security when we are old....Take [a particular teacher] for example: he is an associate professor who has developed a rather serious [health problem] over the last few years. Now he can't work any more, and gets only something like 300 yuan a month, 70% of his salary. I don't know exactly how much...But he has been working hard all his life for this university at such low pay in those years before this new policy began. I can imagine that he has a lot of financial pressure now because he can't teach in the Training Centre either. (JT)

As for the point system, teachers in senior ranks and those who do more administrative service get more points than their counterparts in lower ranks or without administrative responsibilities. Each point earned under this system is translated into a sum of money based on the financial conditions of the university. Thus, financially better off universities can afford to assign a greater amount of money to each point than poor universities. So a teacher working in a wealthier university can get a larger paycheck for doing the same amount and kind of work than someone working in a university with more meagre financial resources.⁷⁶

This new salary system in which the financial condition of each university, independent of the amount it gets from the government, determines the salaries of its employee, has two immediate results: universities scramble to set up businesses to increase their finances; and new salary gaps among university teachers are created. I discovered in the course

⁷⁶ The university under study has been doing relatively well financially since 1993. Therefore, it was able to increase its point value from 2 to 2.50 yuan starting in 1994.

of my research that the teachers' salary increases that started in 1994 were made possible only by each institution's revenue-generating projects. Since the government has not fully implemented its policy to provide extra funding for teachers' salaries, universities are left with little choice if they want to keep their teachers from leaving.

Regarding the growing salary gaps, I learned that the most substantial increase in government funding since its proclaimed commitment to raising teachers' salaries has been in the money earmarked for teachers in the senior academic ranks. In addition to the three salary components already discussed, some full professors get an extra allowance for taking on certain additional academic responsibilities. For example, supervising doctoral students⁷⁷ brings an impressive financial reward to a full professor from both the government and the university, to say nothing of the great academic honour that attaches to this activity. Therefore, it is not surprising that reactions to the new salary policies vary significantly among teachers depending on their age group. Teachers in the senior academic ranks, who tend to be the older teachers, enjoy a much greater increase in income than teachers in the lower academic ranks.

⁷⁷ A senior teacher told me that in order to be accepted as a supervisor of doctoral students, faculty members must apply individually through their university. Decisions are made by the relevant subject committee under the Academic Committee of the State Council.

Now the monthly salary of a full professor is higher than that of the head of any department under the government ministries. The salary of a supervisor for doctoral students exceeds even that of the ministers. In addition to the money allocated to them by the government, each university pays an amount of money to these professors based on its financial conditions. For instance, [a particular prestigious university in an inland city] pays a monthly allowance of 500 yuan to these professors, and [another university in a coastal city] pays 4,000 yuan a month to professors supervising doctoral students.... There is no doubt that the salary for full professors and above⁷⁸ has been raised....This is a positive change. (ST)

While the majority of teachers in the senior ranks benefit from the new salary policy, the teachers in the lower ranks do not seem to be much encouraged by the change in their financial conditions. Two of them point out some problems:

I used to make less than 300 in total, and now it is still roughly the same for my 70% pay. But there is an increase in my 30% pay...So now I make about five or six hundred in total.⁷⁹ Even so, it doesn't make much difference in the salary of us younger teachers if you take into account the price hike over the years, but it makes a lot of difference for teachers in the senior ranks...There is a greater rate increase in their salaries than in ours. (JT)

There has indeed been a very limited improvement with the official increase in our salaries. It is no more than a gesture. I believe that whenever the teachers' salaries are officially declared to have been raised, there is in fact a greater increase in the salaries of people in other sectors in society, which again makes our salaries lower than the others. There is no favourable treatment

⁷⁸ This person is referring to the handful of *bodao*, that is, full professors who have been granted the right to supervise doctoral students.

⁷⁹ This includes not only the 70% + 30%, but also the money from the point system.

for the teachers to speak of, not as they have claimed. (JT)

Thus it is clear that income gaps have expanded significantly among the teachers. Not only are there big differences in income among university teachers from different institutions, but also between junior and senior ranks within the same university. Those in the lower ranks (generally the young and middle-aged teachers) work more hours, but make less money. They also often suffer more of a financial burden due to family responsibilities of taking care of both their children and their parents. Because their income is directly dependent upon the financial condition of their particular institution, these teachers especially cannot but consent to participate in any program or project that reaps more financial return for the department or the university.⁸⁰ For these reasons, as well as the fact that they are newer to the job and therefore less rooted in it, the young and middle-aged teachers are sorely enticed to leave the university when they see so many better paying, less stressful jobs outside. It is ironical that the very people whom the universities need to retain if they are to have a future are those who are experiencing the most serious financial difficulties and thus have the most pressing reasons to leave. It is therefore not surprising that their numbers have dwindled so much.

⁸⁰ Even in the senior ranks, some teachers, who lack the interest to participate in money-generating projects, be they department, university or privately initiated, or who are in ill health, must also be content with relatively low incomes.

CHAPTER 6

WHEN THE UNIVERSITY IS DRIVEN BY MONEY AND MARKET FORCES

The present chapter and the ones that follow continue to report on the first-hand research that I conducted at a major university in China. They name and discuss several issues that are perceived to have resulted from the changes in higher education after 1992. The issues were identified by interviewees, both teachers and administrators. It is their voices (and on one of the issues, the voices of students) that we will hear. The issues are: the emergence of an economic pragmatism that dominates all decision-making, pressures resulting from the need to make money, new economic opportunities for teachers in other sectors of society, the centralized political process, new tensions in university relationships, the lowered esteem in which teachers are held, and the changing commitment to teaching.

The New Pragmatism that Dominates Policy-Making from Top to Bottom

Since the beginning of the economic transition in 1978, there has been a consistent and observable effort by the government to emphasize exclusively the importance of rapid economic development over all else. The past emphasis on the ideology of socialism under Mao has been replaced by an official emphasis on the paramount importance of modernization of the country. This new approach, which has been the

guideline for all productive activity since the late 1970s, has resulted in fundamental changes in social values as well as ideological and financial considerations in decision-making. The usual emphasis on justice, equality and public interest is giving way to concern for quick returns on investment, practical monetary interests and value placed on material goods alone.

Not unexpectedly, these changes have had a major impact on the government's education policies. For one thing, the government promised to increase funding for education. However, my research indicates throughout that much of what has happened on university campuses since 1978 has resulted from lack of government investment in education. Yet even with the introduction of PRADEC, changes such as university restructuring, curriculum expansion, and the new salary policy, have occurred without any substantial increase in government financial support. In spite of repeated government promises to increase investment in education, a report in 1996 by SEC to the Special Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Health under the Standing Committee of the People's Congress showed that government investment in education had decreased over the years from 3.25 % of the GNP in 1985 to 2.40% in 1995 (Table 1), with the decrease being steady every year after 1990.

Table 1

Annual Government Investment in Education in Percentage of GNP:

Year	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
% of GNP	3.25	3.19	3.05	3.03	2.76	2.62	2.40

Source: A Working Report by SEC to the Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Health under the Standing Committee of the People's Congress, May 30, 1996.

Many participants, both teachers and administrators, pointed out that, given the government's economic priorities, there is little probability that it will increase funding for education in the near future. The discrepancy between government rhetoric and actual investment has been a fact of life for so long that many teachers could not but hold the sincerity of the promise in doubt or in contempt and search for reasons behind this inconsistency. One participant pointed out a plausible reason for the government's failure to live up to its promise:

Investment in education is just a long-term investment in which you don't see quick returns as you do when you throw money into some productive enterprises that will turn out products the next year. You don't see the results of your investment in education until long after the students are graduated. It's a slow and long process. (A)

Another participant, a senior teacher, stated that in the present period of rapid economic development, the country seems to face problems demanding government investment that are more urgent than education, problems such as peasant

unrest, rural migration to urban areas, huge inflation, and corruption, problems that are likely to threaten social stability and the authority of the government if left unattended. In the opinion of this participant, as long as lack of investment in education does not lead to social unrest, it will probably never get to the top of the government's agenda. This person went on to astutely observe that

very few leaders at present have a strategic perspective for the development of this country in the next few decades. They tend to be preoccupied with current problems...However, the government is going to repeat the same mistake it made with its population policy in the 50s if it doesn't do anything about its education policy. When Mr. Ma Yinchu⁸¹ predicted the population explosion in the 50s, he was criticized and demoted...The potential population crisis was not keenly felt until it was too late to make adjustments. That is what we are facing now--forty years later--the heavy burden of a huge population on the development of our national economy. The same thing is happening in education. Many problems caused by the present neglect of our educational development will not be strongly felt until many years from now when the country needs competence in international competition for intellectual and scientific products. (ST)

This observation is shared not only by many university teachers; it has also been echoed by economic experts internationally who predict that there will not be significant changes in China's economy in the early decades of the 21st century because of China's low level of scientific knowledge (Zheng E. 1996). However, this concern for China's future has

⁸¹ Ma, Yinchu, the President of Beijing University in the 1950s, was a noted demographer.

not impressed policy-makers in government, and consequently, few changes have been made in government investment priorities.

It was noted by several participants that the continuing government neglect of education was a result of a pragmatic tendency about investment priorities. Thus, in education, the market value of programs often determines curriculum development. There is a strong proclivity for policies, education or otherwise, to be adopted or revised based on a "bottom line" mentality and the likelihood of achieving quick returns on investments. University teachers are very quick to discern the intentions of government.

I learned that the Vice Premier in charge of education... instructed that our university put out a series of textbooks for crash courses in training [in a particular subject], which is urgently needed for economic development in the country. He didn't mention anything about the need to improve the academic standards of our teaching and research....It was a clear signal from the government about its focus of attention in higher education. (ST)

With this official encouragement to cater to the market-driven economy, not only is curriculum expansion based on considerations of immediate financial benefit, but also the strategic planning of university development is preoccupied with the paramount concern to save money by increasing administrative efficiency. These new interests replace the quality curriculum planning and long-term faculty build-up that was formerly the central concern for developing higher education. This shift in focus is well reflected by one of

the administrators interviewed:

There is much room to improve the quality of teaching and administrative efficiency. We have employed too many people. For example, we have to keep so many teachers...whether we have students or not. In my vision, these departments [with low enrolments] would be run in cooperation with research institutes in society....Then when we have students, we would invite people over as visiting scholars, and when there are no students, they would do research in those institutes. (A)

When I asked who would pay for these people, there was no response. Obviously, that was not a consideration in this administrator's vision. For her, the need to increase efficiency meant getting rid of teachers in the less popular disciplines and dispatching them to other institutions when there was no demand for their subjects. There was hardly any consideration in her vision of strategic planning for the long-term academic development of the university. Her concern was simply to save money. When the worth of everything is determined by its value in the market, teachers in less popular fields become less valuable and are sometimes even considered burdens by the university.

Significantly, this new economic pragmatism is uneven in its application. There is indeed some administrative inefficiency. Traditional job security, referred to as the "iron rice bowl", still prevails in some sectors. This is only to be expected, because great social changes, like those occurring in China, are uneven in their consequences for different parts of the population. With some sectors having more political influence than others, the authorities

sometimes feel obliged to implement changes tentatively and unevenly. Thus, the university, while undersized in its teaching resources, is overpopulated with support staff members⁸² who still retain some power because of China's proclaimed commitment to the working class. This overpopulation of staff stands in sharp contrast to the underpopulation of faculty due to brain drain in the major departments such as the one under study. Nonetheless, retaining faculty in the less marketable fields is seen by some administrators as the source of inefficiency. To compound the insult, it is the teachers in these fields who bear the blame for the charge that there are too many

⁸² Support staff members not only work on campus, but, like students and faculty, they also live there. Chinese universities are usually composed of at least two sections: the working area where classrooms, libraries and so forth are situated, and where students live; and a residential area where the majority of the university employees--teachers, administrators, and support staff--live. Each university is, by itself, a well-established and nearly self-sufficient community with its own bookstores, print shop, faculty cafeterias, student cafeterias and other restaurants, clinic, transportation centre, grocery stores, nursery and kindergarten, elementary school and even bike repair shops and vegetable stands set up daily by peasants who bring in their fresh produce from the countryside. These facilities serve the entire population of students, teachers, administrators and support staff on campus. Thus, a university is a lively, active community, where people live, work, study and even do some of their shopping and other daily errands. As most universities are responsible for providing all students with room and board and most employees with housing, they have to employ a large support staff to maintain the services. This also requires more administrative personnel at different levels and in various fields to ensure the implementation of routine work. In Chinese universities, it is normal for teachers to be outnumbered by the support staff, and for the administrative personnel in other sectors of the university to outnumber those in the academic sector.

teachers.

The diminished teaching ranks compared to the relatively stable support staff has pitted the teachers against the support staff. The resentment is widespread and palpable, especially since, despite all the talk of efficiency, some support units, though large and fairly inefficient, are still growing. One junior teacher provided examples of overstuffed, inefficient support units:

We have far more people in the support staff than we need....When I went to get a letter certified in a university administrative office, it took me several trips before I finally got into the office. I asked them what their working hours were, and the guy told me they had four full-time people and one part-timer working there. But the office was closed most of the time every day! Also, there were more than 100 people working in the library. People there told me that their normal work load was four half days a week, which amounts to only two days' work!...At the beginning of the semester, they put up a notice saying that the computer system needed to be updated, and so the circulation desk was to be closed for the next few weeks. So there is no access to books for teachers or students now...They could have done it during vacation, but they didn't do it until now when everyone has come back and needs to use the service. (JT)

It has become clear that because of the new economic pragmatism, education, in the face of competing needs for government investment at the national level, has not been put even close to the top of the investment list since the mid-1970s. This has sent out clear signals to society and to administrators at all levels that education is dispensable. In higher education, when there is a drive to increase efficiency, teachers with less market value are considered to

be the least needed on campus even though the greatest share of the expenses comes from the very large support staff. Similarly, when there is a financial crunch at the local level, government funds for school teachers' salaries are often transferred to satisfy "more urgent needs", leaving teachers at the grassroots villages and counties to work for months without pay. Such neglect of the needs and interests of teachers by local governments would not be possible if education were more highly esteemed by the central government. One participant provided an analytical focus, suggesting ways to deal with the problem:

It's not an issue of our government having no money for investment; it's a structural problem with the system. First of all, there has to be a legislative guarantee of educational investment for the country, an issue that has been talked about for many years....If we could use the money that has been spent on state banquets and business luncheons for education, it would be much better. At least we would not be so plagued by financial difficulties as we are now....[Government officials] can spend money in any way, buying imported luxury cars, building expensive guest houses...you name it, but they don't have the money to invest in education. Some of them talk about educational investment out of genuine concern, but many of them talk about it for the sake of public image, while in reality, they are not ready to commit themselves to it....When education is not given enough attention, it is an indication that the government is not being run properly....It's not a matter of firm determination by whichever individuals to solve this issue. It's a matter of an efficient and clean government that is committed to implementing legislation to guarantee investment in education. This demands a systematic structural and political reform in the country. That is why we have been talking about educational investment for twenty years, and we are still facing the same issue now as we were before. (ST)

Many other teachers are also able to identify developments that have led to the current lack of esteem for teachers and the overall predicament in higher education and to suggest remedies. However, few have the confidence to believe that things will improve through official or collective effort under the existing economic structure so long as the lack of investment in education does not show government policy-makers results as dramatic as stagnation in production, famine or social unrest.

**The Real and Present Need for Money:
When Money Becomes the Driving Force**

New Demands on University Administrators

When money is in short supply for almost every facet of education, from housing to classrooms, from teachers' salaries to library books, the university administration expends most of its energy searching for revenue-generating projects.

According to one administrator:

It is a common understanding that universities have to look after themselves financially when there is not enough funding from the central government. For example, we need around 20 million to run our university every year, but get only about 12 million, barely enough to cover salaries....It takes about 10,000 yuan a day just to keep our heating system running....When 80 or 90 percent of the government money is used to pay for salaries, we can only be left in the cold if we do not have other sources of revenue. As far as I can see, universities cannot survive, much less develop without this additional revenue, which has to be generated from money-making enterprises. (A)

In order to ease the financial difficulties, many

universities set up businesses purely for money-making purposes. Very often a high level administrator is assigned to take charge of all the money-making projects on campus to cover the financial needs of the university. Consequently, projects for money-making purposes are often given priority over those for academic and professional development. During the time I was interviewing teachers and administrators, two buildings were under construction on the campus, and they were not for teachers' housing as had earlier been expected. I learned from the participants that while a large part of the university revenue is consumed by overhead, another huge expenditure goes into capital construction for money-making purposes.

To use our President's words, we have to put money into capital construction now in order to make money later. For example, the student residence being built on campus is for overseas students. Only when we have more space to accommodate more overseas students can we make money from their tuition fees.⁸³ And only when we reap money from these programs can we improve our educational environment, and teaching facilities. (laugh) I guess many construction projects are designed for the purpose of generating revenue to cover the cost of other educational needs....I guess this approach is not totally unacceptable. Otherwise, what can you do when you run out of funding from the government? [The university] is building a student centre next to it, with only the first floor for student activities; all the floors above will be used as a hotel. It is estimated that when completed, [the university] will be able to get returns within a year or two. (A)

⁸³ International students are not subsidized by the government as are Chinese students, and their fees are considerably higher. Thus, they can be a source of a fair amount of revenue.

This real and present need for money has resulted in a new criterion for academic institutions: the success of a university or a department is judged by its level of financial security and the ability of the institution to accumulate revenue in the absence of government funding. Consequently, the main qualification for an ideal department Chair is no longer a person's academic standing and vision, but rather his or her ability to establish and maintain good relationships with business partners and to explore opportunities for money-generating programs. The words of two senior teachers capture the sentiments of many:

Everything is commercialized these days. And we teachers are not worth much....A department chair's first priority is...to find ways to cover the department's expenses and provide opportunities for teachers to make more money so that they will stay rather than leave for better paying jobs. If teachers' welfare and salary are dependent on the chair's ability to look for money-making projects, there is no way that I could [be the chair]. (ST)

Chairs of departments nowadays have started going after money to keep the departments going. It is unprecedented. Chairs used to take charge of teaching and research, but now the major concern is to have financial resources to enable them to provide extra income to the teachers. They have to come up with all kinds of incentives for teachers so that they will be happy to stay here and put their minds to teaching. They have to spend a lot of time doing PR and socializing. This is absolutely a new task for the chairs of departments now. (ST)

The new demands on administrators not only alienate many teachers, but can even change the academic orientation of departments and universities. The impact of the changes in the quality and direction of leadership in the university

resulting from the pressing need for money is yet to be fully appreciated, but it has surely affected the morale and values of the teachers as well as their professional commitment to teaching.

New Sources of Tension

When the university runs short of money to keep up its operating expenses, it depends on revenue from money-making programs at the department and university levels for extra sources of income. To ensure that it gets the revenue, the university administration has taken a tough stand, which, in turn, has led to negative reactions from other quarters in the university. The example of the Training Centre is a case in point.

The Training Centre...is the major source of income to keep the department going and to provide teachers with bonuses and incentives that will keep them from leaving. However, since the Centre started operating, we have never been able to resolve the conflict between the department and the university over the distribution of revenue. The department wants to keep a larger share of the total income for itself, but the university also wants a larger share for its needs. After many years of negotiations, the university set a 4:6 ratio, with the department handing over 40% of the income...[The department] has always wanted to change the ratio to 3:7 or 2:8 so that it would get a larger share of the money...but without success...[The department complains that] after giving 40% to the university and another 15% [to pay taxes on income from its enterprises], and after deducting operating costs for running the program, there is barely enough left to pay the teachers. (A)

As a result, the teachers, who bring in about 20,000 yuan

by teaching 80 or more extra hours each in the Centre every term, do not get much after all the deductions. However, the revenue generated from the Training Centre is essential for both the teachers and the department. Not only do teachers depend on the extra income to increase their relatively low standard of living, but also the department needs the money to give bonuses to teachers for holidays, and to fund activities such as social gatherings, transportation for guest lecturers, etc. that are not covered in the department budget, which is very tightly controlled by the university administration. In order to have enough people to operate the Centre, the department administration strongly urges every teacher in the department, except those who are in very poor health, to do some teaching in the Centre. Consequently, out of their own need for money and their obligation to the welfare of the department, the majority of teachers work between 4 and 8 extra hours a week in the Training Centre.

When asked if he could manage without the income from the Training Centre, one junior teacher replied:

No, I can't. All I get for my regular salary is about 500 yuan, which is not enough to make ends meet. I pay 160 yuan per month for my child's daycare, and the child also goes to all kinds of special classes that cost a few hundred at the beginning of each term. Only by teaching in the Training Centre can you be eligible for the bonus and other incentives from the department. So I can't afford not to teach there. (JT)

This participant told me that he was making an extra 320 yuan a month until the end of 1994 for teaching 4 extra hours a

week in the Centre. Because fewer and fewer teachers wanted to work there, starting from 1995, the hourly rate was increased from 20 to 25 *yuan* an hour for teachers in his rank, increasing his income to 400 *yuan* a month for the extra teaching.

While many teachers felt the university was exploiting them by taking 40% of the Centre's revenue, they also told me that they were envied by teachers and others in other sectors of the university for being able to "make easy money." They felt great frustration over receiving less than half of what they had brought into the Centre from their teaching and, at the same time, being judged by others in the university as "the lucky ones". One of the teachers talked about her reaction:

Sometimes I just don't feel like getting out of bed when I think of going to classes in the Training Centre. I literally feel a headache at the thought. Then I force myself out of bed at the last minute, and I feel angry again the moment I enter the building. It's an anger from nowhere, but it's real anger. When I face the students, I feel worse. Yet I have to talk about something in class....I don't care at that time how they feel about me. I have even thought that they couldn't do anything about it anyway because I'm the teacher and they have to listen to me, like it or not. Now thinking about it, I feel sorry about it. (JT)

While it was generally assumed that the young teachers were interested in making money at the Training Centre, almost all of them felt reluctance and frustration over what they had to do to make ends meet.

The fact that such a large proportion of the money made

by the Centre must be handed over to the university has become a constant source of tension both between the department as a whole and the university administration, and between teachers in the department, who press for an increase in pay and the department administrators, who do not have enough funds. Differential access to money has also contributed to strains in the relationships among teachers within the department between those who have no access to extra income other than the Training Centre and those who have other outside money-making involvements and can afford to ignore the Training Centre. Relationships are also strained between those teachers with more marketable skills and those without.

Many participants identified the deterioration of social relationships among teachers as a problem and attributed it to the paramount concern to improve their financial conditions through various means and the resulting lack of time, energy and interest to meet and discuss issues of common concern. It is generally agreed that although the political study sessions in the past⁸⁴ were loathed by everyone, primarily because of the compulsory attendance policy, they served as an opportunity for people to share their grievances, and they developed a sense of belonging among teachers.⁸⁵ Without

⁸⁴ Formal weekly political study sessions at the workplace have been discontinued.

⁸⁵ This is not to suggest that all relationships were smooth in the past. The factional fighting during the Cultural Revolution took a heavy toll on relationships among teachers, with undercurrents still being felt among the older

that point of connection for all teachers to meet and talk with one another, many find themselves more and more isolated at the workplace.

One junior teacher complained about the lack of free academic discussion within the department:

Teachers tend to think too highly of themselves....There is no room for free discussion of academic issues.⁸⁶ First of all, there is no time for you to have this kind of discussion. Secondly, there is not the right atmosphere for this kind of discussion. [Even when we do have the occasional discussion] people tend to be overly sensitive about their pride and security....There should be more tolerance of academic differences, more openness and more equality in these discussions. Now a lot of senior teachers don't talk about academic issues with other teachers. They tend to wrap themselves up in a facade and behave like superiors when they are asked questions....When it's such a hassle to ask just one question of these senior teachers, I would rather leave it to myself or until later just to save the trouble. (JT)

The absence of a sizable group of middle-aged teachers, who are often able to share experiences with both the senior and the junior groups, has contributed to the growth of a marked generation gap between the senior and the junior ranks. The lack of common concerns of teachers in different age groups has added an even greater barrier to communication. One middle-aged teacher pointed out that

teachers, who were Cultural Revolution participants.

⁸⁶ Discussions, both formal and informal, about academic issues and teaching concerns were more common in the late 1970s and early 1980s when there were weekly meetings attended by people teaching the same subjects and grade levels.

people, especially younger teachers, are more and more concerned about going abroad, or doing research, or professional development....Senior teachers are worried about promotion, and even full professors aspire to become Ph.D. supervisors....So people are more involved with their own personal interests these years. (MT)

A senior teacher expounded further on the problem of the generation gap:

We don't have as good a team of teachers now because there are few people in the middle-aged group working in this department. There is a great gap between those of us who are going to retire in a year or two and those who are only in their twenties or thirties. I'm not sure how committed the young teachers are now, and I don't blame them if they are not. It's very hard for them to stay in this field....When they teach in several places, how can they have the time and energy to improve their teaching in the department? A couple of years ago, one of our senior teachers volunteered to help the young teachers with in-service training, but the turn-out was so low that he had to give it up. There was also recently a suggestion in the department that we should resume our old tradition in which senior teachers are responsible for helping the younger ones by giving them advice and feedback on their class preparations and teaching. I disagreed, because it would have been very hard for both sides. For us, what should we do if we find things that need to be improved? Should we point them out directly, or should we let them go? If you ask the young teachers to improve, what can you do if they don't or can't? It's not the same environment as we used to have in the fifties, when we all stayed up very late and were always prepared for the senior teachers to step in the classroom to sit in on our classes. We were all trained by our seniors in that way. We could have a new generation of good teachers if we had kept up that tradition, but it's impossible now. On the other hand, it's too hard on the young teachers too. If you set too high a demand on them, they will all leave....So for the moment, it's good enough just to keep these young people in the ranks. You don't have much choice. (ST)

A middle-aged teacher participant gave other reasons for feeling irritated.

[A few years ago when I was a young teacher], I wasn't happy when [the senior teachers] did research and left all the endless details [associated with the research] to us. But when the research report was published, they got all the honours and we were always put in the category of "etc., etc."....We did all the hard work, and were told that these chores would be good experience for our future teaching. How could anyone take such crap without getting upset?! Now the young teachers don't have to be as frustrated as we used to be...because it is impossible for me to push others around like that. I can't let others go through the same experiences as I did. (MT)

This teacher dealt with the annoyance by "becoming more detached from the department."

Of course, the lack of communication in the department and people's diminished concern for each other has created growing frustration and hurt.

There is this great indifference toward each other in this department, where everybody minds their own business. There is no communication among teachers, no interpersonal or emotional interaction. For those teachers who live off campus, it's even worse. I don't know what administrators are thinking, and they don't know my problems. Very often it's not lack of money that makes people unhappy working here....At least if the administrators show in deeds that they care for you and really want to help, I would understand and appreciate them better. And there would not be so many grievances among the young teachers. But now nobody cares even if I go to talk to them about my problems...There is also very little caring and concern among colleagues....When I was on [sick] leave, it was just like there had never been such a person at work before. Nobody even called to ask after me. During this period, when there was any bonus and incentives for all the teachers, there was nothing for me, as if I had never existed. I didn't get a single call from anyone in the department while I was on leave. It chills me to

the bone even to think about it now. They remembered me only when I was fit to work. I found it very hard to understand. Maybe it's just in this occupation that people have this sort of indifference toward one another. (JT)

It is clear from the above experiences of teachers that the tremendous social and economic changes have changed the nature of the work units to which people felt so deeply committed. They have also dismantled the close interpersonal relationships within the work units. This change has caused tremendous frustration and discomfort among many teachers who have resisted adjusting their deep sense of community and collectivism to the economic pressure for individual success.

More Opportunities for Teachers in Non-Curricular Activities

Rapid economic development has created a burgeoning variety of opportunities for university teachers in non-curricular activities in society. Companies invite teachers to help boost their businesses in domestic and international markets; foreign enterprises look to teachers to establish contacts with local companies and to conduct professional training for employees; television and radio stations hire teachers to host educational programs in response to audience demand; publishers seek out teachers to compile textbooks, and to write books in their fields of specialization; teachers establish their own businesses where they can apply their expertise.

It is a matter of fact that university teachers have been

surrounded by far more rewarding opportunities for financial returns and fame from sectors of society other than the university. As a result, many teachers are attracted to these non-curricular activities and give the time and energy to these projects that used to be devoted entirely to teaching.

I was one of the dozen teachers involved in [an academic program sponsored by an international organization]. Later, I got involved in a TV program sponsored by our publisher and the Central TV Station...I worked on [another TV program] which will be aired soon. So besides teaching, I am busy with many other teaching-related, and community-oriented activities. I think it's good for me in the sense that it has brought some of my initiative into play. Before, when my whole life centred around a few classes...on campus, I felt so limited in my horizons. It was not conducive to an open-minded way of thinking. But now with more...going on in my life, I can bring things into my teaching that I come across while doing other activities off campus. I think these activities have a more positive influence on me. I am also working on compiling a textbook...It's in process and I have selected all the pieces....I was involved with [another project] last year, which was completed by a team of 20 people...I worked from morning till night on the third day of the Chinese New Year to finish my part against the deadline...I felt quite tired by the end of the term...but now I feel like I have accomplished something. (JT)

This participant is not alone in taking up a number of non-curricular activities in addition to a full teaching load and teaching at the Training Centre. At the time of the interviews, the majority of the teacher participants had at least two more work commitments in non-curricular activities besides teaching in the department and the Training Centre. Many of them explained that it was not only the money that attracted them to these other projects, but also the novelty

and the opportunity to expand their interests.

I know that [a major international corporation] contacted our department for a possible partnership. I took part in one of their training sessions...and was very impressed by the way they managed their programs...It was really very good, very systematic. All their employees will have professional training. Their university program covers a variety of subjects. They promised us that when their program got started, they would invite us back....We young teachers want to have some opportunities to establish contacts with big companies so that we can become more involved with their work, something other than teaching. Otherwise, we do nothing but teach, teach, teach, on and off campus; we get bored....I think we teachers can become very dull by teaching the same few courses in the university over and over for a long time. I want to have something new in my life. (JT)

This desire for "something new" and different from their daily routine work was shared by many young teachers. The non-curricular activities gave them a sense of accomplishment as well as the financial security they keenly needed at this stage in their lives. Therefore, it was an uphill battle when administrators tried to press teachers to maintain a high level of commitment to teaching in the face of their low salaries and their university work that meant so little to them professionally. While outside activities expanded their horizons and provided new possibilities for the teachers to develop themselves professionally, they certainly claimed their time and energy away from teaching.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Decreasing commitment to teaching is more fully explored in chapter 8.

CHAPTER 7

CENTRALIZED DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Selective Decentralization of SEC's Power

The total government control over decision-making in nearly every aspect of life in universities was a central concern of the participants in this research. During the interviews, I probed to find out how much decision-making power had been decentralized to the university as promised in PRADEC. I discovered that, since 1992, SEC had decentralized some of its financial and administrative responsibilities over a few key universities to the provincial governments, which in turn, had given some decision-making authority to these universities. For instance, some key universities have been granted the power to appoint Ph.D. supervisors and to send their teachers abroad through exchange programs.

SEC's control in the past extended to minute details, often causing more problems than it solved. One participant related a very telling example:

[A particular] university applied to build a residence hall for visiting foreign scholars when it was under the direct administration of SEC. So SEC sent some people over for a needs assessment...and they decided to revise the budget submitted by this university. SEC told the university to use a different material than the suggested composite aluminium for the building entrance and the window frames, because the suggested material was too expensive. So the university had to install doors and window frames made of iron. That's how SEC administered university affairs down to the

smallest detail, even though the composite aluminium would not have exceeded the budget approved by SEC. Nonetheless, the university had to comply because it was not in line with SEC's construction policies...Why should SEC be bothered with this since they weren't asking for any additional money?...After the completion of the building, it was obvious that the iron doors and window frames were no good and had to be removed and changed to composite aluminium again. This shows how much SEC interfered in university administration. (ST)

Although this participant was confident that, in future, SEC would not exercise such detailed control, she also suggested that SEC might be less interested in handing over control on more important issues:

Now they say such things won't happen any more, and they will decentralize decision-making powers in areas like this one....But SEC doesn't feel comfortable leaving universities alone. The issue is how committed SEC is to the policy of decentralization. (ST)

Other teacher participants agree; they do not perceive much decentralization except for the fact that 30% of their salary is redistributed by the department, whereas it was previously controlled by the government. University administrators also do not see much decentralization in areas of central concern.

SEC has been talking about decentralization every year, but there has been little substantial change. Take curriculum development for example: even if we don't like a certain course, we can't do much about it because it's based on SEC's curriculum in which non-major courses⁸⁸ take up as high as 51% of the

⁸⁸ Non-major courses are those that are not directly related to the major discipline selected by the students, but are considered essential to their program. They often include courses such as Chinese History, Political Economy, and

curriculum. Even if we don't want to run some courses, we have to. Otherwise we will be held responsible for failing to provide a complete program for the students. This is an example of SEC's control over us. Normally, curriculum design should be the concern of each university based on its own conditions, but it's not so here...under what is called *hongguan guanli* [the general supervision by SEC]. And all personnel arrangements are controlled by SEC. Most of the personnel changes within the Administrative Committee⁸⁹ at the university level are under the direct supervision of the relevant department in SEC... [University administrators] have not found much decentralization of decision-making, but SEC claims that they have decentralized whatever should be decentralized. There is still a lot of confusion that I'm not very clear about. (A)

When I asked another administrator if she has seen any decentralization of decision-making power from SEC, her response was:

Let me put it this way. We are working within a certain limit. Within this limit, we can have much room to manoeuvre. But...it isn't up to us to draw the line. For example, the size of the enrolment is not determined by us. We can only submit our plan to SEC for approval. If it's approved, we will use our enrolment plan....As to which courses students are to take at each level, it's up to us to decide. There are some rules on what we have to submit for approval and what we don't. For example, if it's a matter of setting up a new program, there are rules to tell you what procedures to follow and where to submit your application for approval from SEC, etc. So long as you follow the rules, there should not be any problem. (A)

Two other administrators thought there was not much interference from SEC in their decision-making except when it

Socialist Theory and Party History.

⁸⁹ The University Administrative Committee consists of the 6 top administrators in the university.

concerned "matters of some significance." When I tried to clarify what were considered to be "matters of some significance," I learned that issues such as quotas for promotion and funding for new programs or new buildings on campus are to be approved by SEC.

Clearly, the decentralization of SEC's power has been rather selective. It appears that decision-making authority has been extended to universities in some administrative areas, but that issues deriving from major educational policies that more directly relate to the life and work of the teachers still remain under the control of SEC.

The Decision-Making Process at the University Level

Just as SEC still holds most of the decision-making power in the critical areas of personnel, financial management and curriculum development, the university keeps whatever control it has in these areas to itself over the departments. However, when decisions are made without consultation, tensions arise between university and department administration, or between teachers and the department administration.

It is officially claimed that university affairs are run collectively by an administrative committee composed of the President, Vice-Presidents and other higher level administrators in the university. However, the Party leadership policy stipulates that "the President takes

executive responsibility under the leadership of the Party Committee." Therefore, almost all major decisions reached by the Administrative Committee are subject to the approval of the Party Committee.⁹⁰ I was briefly introduced to this decision-making process by an administrator participant:

Major decisions reached by the Administrative Committee have to be approved by the Party Committee of the university. When a decision is made and approved, the member of the Administrative Committee to be in charge of the issue in question is to supervise the implementation of the decision. If problems arise in the process of implementation, there will be more discussion and more decision-making through the same process. (A)

Further discussion with other administrators revealed other aspects of the decision-making process in this university:

Oh, yes, a very big chunk of our time is spent on choosing candidates for leading positions at the department level. Nowadays, not many people are interested in taking up administrative responsibilities. We have to spend hours and hours deciding who the appropriate candidate is; then the people in Personnel go and talk to that person. If that person doesn't want to take the position, we have to think of someone else and go through the same procedure again until we fill that position. Then another position is to be filled soon after. (A)

It was clearly indicated in my talks with administrators

⁹⁰ The chief responsibility of the Party Committee is to ensure the implementation of Party policies in university administration. Therefore, all major decisions reached by the Administrative Committee are subject to the formal approval of the Party Committee. The head of the Party Committee is usually involved in the entire decision-making process as a member of the Administrative Committee. The Party Branch at the department level assumes a similar role and is similarly related to the department's Administrative Team.

that much of their meeting time was consumed by administrative details over decisions that often "ended up not being implemented even when they were made." (A) When asked for their reflections on the reasons for such administrative inefficiency, one of them said:

We don't have well established, well thought-out rules and regulations for our administration. I was quite impressed by the number and volume of rules and regulations in a Western university when I first visited there. They've had hundreds of years to develop those rules and regulations. Everything was ruled by the book. When something happened, the Chairperson flipped through the book and followed the rules stipulated in such and such sections in such and such chapter. I don't mean to say that it is perfect to rule by the book all the time, but it saves a lot more time than making decisions case by case like we do here. It also avoids unfair treatment of individuals. As we don't have well established rules, we have to rule by each individual's own judgement on each case. When each case is treated as a special case, it's hard to be fair and objective all the time. Therefore, it's not conducive to consistency in our policies. (A)

It obviously creates problems when decisions are made according to each decision-maker's own judgement or relation to the matter under discussion with few rules or precedents to rely on--a typical traditional decision-making approach of "rule by people" rather than "rule by law". For one thing, when the chief executive officer of a decision-making body is not inclined to collective consultation, then a decision is even more subject to the power of an individual's will. As one administrator indicated:

It's claimed that every decision is made collectively, but [that's not the case]...Some find it hard to speak out at meetings. This...is a

fatal weakness of [the Administrative] Committee...[H]owever experienced a person is...there is still the need to listen to others...And it should not be only a gesture to let you speak whatever you have on your mind, and then, that's it, done....Now, if you want to get something approved at a meeting, you have to do a lot of schmoozing with others first and then bring it up at the meeting. Then it will be easy to get it approved. Otherwise, if you bring up an issue at the meeting without any assured support from others, once it's rejected, there is little chance for it to be brought up again. (A)

It should be noted that not all administrators were critical of a centralized approach to decision-making:

There are no self-made policies in our universities. All our decisions are based on SEC and municipal authority guidelines...When a new policy is introduced to us from above, we can discuss how to carry it out with more efficiency....To me, democracy in a university is to find out how to carry out the policies made by the Central Committee of the Party by soliciting opinions and suggestions from the people. It is not democracy to show defiance to the government by saying that something is not right, and so we won't do it. It's not democracy, and it's wrong, because the policies from the government are worked out from a broader perspective in the light of democracy. So our job is just to implement them accordingly. (A)

It is clear that department administrators, and teachers even more so, are removed from the decision-making process when major policies are involved. Not surprisingly, this has repercussions on the implementation process. Although SEC can almost always count on university administrators to implement new policies, university administrators often find more obstacles than support at the department administrative level. One administrator observed that

implementation is not carried out to the letter. That is to say, policies that are in the interests of the department administration get implemented, and those that are not in their best interests are neglected. If a certain policy might cause strain in interpersonal relationships at the workplace, it will likely be circumvented by the local units. (A)

This fact is problematic for some:

What is the responsibility of an administrator? The point of being an administrator is to help carry out established policy and make sure that it is observed to the end...In addition, since decisions are made under the supervision of the Party Committee, the Party Branch at the department level should see to it that they are being implemented properly. But the Party Branch at the local level has been very weak over the years...It's very hard to have a good team of people to carry out new government policies actively. (A)

In spite of the limited decentralization, some university administrators expressed apprehension over the idea of decentralizing decision-making power to the universities:

Under the planned economy, the government took care of everything, and there was not much initiative on the part of the universities...But now, with the talk of *zizhuquan* [the right to self-rule], it...means more responsibility...When SEC gives the university the power to determine its affairs, it is to exercise this power....This responsibility cannot be held by one person; it has to be shared by people at different levels. There have to be some rules and regulations, but there aren't any....If SEC decentralizes too much of its decision-making power to us, [some people will be] afraid of it, because in the absence of a comprehensive system of rules and regulations,...when everything is new, and when we are so used to following [official] instructions as in the past,...how can it be an easy matter? (A)

The Decision-Making Process at the Department Level

Department Conflict: External and Internal

When *zizhuquan*, or the right to self-rule, was extended to universities, some university administrators complained that their counterparts at the department level were not always eager to share responsibility for difficult decisions. However, quite the opposite was the case from the perspective of the department administrators. It was clear from the interviews that the idea of decentralization or self-rule is not as appealing to university administrators as it is to administrators at the department level who feel extremely limited in dealing with major issues of significance to teachers.

The department administrators complain...that they can't do much with the little decision-making power they have. It's true that they don't have much decision-making power. A lot of the major decisions are made at the university level, such as candidates for going abroad, promotion quotas, housing conditions and the ratio of extra income to be submitted to the university. No wonder some chairs complain that they have no rights at all.
(A)

A story told by an administrator illustrates how limited department administrators sometimes are:

I remember one faculty member from [a particular] department who applied for a three-month extension of his stay abroad. After a discussion at the department administrative meeting, the application was approved. But this turned out to be something that was beyond the department administrators' authority. The department is not supposed to decide by itself when the extension exceeds seven days. What should have been done was to submit the application to the university to decide if it was to be approved or not. Then the department could

give the teacher an answer. (A)

When asked how much decision-making power the department had over major issues of concern identified by the teachers themselves, namely, promotion, professional development abroad, housing, and extra income, an administrator answered:

All of these problems are very difficult to take care of at the department level...Take the promotion issue for example: the quota is entirely determined by the university...The department can...recommend candidates for promotion, but they have to be approved by the university....As to housing, it is even more beyond the department's control....Financial management is entirely in the hands of the university, which rules when and how the money can be used, and when not...And also personnel arrangements; when the department wants to have someone for a position, it has to be approved by the university. (A)

Through my interviews with administrators, I found that there is greater resistance to the control exerted by the university administration over the department than there is to SEC's control over the university. Nonetheless, although it has been recognized at the university level that there are complaints from department administrators because of their lack of decision-making power, little has been done over the years to deal with this problem. Often department administrators are genuinely concerned about teachers' welfare and find it frustrating that they cannot achieve what they want. For just one of the many examples, a participant told me that it took him 18 trips to the university's Division of Housing to get approval of four legitimate requests from teachers to improve their housing. The tremendous limitations

imposed on them in dealing with issues of great concern to the teachers does not sit well with department administrators.

We can't always do what we are told to do. If we think the decision is inappropriate...we will not implement it and try to justify our actions....We will try to persuade the higher authorities to alter their decision through active communication with them. (A)

The university administration often finds such behaviour at the lower level annoying and the source of inefficiency: "It is just such obstacles in the middle of the implementation process that have resulted in all sorts of problems" (A).

From another point of view, however, despite departmental efforts to forward teachers' interests, there is a high level of frustration among the teachers over how little their interests have, in fact, been protected against the intrusion of university policies. Describing their pent-up anger over a dispute between some teachers and the university administration, one participant declared:

We wanted to quit teaching until the matter was settled, but on second thought, we knew the problem was not caused by our department, and there was no reason for us to let the students suffer or to make things more difficult for the department. So it was very frustrating; there was no way for us to show our anger, because there are two different administrations that we had to deal with at the same time. (JT)

When there is a conflict of interest between teachers and university policies, teachers say they have no choice other than to leave the university in anger or to comply with the will of the authorities. The absence of protection of their interests by the department has left many teachers to decide

in great disappointment that they should have as little to do with the university as possible. Such detachment from the university is possible only when they have outside financial and professional opportunities. As one of the teachers observed:

Now people are less and less dependent on their unit for benefits and bonuses. They can afford to be indifferent to what is going on in their work unit, because they can make a lot more money working somewhere else in addition to getting their regular salary from their workplace. (MT)

Caught in the middle of the conflict between the university administration and the teachers, department administrators often experience frustration and helplessness similar to the teachers. It is they who suffer the direct consequences, such as the abrupt departure of teachers, the absence of commitment to teaching, or the lack of support for their decisions. Consequently, they seek greater control over decision-making.

Department administrators would like the university to decentralize its decision-making power so that they would have more control over their own affairs...financial management, personnel management...how to allocate the department's money. For example, what should be the ratio of the income from running different programs that [the department] hands over [to the university]? (A)

If, indeed, the department had more decision-making power when it came to issues of importance to the teachers, would teachers at the grassroots have more control over their lives and their work? When I looked into decision-making at the department level, a similar pattern of centralization left me

with serious doubts.

The Unempowered Teachers

The following are the general contours of decision-making at the department level:

When an issue is initiated in the department, it's brought up for discussion at the weekly administrative meeting which members of both the administration and the Party Branch attend and at which they voice their opinions. Usually we expect to reach consensus before a decision is made at the meeting. If opinion is divided, it will have to be put aside for a while....When we make decisions, we have to first of all think if it is in the interests of the teachers and how they will respond. When it comes to issues such as candidates for a leading position, we ask around for teachers' opinions, especially senior teachers or those in charge of administrative work at different levels...When it comes to general administrative affairs, it's not necessary to ask them for suggestions....If it is a decision based on a government policy, then even if it's opposed by many teachers, we still have to carry it out.
(A)

A contentious part of this process is that even though department administrators seem more open to listening to the teachers, they tend to listen to only a select few. The majority, especially the younger teachers, are left completely out of decision-making. When I asked if teachers had any input in major decision-making in the department, I got the following responses:

No, there are not many major decisions to begin with. Even when there are, they don't usually consult us. It's always the decisions of one or two people in the department. (JT)

Not often...We certainly should be consulted, but generally speaking, decisions are made at the

administrative meetings at the department level....They usually call a meeting to inform us about what has been decided and what is to be done next. But it has already been decided. They should have talked to us before they made the decision, but that's very rare. A lot of teachers don't seem to care about [not being consulted]. Whatever is decided is fine....But some of us certainly would like to be consulted when it comes to major issues. (JT)

On one such major issue, the selection of candidates to go abroad, which is of crucial concern to young teachers especially, several teachers in this age group agreed with this participant's strong disapproval about the process:

There was no public information. You never knew who had been chosen to go, and who was the next lucky person....It was always a closed deal. I felt that I was remembered only as a name on the payroll, and when it came to important decisions in the department, there was no way that I could have a clue as to what was going on.(JT)

More than any other group, the junior teachers feel they have no say or no knowledge of how decisions are made on other important matters as well.

The lack of decision-making power at the grassroots level has caused tremendous difficulties for the teachers. To avoid further frustrations and tensions, many teachers choose to be indifferent to administrative decisions and policies whenever possible. The selection of a chair for the department stands as a case in point. Tight university control over department personnel arrangements resulted directly from the centralized control by SEC over university personnel arrangements. This has not only contributed to teachers' resentment of those at the higher levels, but has also made them reluctant to accept

the leadership of anyone who is hand-picked by those authorities. Therefore, in spite of several attempts, the university administration could not convince professors in the department to take the position. Finally, it decided to conduct a poll to solicit teachers' opinions on appropriate candidates. However, after more than two weeks of polling, fewer than 20 teachers out of more than 80 working in the department responded, and it took more than six months to fill the position and finally form a new administrative team⁹¹ for the department.

When I asked participants if they had taken part in the poll, their responses revealed a deep cynicism:

The key issue now is people do not believe in [the administration]. They knew it was no use and that even if they recommended candidates, they would not be selected if the university did not like them. So...most of them chose not to be involved in this.
(A)

No, I did not participate. It was just a joke. They had their mind set on someone and then went through this procedure to create the impression that the person was selected based on the opinion of the teachers. I didn't want to be part of this farce. (ST)

I didn't have anything to do with it. First of all, I knew that it was impossible that they would accept the candidate I suggested. Secondly, I thought it was a meaningless show....If they really cared about people's opinion, they would have a poll among all teachers and let the candidate be

⁹¹ Once the Chair is appointed, s/he recommends other department members (depending upon the number of vacancies at the time) to join him/her in forming the department's administrative team, which collectively runs the department. The final decision on the make-up of the team rests with the university administration.

determined by the result. If it was a decision by the Party Committee, what was the point of soliciting opinions from us? Everybody knew that not even once have teachers' opinions in any way influenced the decision of the Party Committee, but by conducting the poll, they had the excuse to proclaim that their decision was based on our opinions. They wanted to have a dictatorship while appearing to go through a democratic process. I have told them what I think every time they come to me, but they haven't changed a bit. (ST)

I could hardly think of an appropriate candidate and thought that it was not going to be useful anyway, as they already had people in mind. A lot of the teachers thought this way, so they didn't bother to vote. When I asked people if they voted, they would say: "Why bother? It's just a sham; they have already determined the candidates before they set up this opinion box. Why waste our time?"...Many did not take it seriously. Also, some said it would make no difference who was in office anyway. (JT)

As it turned out, most of those who took part in the poll were teachers from the junior group who thought it was a good gesture by the university to solicit their opinions. None of the teachers from the senior group responded to the poll. The low rate of participation is all the more serious because the role of department leadership has been a source of difference between the teachers and the university administration, with each having different expectations of the chair. For the teachers, the chair can play a decisive role in the work and well being of the department; they see the quality of the working environment as largely determined by the quality of the administrative team at work. However, they also regard the candidates selected as often being favourites of the university authorities, and therefore view them with suspicion

and distrust even if they had been considered good teachers before being chosen. With those points in mind, it becomes clear that the teachers' abstention and indifference are merely protective responses to avoid even more tension and further disappointment.

Deteriorating Social Relationships

The many problems, such as individual struggle for financial security, the absence of teachers' input in decision-making, and so forth, are exacerbated by the lack of adequate, institutionalized communication channels among different sectors within the university. Taken together, all these problems have resulted in tensions between administration at different levels, between faculty and administration, among faculty members, and between faculty members and support staff.⁹²

The Relationship between Administration at Department and University Levels

Some administrators think that it is possible to have normal communication between the two levels; others disagree. It is not uncommon for university administrators to see their counterparts at the department level as constituting a greater

⁹² Tensions among faculty members have been discussed in the preceding chapter. As for the relationship between the faculty and support staff, this demands an extensive research effort that goes beyond the parameters of this work.

obstacle to the implementation of government policies than any other sector within the university. One of them expressed little hope of improving understanding and cooperation between them:

The departments seem to be responsive only to orders from above...[But when orders are issued] without getting a common understanding...a series of problems will follow....Everything would be in place if there were a common understanding between the university and the department....But it's so difficult to reach an understanding these days. (A)

For their part, the department administrators clearly expressed their frustration over university administrators, who repeatedly overstep their bounds and who "often make decisions without consulting with the departments concerned" (A). The frequent conflicts of interest between university and department administrators create constant tension between them. Most often, differences end up being settled through compliance by the department with the demands of the university.

Tension between administration at the department and university levels is one important reason for the difficulties in selecting candidates to serve as department chair. It is commonly said that qualified people often shy away from administrative responsibilities because they think it is almost impossible to communicate with the authorities above them, much less reach a common understanding with them over some of the major issues concerning the teachers.

Department administrators are faced with a challenging

task: on the one hand, they are supposed to implement university policies at the grassroots level, but on the other hand, they cannot ignore the needs and interests of the teachers when they are in conflict with these policies. Consequently, these administrators often end up being accused by both sides of not doing their job.

The Relationship between Faculty and Administration

Teachers experience frustration with both levels of administration. The centralized decision-making process within the university offers little opportunity for teachers to be involved in university or even department affairs. Although there is no longer pressure on university teachers for "thought reform", many think that the social environment within the university remains as unfriendly to teachers as before. Some suggest that the legacy of the Party's prejudice against intellectuals can still be perceived through some of the administrative policies. Under such circumstances, teachers respond to new policies with little enthusiasm.

Both faculty members and administrators agree that implementation of administrative policies depends more on the quality of the interpersonal relationships between administrators and faculty than on the merits of the policies themselves or the bureaucratic obligation of the teachers to those in authority. Faculty members carry out their routine work, but when it comes to anything beyond their normal

teaching responsibilities, such as additional teaching or initiating a new program, whether or not they will comply depends largely on the views and attitudes of each individual teacher involved.

Administrators often rely on pressure to achieve their goals. There is an assumption among those in leading positions that an administrative order can accomplish almost anything. For example, when teachers did not respond with enough publications to the policy that placed great emphasis on research, university administrators decided to "encourage" more research through an administrative order:

We're trying to signal to teachers...that it's better to commit themselves to more academic activities than to money-making projects...We assume that if they don't teach as many non-curriculum hours as they do now, they will have more time to do research. But it's very difficult, extremely difficult to make them see the point. Persuasion alone doesn't work. You have to take certain tough measures...You have to play tough...Maybe I'm wrong, but without tough measures, no self-motivated research is possible.
(A)

"Playing tough" means exerting pressure on teachers through administrative and financial measures to do research.

By contrast, many teachers reported that the administration made little effort to accommodate what the teachers felt they truly needed:

I wanted very much to go abroad for a degree program....But we were kept in the dark as to who was to be the next on the list....There was no systematic practice for choosing candidates to go abroad. It was all a matter of the administration's personal preference. I felt very hopeless. It took a lot of determination for me to

apply for the in-service graduate studies program in the department. I had felt rather reluctant to get my MA degree the hard way, because it's not easy to work on a degree while teaching. But to our great surprise, the request [put in by two other teachers and me] to do in-service grad studies was turned down by the department. I couldn't believe that they wouldn't even encourage our initiative to find our own way for professional development. We didn't ask for any favours in doing this...not even to reduce our workload. Why on earth did they turn us down?!...When we went to talk to the Chair about our request, she was really rude. She said: "You can do whatever you want, so long as you have completed your five years of service." We were so upset to hear that....I'm still very angry about it even when I think of it now. If I had had a chance to start my in-service grad program then, I would have completed my degree by now...There was no way that I could understand why they didn't want to give us the chance when it would have cost them nothing. I was very unhappy then and could escape from my frustration at work only through my family and friends...I could not care less about what was happening in the department. (JT)

The lack of understanding of and support for teachers' needs is not limited to their professional experiences on campus. Many teachers related stories showing that other aspects of life in the university are far from easy:

The last few administrations treated you like nothing...Nobody cared about your academic development so long as you kept going to class. When the Division of Housing came to confiscate my rooms⁹³, I went to the Chair for help. He didn't even listen to me. I had never made any demands on the department, never had any fights with people in the Division of Housing, but now, for no good reason, they sealed my two doors using paper

⁹³ Some teachers have 2 unconnected rooms. This can occur for a variety of reasons. For example, someone with a single room who is leaving campus might ask a friend, also with a single room, to look after his/her room. Sometimes, the person never returns, and the room is permanently taken over by the friend.

strips. The Chair just refused to speak to me when I told him about it. So I just went ahead and tore off the paper strip seals and put them on his table. I had hurt his pride without knowing it....Since then, I have been considered a trouble-maker. (MT)

It is commonly agreed that housing is of major concern to the teachers and a source of contention for many. It can determine a teacher's decision to stay or leave the university. Several teachers in the junior group expressed their bitterness at the Division of Housing, which often makes their lives miserable. One teacher, who had recently come back after studying abroad, was not eligible to move into an apartment building because she was not married. According to university policy, apartments are assigned only to married people with families; unmarried teachers have to live in old-style dormitories with no kitchen and with bathrooms shared with many other residents.⁹⁴ She described what it was like living there:

They rent those rooms to students from training centres to make money, six or eight of them sharing one room. But nobody cares about the sanitary conditions in the building. The public washrooms and lavatories are never cleaned. I had to clean the lavatories and the corridor myself yesterday...Since these students came to live here, my gas stove has been stolen, and more than 7 other gas stoves in this building have also been stolen....They don't separate the teachers' living quarters from those of the students...And those

⁹⁴ This policy actually encourages people to marry earlier and have children early so as to improve their chances of getting their own apartment. Because teachers generally tend to marry late and start their families late, they are at a disadvantage when it comes to improving their living conditions.

people fight, drink and vomit, and play cards till the middle of the night....I would not feel so bad if there were not enough housing around for everyone, but it's the unfair treatment toward different groups of people. (JT)

Under such conditions, many teachers simply leave the university. They do not hold out any hope that the hostile university policies will change. As one participant said:

It is obvious that they don't cherish the teachers. They don't give a damn if teachers are leaving the university; they would say that nobody is begging you to stay. [Two particular teachers who left the university] are very good, experienced teachers in their mid 30's, the age group that is most needed in our university. Now...people in that age group have all gone. They never make you feel appreciated and moved to feel committed to the work of this university. I don't feel indebted to the university...although I choose to stay here...If they can at least show a bit of understanding and appreciation for our teachers, it would be a different story. But no way. They never care about you or value you, not in the least. It's very upsetting and disappointing....A teacher in his 30's has to share a dormitory with others just because he's not married. [Another person] was squeezed out of her dorm because her roommate was having a date....If there is any bit of concern and understanding, it's hard to believe that they can't find rooms in this university for teachers in their mid 30's. But they will give you all kinds of excuses saying that they can't give special treatment to the teachers, [because] the campus workers will ask for the same. (JT)

Those who stay feel unfulfilled. Their only hope for making changes in their lives is to rely upon their own resources:

There was no communication and understanding between the administration and the teachers...The department was falling apart, and more and more people left for other opportunities. I didn't have the opportunity or the interest to compete with others to go abroad. Yet I had to survive under these circumstances. It was just so meaningless

for me. Even when I went out to make some money, it was boring. I had always wanted to become a learned scholar in a university, but at that time I could see no chance to accomplish that any more, not even any hope for it...Nobody in the administration cared to think about the interests of the teachers...It was a very stifling environment....When there was less and less job satisfaction from being a teacher, my desire to do something else grew immensely. I needed to find some satisfaction from other sources to keep a balance of mind. (MT)

Thus, many teachers set off to engage in other projects without quitting their jobs, a clear indication that money-making is not the only driving force encouraging other kinds of activities. What these teachers need is a sense of accomplishment and self-respect, which they have been deprived of on campus.

Being a teacher, what I want most is a relatively free state of mind and lifestyle...This [non-curriculum related] project gave me the psychological satisfaction that I could do what I wanted to do and didn't have to be controlled by them....I couldn't take university life any more. (MT)

Compared with their younger colleagues, the senior teachers seem to take the administration with more ease:

There is less tension between teachers and the administration now. First of all, there are fewer fact-finding/opinion-seeking meetings now. And even if there were more, few people would be interested in voicing their opinions. It's not because there's nothing to say, but because people realize that it's...not a particular individual who [is responsible for the problem]. Problems in higher education are all interrelated. To blame Zhang or Li⁹⁵ for what they have done to our university or to education means very little and

⁹⁵ These are common Chinese surnames, equivalent in meaning to the English: Tom, Dick or Harry.

won't help at all. (ST)

Interestingly, another senior teacher also saw less tension between the teachers and the administration, but attributed it to the diminished frankness between them:

In the present circumstances, few people would disagree with or criticize others directly....When [a particular person] became the Chair and asked me for advice, I talked with him sincerely about my views of the department....But there are still things you don't comment on, as they might be too strong and hurtful. Now, we no longer criticize others pointedly as we did in the 50s and 60s when everyone was supposed to do criticism and self-criticism. Now we can only say good things about each other, like the media, which "praise everything to the sky,"⁹⁶ and do no more criticism; so people get spoiled.⁹⁶ (ST)

By and large, however, the most striking difference between the younger and older teachers' relationship to administration is the greater acceptance on the part of the senior teachers. This is partly due to the fact that they have more opportunities to voice their opinions to administrators. However, in line with Chinese tradition, the administration can show--or appear to show--respect for the opinions of senior teachers out of courtesy rather than a genuine desire for them to participate in decision-making. The general belief is that people must wait until they are forty or fifty before their voices will be heard and

⁹⁶ When the criticism and self-criticism meetings of the past were abandoned, no other regular channels of communication between teachers and administration were established in their place. Consequently, many teachers found themselves isolated at the workplace without much understanding or support from the administration.

respected. This fosters the illusion that teachers' views will be heard and truly respected once they have gained seniority.

Fundamental Improvement in Leadership or Continuing Crisis?

Faced with an increasingly indifferent faculty and growing tension between teachers and administration, the department administrative team in office when this study was conducted was making some changes in its approach to administration. It was generally agreed that the relationship between the teachers and the administration at the department level had improved in the previous two years. The teachers gave a number of reasons for this improvement, but many recognized that the new administration was showing a willingness to work hard and to better appreciate the teachers. One of the administrators expressed these very qualities when she explained her views on leadership:

It's my motto at work to be an honest person and work hard for the teachers to help them resolve practical problems. It won't do to pay lip service...You have to take care of those matters that are in the basic interests of the teachers and the department. If I have done my best, I will have understanding from the teachers....But there are limits to what I can do. If I've tried my best and explained to the teachers what I've done, where the problems are, and when I fail, why I didn't succeed, I believe I will be appreciated. (A)

From my observation of the administrative work in the department, the effort to create a better working environment is based on improving interpersonal relationships. An

administrator emphasizes the importance of being a good role model:

Sometimes the teachers' commitment to work is based on their judgement of the particular person who is in charge of the project. If they find this person very committed to the job...for the benefit of the teachers, they will work hard just as if they have found good friends who can understand and support them. (A)

The influence of the Chinese tradition is also evident in this kind of administrative approach:

I once said at a meeting that whatever larger environment we are surrounded by, we should try to make our [work unit] a big family in which our teachers have a place to pour out their grievances and speak up about their concerns. If we can make it like that, it will be a great psychological comfort to our teachers. If we have a workplace where everyone has a congenial relationship with one another, it will be much easier for us to do anything, to complete any projects. The administrators should not view themselves as bosses, but as friends of the teachers. Instead of giving orders to get things done, they should commit themselves to reaching a common understanding through consultation. It's easy to get things done when we are all friends. (A)

These views show that some administrators are quite ready to work harder than anyone else. They are also committed to making the workplace more congenial for the teachers. Whenever there is tension as a result of decisions made without democratic procedures, or when conflicts arise between teachers, such administrators appeal for understanding based on trust in their sincere desire to do a good job.

However, this approach relies solely on the good will of individual administrators rather than on structural changes that ensure more democratic participation. There are still no

established, recognized channels of communication. Compared with the authoritarian administrative style of most previous administrations, this more humanistic approach is no doubt an improvement. However, running a workplace using the traditional model of running a family may not make it less authoritarian by nature, and more importantly, it does not remove the sources of teachers' grievances. Tensions between teachers and administration that have resulted from the long-standing centralized decision-making process at all levels in the university remain unresolved. Therefore, it is unlikely that this will lead to fundamental improvements in social relationships or in governing the department in the long run.

In sum, despite the temporary improvement in administrative style at the department level, great tensions in social relationships between teachers and administrators, and between administrators at the two levels persist. The tremendous loss of intellectual assets from the universities, the official pragmatic approach to higher education, the pressures on teachers and universities to make money, administrative inefficiency, and the misguided emphasis on increasing efficiency purely through administrative measures--all these and other such problems have contributed to the loss of confidence in and support for administration by teachers. Yet, these problems remain unattended and sometimes even unrecognized.

Some opt for more democratic procedures, particularly in

the selection of the chief administrative officers of the university, as a major step toward solving the problems of the university:

I think there is a lot of room to improve our system of selecting candidates for leading positions. People are often chosen based on their personal relationships with current administrators rather than their quality and competence. If only we could have democratic elections. (A)

I learned from the newspaper that, as an experiment, the President [of a particular university] was elected by the teachers themselves. I hope this will also happen in our university. Our President has been in the position too long...Under this system, none of the people in leadership positions fulfil the will of the people....For university presidents to be elected through teachers' vote rather than by the will of the authorities is a positive step. (JT)

In spite of popular demand for changes in the official personnel management policy, elections appear to be unlikely in the near future. The experiment of electing the President at that particular university as covered by a media report in early 1995 (Song 1) remains just that, an isolated experiment.

This fact is recognized by some. One senior teacher made it clear that there are no easy or immediate solutions. Based on his analysis, he could forecast only stagnation in the leadership of higher education:

From the point of view of the government, so long as education does not face immediate grave consequences like other social spheres that are confronted with many far more menacing problems, so long as it can keep going without serious trouble or imminent danger, it's all right. Therefore, [the authorities] are likely to choose people for leadership positions who are able to maintain the status quo, thus leaving the many problems in education unattended. Consequently, people in

leadership positions at various levels of education tend to do just what they are told to do. That's why you often find so many people who are not as capable and creative as their positions demand; yet they are very much liked by the authorities at higher levels....Because of all these considerations, it's very unlikely that there will be any serious or drastic changes in higher education. (ST)

CHAPTER 8

UNIVERSITY TEACHING: WHY BOTHER?

I have discussed the major issues that emerged from the interviews, namely, the lack of financial security for teachers, opportunities from other sectors in society, the centralized decision-making process at all levels of the university, and the deteriorating social relationships in the university. All these have exerted a great impact on the life and work of university teachers. The ways in which teachers are viewed by others, the ways they spend their time, and their attitudes and behaviours toward teaching have all been deeply affected. It is these three areas that are discussed in this chapter.

The Esteem in which Teaching is Held

The all-prevailing concern for money in the university affects, to a great extent, the judgements made in society about teachers. The fact that over the years teachers' salaries have remained lower than the average income of people in other sectors has created a mentality in society that those working in education are not worth much.

According to the policy set by SEC in 1992, a university teacher is expected to teach between 6 and 9 hours a week depending on rank, with an average teacher/student ratio of 1:6.5. For every extra hour taught beyond this quota, the

teacher should receive recognition in the form of a monetary reward. With a rapidly growing student enrolment against a very serious brain drain since 1978, it has become normal, although not necessarily voluntary, for almost all teachers in the department under study to teach many overload hours. However, the efforts by teachers to meet the demands of the students and the department over the years have not been sufficiently recognized. Many teacher participants expressed concern about the lack of respect for their work:

There is no comparison between what we make from [a particular non-curriculum program] and what we get for the extra teaching workload in the department. The university pays less than 3 yuan for an hour, and it has remained like that for so many years! How can you expect teachers to have any initiative for anything with this kind of pay rate? (ST)

The value officially assigned to the extra hours of work is extremely offensive to the teachers. As a result, in spite of the fact that improvements are urgently needed in the areas of teaching methodology, curriculum development and teaching materials, little effort was being made by teachers in any of these areas when this research was conducted. Many senior teachers were very conscious of the little time left to them before they retired compared to the great amount of work needed if any improvements were to be made in any aspect of teaching practice in the department. However, the official appraisal of the worth of their work, as indicated by the level of their incomes, has deterred many teachers from directing their thoughts and their time to improving teaching.

The lack of respect by the official policy-makers greatly saddens the older teachers, for whom teaching has represented a life-long commitment.

Even up to this day, SEC keeps paying only 5 yuan for any extra teaching hour a teacher does, a rate that has been unchanged for the last twenty years! If that's the value of a teacher's intellectual work, how do you expect anyone else to show any respect for our labour? This is only one small example. I remember when we invited a retired staff member back to work in our department. She told me that the money she got from us was not as much as what she had paid her household helper. They are hurting people by paying such a low rate for our work....I find that SEC itself doesn't trust intellectuals, nor does it care about the concerns of the teachers....It's not uncommon for those young employees who work in SEC's administrative offices to lecture professors who go there on university administrative business. I've heard a lot of stories like this. (ST)

Noticing a discrepancy in the official rate cited by the two teachers for the value of their work, I decided to look into the matter. This is what I learned from an administrator:

It was valued to be worth 2.50 yuan an hour by SEC a long time ago, and has remained so up to now. It was the department which decided to double the value of the teachers' work out of its own resources....there's no official budget for that....But even when a teacher's extra hour of work is valued at...5 yuan, there is a four or five times difference between teaching in the department and teaching in other non-curricular programs....It was decided, starting from the second half of 1994, that the department...[would] reduce the difference....Even if it could only increase the rate...to 10 or 15 yuan for each extra teaching hour, it's a way of encouraging more commitment to teaching in the department rather than in non-curricular programs. Otherwise, when people have some time and energy to do more work, they will naturally take up more hours in non-curricular programs because they pay more. As a result, it's

often very hard to find replacements for teachers in cases of emergency, and this is bound to have a negative effect on the quality of teaching. (A)

I learned later that the department receives 2.50 yuan per hour from SEC each year for a standard number of overload work hours, regardless of how many hours are actually taught. In fact, the sum total paid by SEC is far from adequate to cover all the extra hours worked. As a result, the department has to "figure out within the amount of money [given by SEC] how much is to be used each semester to pay for the extra work taken up by the teachers" (A). According to this administrator, if SEC were to give the department more money, "of course the average rate for the teachers would increase." This means that the value of a teacher's work is dependent upon the amount of money allotted to them by SEC. Even when the department increased the rate for extra hours using its own resources, this did not make the teachers feel more appreciated, because the department was using the revenue generated from their teaching in the non-curricular programs to foot the bill which was supposed to be paid by the government. To the teachers, this means, in effect, that they are paying themselves for the extra work they do by the money they bring in through teaching in these non-curricular programs. For the department, it is the only source they have to increase the monetary reward to encourage more commitment to teaching in the regular curriculum. For SEC, by not changing the rate of a teacher's work in spite of the

tremendous price hikes in the intervening 15 years, it is sending a clear message to all teachers that their work is not valued much by the government.

The lack of official appreciation for the extra time and effort given by the teachers has not only contributed to, but indeed confirmed the low esteem held toward the teaching profession by society as a whole. When this attitude is compared to the traditional respect in which university teachers were held, the contrast is stunning. As we have seen, scholars were revered in old China, but then, the downgrading of university teachers in the political campaigns during many years of the socialist revolution took its toll on the reputation of teachers. It plummeted even further with the arrival of the market economy, where the worth of a person is reduced to the size of his or her paycheck. Because of teachers' low salaries and resulting low esteem in society, teaching--a once glorious career--is now looked down upon.

Both the teacher and administrator participants expressed serious concern about this public sentiment.

Improving the political status of teachers not only means giving them opportunities to join the Party or honouring them with the title of "model teachers". It should mean imbuing teachers with the confidence that being a teacher in this society is a respectable profession. But now teaching is regarded as an occupation that anybody can do when they fail in their effort to find something more desirable. Very often, when people talk about someone who has not made it in their chosen career, the conversation ends up like this: "Well, if nothing works out, s/he will become a teacher...If s/he can't make it as a high school teacher, s/he can at least become an elementary school teacher."

(laugh) You see, teaching is often treated as a last resort for someone who fails in their first choice of a career, and it's not an uncommon thought that when the worst happens, the person will still be able to become a teacher. But it also implies that being a teacher is equivalent of being incapable or unpromising. (ST)

Another participant observed:

Now when you meet old acquaintances, the first sentence in the conversation will be: "Oh, you are still teaching? *Ni zhen laoshi!*" [How complaisant you are!] It sounds like those who are still teaching are not capable of doing anything else, or they just don't have the connections to help them out...This has created such a misleading image. There are many wrong perceptions concerning teaching now...Being a teacher is always related to the idea of being poor and a drudge, and behaving like a book-worm....If these wrong perceptions are not changed, teaching as a profession will never attract the best people in the society. (A)

With the government policy that rewards teachers with low pay and the negative social attitudes toward teachers feeding on each other, teaching as a profession is held in lower and lower esteem. Teachers are victims of an ever diminishing respect and appreciation from both government and society, in spite of the hard work they devote to their profession and the crucial contribution they make to society.

The Promotion Policy for University Teachers

The promotion policy in higher education is a crucial indicator of the academic priorities of a university. As academic rank determines a teacher's income, housing, medical

coverage and many other benefits,⁹⁷ promotion is one of the few major concerns that is shared by teachers from all age groups.

With a higher academic rank, your salary moves up automatically to a scale that makes all the difference. With the salary reform introduced not long ago, there is a greater difference in salaries within and between the ranks of professors and associate professors. Once you are promoted from an associate professor to a full professor, you are moved up to a higher scale with all kinds of differences: in housing, salary, medical treatment, everything. A full professor still in a two-bedroom apartment will have priority over an associate professor when there is a limited number of three-bedroom apartments available...So when academic rank is closely linked with one's financial and welfare conditions, it's taken very seriously by all teachers. (A)

The three most important issues concerning promotion policies in universities are: a quota on the number of people promoted; the recommendation and selection process; and research as a criterion for promotion. The discussion that follows focuses on the emphasis on research over teaching in qualifying candidates for promotion. Since the mid-1980s, an increasing emphasis has been given to research publications rather than teaching performance in the promotion policies in all universities.⁹⁸ As for the university under study,

⁹⁷ According to an administrator I interviewed, academic rank in Chinese universities is related to 28 different benefits in a person's life.

⁹⁸ Under the Soviet model, research work was mainly carried out by specific research institutes under the Academy of Sciences. Many universities, even the leading ones in an area, did not necessarily have a strong tradition in research. Before the mid-1980s, the main criteria for promotion were: first seniority, and then quality of teaching. Therefore,

[it] is traditionally quite weak in terms of research. Many teachers are not used to doing research. Many have taught all their lives; yet they haven't produced much research in their field...It only shows that we haven't paid enough attention to research work. Therefore, some of our teachers hardly have any chance for promotion before they retire. (A)

Consequently, tremendous efforts have been made by the university administration to encourage more research among the teachers. One administrator made it quite clear that it would not do if teachers had only so many hours of teaching to show for their good work, and that "without presentable research...there is little chance for anyone to be considered for promotion" (A). As one would expect, the pressure for more research has been most strongly felt by teachers in the junior and middle-aged groups:

It looks like [the administration] is paying more attention to research now. At least they make you feel pressured by setting up your research work files, and checking on your progress in research, etc. I don't remember having as much pressure in 1990 and 1991 as I do now. Now you can feel the pressure more often. Meanwhile they offer some token prizes for those who are doing well in research...For each piece of published work, you get 10 yuan from the department.... If someone gets 30 yuan more than you do this term, it means she or he does more research than you do...they make you feel this pressure. You are supposed to file an annual report of your academic progress every year, including the areas of your teaching, research,

many university teachers were promoted to the senior academic ranks with few research publications. Most of them spent virtually all their working time in classroom teaching and teaching related activities, such as curriculum development, preparation of teaching materials, and learning from each other through discussion and observing each other's teaching. To be considered a good teacher was a source of great pride.

public service, etc. This report becomes reference material for your future application for promotion and research funding. (MT)

Thanks to the new promotion policy and the increasing administrative pressure to do more research, more and more teachers engage in whatever might be deemed as research projects, and indeed, there was a remarkable increase in published research in the department under study in 1994 compared with 1993⁹⁹ (Table 2):

Table 2

Publication Statistics for the Department under Study for 1993 and 1994

Year	Books	Textbooks	Edited works	Translated works	Essays/Articles
1993	0	2	3	9	18/6
1994	7	16	12	24	23/30

Source: Research Division of the University under Study.

Although it is claimed that the reason research work is the major criterion for promotion is that it serves to improve classroom teaching, it remains an open issue whether an increase in publications has any positive impact on teaching in the department. Judging from the views of the participants, the opposite appears to be the case. While it is not my intention to discredit the promotion policy or the importance of research emphasis in universities, it is worth

No statistics were available before 1993.

finding out why the increased research emphasis in the department has not brought about significant improvements in teaching as expected. The promotion policy also calls for more attention when quality teaching is reduced to a level where it is virtually insignificant in deliberations about a teacher's qualifications for promotion.

Administrators and teachers have many concerns about the promotion policy. However, whether research work has actually promoted better teaching is all but absent from their concerns. This is not to suggest that all research must be teaching related to be valuable. The problem is, rather, that teachers must now give a great deal of time to research. Because of this and the pressing need for them to make money at other paying projects, their time is becoming increasingly precious and scarce, with less and less of it being available for teaching preparation and other teaching related activities.

The administrators interviewed emphasize the lack of motivation among teachers to do more research, whereas the teachers are more concerned about how to put their names "in print".

There are quite a number of senior teachers who are very rich in teaching experience, with a lot of students to show for it, but rather weak in research experience, with few publications to present when it comes time for promotion. Some slacken their research work soon after they have been promoted....It's a problem that has been found across all departments, not only in [the one under study]. (A)

There are a lot of teachers who don't want to be engaged in research work, because it's not only hard, but one can't make much money by *pa ge zi* [crawling over the squares].¹⁰⁰ It will take a number of years to get a book of this size [gesturing] published, and you get about 10,000 yuan for it. Considering the time and energy you have put into the book, this 10,000 yuan is nothing. So it is not as easy and fast as getting the same amount of money by doing something else. It's natural for people to weigh different projects and choose what is easier and faster for them in order to get the money they need to live on. (A)

It is true, as the administrators say, that the teachers are not motivated to do research. When commercialism rules universities, promotion for doing research is just another uphill battle, as indicated by the observations of this teacher:

I don't think it's worthwhile to do scholarly work nowadays. It takes so much energy and time to write a book, but how much do you get from it and how much does the publisher get from it? And how much does the agent get from your book? A Ph.D. student got 20,000 yuan for a book he had laboured through for years, and he felt so very grateful for the money. But the agent and the publisher got at least 200,000 or 300,000 from it or maybe even 1,000,000. Otherwise, those people would not have taken him as their client in the first place, not if they didn't see at least 200,000 yuan in it. You can't think about these things. [They are too infuriating.] (ST)

Many teachers choose not to think about these things. Nonetheless, they want to see their names in print so that they will have something presentable when they are being

¹⁰⁰ Standard Chinese paper pads are filled with squares for characters. Anyone who prepares a manuscript for publication in Chinese fills one square after another with Chinese characters. The phrase suggests a slow, tedious process.

considered for promotion. But as the university becomes more individually and less collectively oriented, it is entirely up to each teacher's connections and competence in the field to look for his or her own research projects. Consequently, while professors may, because of their fame and seniority, have more research projects proposed to them than they can possibly handle, many junior teachers do not have any idea where to begin to get or develop such projects.

I do care about research, but I can't do much about it. I have to wait till I'm over forty to get my turn to be published and promoted. In addition, I don't have the ability and the seniority to do as many research projects now. So if the department can engage us young teachers in some research, and create conditions that encourage the professors to get the young people involved in their research work, there could be benefits for both sides. The young teachers are not incapable of doing research, but we lack experience and guidance. (JT)

The publishing house is not so receptive to stuff the younger teachers produce unless it's recommended by a well-established somebody. Without that, the publisher will challenge you in every aspect...But when it comes to something produced by a more established person, or someone like a president of a university, he will get anything he writes published just because of his name....I'm not confident about getting something published without any recommendation from the senior teachers. (JT)

It is clear that, for many teachers, research means any publications that will put their names in print. However, just about anything other than research on teaching is easier to sell and draws a higher price. The teachers, therefore, do not have much choice but to take on whatever is proposed to them by the publishers.

When you have no other choice, you have to take whatever project will get your name in print, even if you're not interested in the subject. Thus, so-called research is just for the sake of getting publications, or having your name attached to a research report so that you will have something to show for your future promotion. I have to do whatever I'm offered. There should be some systematic research plans in the department as well as organized teams for doing various research projects. For people in our age group...this is a major worry. (JT)

As a result of this pressure, one finds all kinds of publications listed under the names of candidates for promotion, and there is a much greater variety of books on the market than ever before. However, few of these publications are related to teaching and often not even to the areas or topics taught by those who did the research. Thus, not much of a positive impact on teaching has accompanied the drastic increase in publications. According to a young teacher,

Now nobody wants to do practical research about teaching as it takes a lot of time to look for...supplementary materials for class...It's considered to be a waste of time, because it's not as impressive as...publishing an article in a journal. Very few people are doing serious research about teaching. Not even senior teachers. I don't think they're interested in making their courses more effective...or improving things. Since these efforts are not counted as research results, why would people want to spend their time on them? (JT)

Many teachers told me that there had been little change in the area of teaching in the previous few years in spite of all the changes in other aspects of life in the university. Although a few teachers have come back from abroad after finishing their degree programs, according to one participant,

their main concern upon returning was to get things published so that they would be well prepared when it came to consideration for promotion. Therefore, "they don't have much concern about the quality of the teaching materials or even their own teaching" (MT).

As disheartening as it is for most teachers, all of them seem to be aware that their teaching and related activities are undervalued:

Practically speaking, when it comes to promotion, only your publications count. You will have nothing, even if you have been a good teacher all your life. Nobody will give you as much credit for it as for a couple of books you have published. I guess you won't find many people if you are looking for those who spend a lot of time on improving their teaching these days. (JT)

Consequently, even though many teachers recognize the need for improvement in teaching and know what should be done to bring it about, they do not bother with it, because it will not be appreciated, because their time is so limited, and because good teaching will come to nothing at promotion time.

After teaching seven or eight years, I feel somehow fed up with it, doing the same stuff again and again. But I don't want to put in my time and energy for any change in my teaching as it is useless and without any rewards. If I could get something published from my efforts to change, o.k., but it's impossible, so it's...a waste of time and energy....The best choice is to follow convention and do whatever other people do. (JT)

When asked for their views on the overall quality of teaching during the previous few years, all teacher participants could list problems that needed to be addressed. Although an administrator claimed that "there has not been

much of a downslide in the quality of teaching in our university," the teachers were in strong agreement that there, indeed, were serious problems in teaching that had gone unattended for several years.

We keep getting complaints from the students that they don't like this or that course. I'm not sure if it's a problem of our curriculum, or methodology, or teaching materials, but there have been a lot of complaints. (MT)

There is no serious thinking or discussion about teaching, nor are there any model teachers for the others in terms of commitment to the profession. There are hardly any in the senior teachers' group....There are a lot of problems with our texts and our curriculum. It's a very limited and narrowly focused curriculum....There is little connection between each grade and little communication among teachers about the progress of the students from each grade....We are failing to motivate the students' enthusiasm for learning. (MT)

It is clear to everyone with some teaching experience that there are problems in teaching in this department which deserve serious efforts if there is to be any improvement. The theoretical relationship between the importance of research and its potentially positive impact on teaching dictates that these problems in teaching should be among the areas targeted for research. But given the weight of administrative pressure for more research of any kind, the problems in teaching remain unattended. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that it is more difficult to do the research necessary to correct problems in teaching than it is to work on certain kinds of essays or books or other projects that require relatively little time and effort for quick

publication. If the problems in education are to be corrected, there are no shortcuts. A great deal of time and energy will need to be invested by many people, because such work often requires a collective effort. Efforts to improve teaching might not only be more challenging; they also might not be as tangible, observable or impressive as publications in print. Consequently, faced with a promotion policy that counts publications but does not reward efforts in teaching, plus great financial insecurity and other immediate needs, teachers, not surprisingly, do not have much initiative to conduct research on teaching or to do a good job in teaching.

The present promotion policy, while legitimately claiming the importance of research work for the quality of a university, has effectively diverted people's attention away from teachers' basic task: teaching. With teachers facing so many problems in life, the lack of recognition through promotion for doing a good job as a teacher has greatly contributed to the diminished quality of teaching and to the teachers' diminished commitment to their profession. The upshot of the promotion policy, if left unadjusted, is that it will continue to encourage self-serving advancement through an emphasis on publications rather than the advancement of students through an emphasis on high quality teaching.

Teachers' Commitment to Their Profession

It is clear from the previous chapters, and from discussions in this chapter on the low esteem accorded to teachers and on the university promotion policy that the university setting under commercial influences has not been conducive to teachers' commitment to their profession. Many teachers conclude that there is no point in exerting themselves to improve teaching. But what and how exactly are the teachers doing in their routine, daily teaching work? To what extent have the issues under study influenced the teachers' commitment to their profession? I looked for answers to these questions through my interviews with the teachers themselves and through a survey which sought out the perceptions of all the third-year students in the department under study about the work of their teachers.

In this survey, I approached the assessment of teachers' commitment using three indices: teachers' expertise in the field; their interest and competence in teaching; and teacher-student relationships.¹⁰¹ For teachers' expertise in their subject areas, the statements focused on teachers' interest in the subject, their command of the subject, their ability to answer questions and to provide adequate references, and their

¹⁰¹ The students were presented with 40 statements. For most of the survey, they were asked to rank the statements on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A few statements contained a blank which they were to fill in using a scale from none to most. The remaining several statements called for responses ranging from very unimportant to very important.

willingness to allow their ideas to be challenged and to allow different views to be discussed in class.¹⁰² For teachers' interest and competence in teaching, there were statements concerning teachers' interest in being good teachers, their preparation for teaching, and their interest in and use of new approaches or methods in their teaching. For teacher-student relationships, the statements concerned teachers' availability to students, their willingness to give individual help after class, and teacher-student rapport. Finally, to get their overall evaluation of their teachers, I included statements about how they feel about their classes, how they and their teachers would judge teachers' capabilities and view the need for improvements, and their opinions about their teachers' commitment to their profession. (See Appendix 5 for results of the questionnaire.¹⁰³)

¹⁰² Teaching style in China has traditionally been and remains teacher centred and quite uniform. Therefore, students would almost certainly relate statements about teachers' willingness to allow their ideas to be challenged and to allow different views to be discussed to the teachers' level of knowledge of their fields. Since the teachers' authority in the classroom is unquestioned (which is not to say that teachers are authoritarian), it is highly unlikely that students would interpret such statements as having anything to do with challenging the teachers' right to be in charge.

¹⁰³ All responses to the survey are fully reported in Appendix 5. However, I have not included an analysis in the text for all 40 statements for several reasons. It frequently happens that responses to similar statements confirm each other, and it is not always useful to repeat them all. By contrast, some responses to similar statements contradict each other. These are omitted because they cannot be considered reliable. Finally, since designing the survey, some of my concerns have shifted as a result of issues that emerged

In addition to the student survey, designed around these three areas, I combed through my interviews with the teachers for their views on these and related issues. Several questions in the interviews focused on their work as teachers, and one asked specifically for their assessment of their commitment to teaching (see Appendix 1). It is to be borne in mind that, unlike the survey, which targeted one particular issue--teachers' commitment--the interviews were much broader in scope and much greater in depth. Therefore, the teachers spoke about their actual teaching work and their feelings about it in a number of other contexts as well. Because the focus and the format of the survey and the interviews were so different, they did not yield precisely the same kinds of information, nor in the same forms. Consequently, direct comparisons are not always possible. But neither are they necessary. My goal here, which is to gain and provide some insights about teachers' commitment to their profession--teaching--will hopefully be achieved by presenting relevant information in the same forms in which it was presented to me, and by interpreting and analysing it.

Expertise in the Field

A very large majority of the students (89.7% and 85.1%) made it clear that they consider it important or very

during interviews, thus rendering some statements less relevant.

important for teachers to know their subjects well (Items 34 and 37 respectively). About the same percentage (86.6%) felt that their teachers did, in fact, have a good command of their subjects (1). However, when the statements were more specific, the responses were less positive. Less than two thirds (63.8%) believed that when they had questions concerning the subject they were studying, their teachers would be able to answer them (5) and nearly half (46.5%) did not think their teachers provided appropriate references for the subjects brought up in class (4). Indeed, only 54.3% thought their teachers demonstrated great interest in their subject (2), an indication that the teachers' many distractions from teaching, or even from other kinds of work in their field have resulted in a noticeable lessening of interest in their subjects. All in all, these figures do not represent a very encouraging vote of confidence in the teachers' expertise.

In contrast to the students' views, I heard a great deal of self-confidence in the teachers' voices when they discussed this topic, especially those teachers who had studied abroad during the 1980s and 90s. Almost all the teachers in the young and middle-aged groups, most of whom had studied abroad, thought that the experience had helped them develop greater expertise in their field. Some saw it as an "indispensable" condition for them to begin teaching at an advanced level in the department.

All the young teachers who have been teaching graduate level courses in the department have studied overseas. Their experiences abroad have helped build up others' confidence in them as well. It broadened my horizons and let me learn about what is going on in the field. I began to have clear ideas about what I should do and how to go about doing research work when I come back to China. It was a great stimulation to my academic development as I knew what was out there and what to do to pursue my career in the future. I felt myself much better informed academically. (MT)

The one year abroad changed my fate in the university. ...I went to [a particular country in the West] to study [a particular subject]. I came back to join the program and started graduate courses in that area. It didn't take me long to develop confidence in teaching courses in that area. So when I came back from abroad, I had the degree, the confidence to teach a special subject...I had an area of interest for my career development. I knew where to put my energy and time for further study. (JT)

The responses to experiences abroad was phenomenally positive. In addition to professional development, some said that the experiences in a different culture enabled them to develop a more diversified world perspective, which they believe has contributed significantly to their becoming, not only more knowledgeable in their field, but also the competent teachers they see themselves to be.

Interest and Competence in Teaching

On the subject of teachers' interest in teaching, 82.6% of the students agreed with the general statement that their teachers were interested in doing a good job (24). This is consistent with the teachers' own assessment of their interest in teaching. It is noteworthy that when I asked the teachers

to describe their greatest satisfactions and frustrations in life and work, most of the experiences they talked about were related to teaching. The following comments show that teaching is more than something that just "interests" them. It constitutes a source of happiness:

To me, when I start a new course and am well prepared for it before each session, and when I get the result I hoped for in class and find the students feel rewarded, I feel gratified. That is a very happy moment. (JT)

I want to have some communication with the students, to establish a small world in the classroom where people can communicate with one another in the common pursuit of something...I have succeeded, to some extent, and sometimes...it's not only an exchange of ideas on the textual content, but communication at a deeper level, on something more philosophical that has been brought up by the texts. And there is an exchange of views on issues of common interest between the students and me...When I find this common desire with the students to search for something unknown, I feel very happy, and the students feel like they are accomplishing something too, as they see that they are respected in the discussion, and that they can communicate with the teacher. (JT)

Some teachers explained how their successes have made teaching meaningful to them:

When I find that I have evoked responses from students in class, when I see them thinking along the right track, and when I find them working very hard to keep up with the new knowledge and to move ahead...I see the meaning of my work. (ST)

I like teaching first-year students who are serious about their learning. They take you as a mentor to enlighten them, and they learn a whole lot from you, from personal philosophy to interpersonal relationships, and I enjoy talking more about these matters with them. It makes me feel at least that what I have committed myself to has been appreciated, is having some effect on the students,

and is worthwhile. (JT)

It is rather interesting to see that while the junior teachers have expressed great dissatisfaction with their experiences on campus, many of them are not completely disillusioned with their choice of teaching as their career. As the above quotations show, they still identify positive teaching experiences as a major source of happiness in their lives. One of them compared the positive feelings that resulted from teaching and other academic accomplishments with the unpleasantness of the experience of working primarily for material benefits:

When I stepped out of class where I got a good response from the students, when the students showed their enthusiasm for my teaching, when they showed their interest in participating in my class, I felt such a delightful relief....Also, when I was on my way to hand in my manuscripts to a publishing house, I was so very happy. It was so different from how I felt when I received 15,000 yuan after I finished [a non-curricular project]. When they gave me the money...I was so tired from working...for days from 8:30 in the morning till 7 in the evening with only a short lunch break in between. I was exhausted when the day was over, too exhausted to feel happy about it. It was so different from the happiness I felt when I finished a very successful class or when I finished my six months of hard work on a manuscript for publication, which meant such a thick stack of papers [gesturing]. It was indeed a very different feeling...It was like a cool breeze on a steaming hot day, but the other one was like hot air blowing around, which might be better than no air, but it doesn't help much at all. (JT)

It would be inaccurate to conclude that all teaching experiences are a source of satisfaction. In recalling their most frustrating experiences in work and life, the teachers

again focused heavily on experiences that were teaching-related:

I am most frustrated when I teach [a particular course]. When the students don't finish the reading assignments, they leave me as the only person in the classroom not only to ask the questions, but to answer them as well. They then say to me afterwards, "Don't be angry with us, teacher; it's like this in every other course. We are just not interested in what we learn."...What can you do? Sometimes I get so upset that I have no appetite for lunch at all after class. (JT)

Well, there are too many frustrations in life to talk about...Once, a Ph.D. student came to my class without doing the reading assignment. Another time, a class discussion was interrupted by the beeps of a pager, which meant that the student, though sitting in the classroom, was still worrying about his business. I was very upset by this. (ST)

Nevertheless, even comments such as these indicate that the teachers are quite involved with their teaching, and that it is still a major source of interest in life. While the positive experiences they have had in the classroom add some psychological comfort to their hard lives, the frustrating experiences in the classroom make their lives even more miserable. Either way, they do seem to care a great deal.

Returning for a moment to the students' views, as we have seen, at a general and rather abstract level, they credit their teachers with being interested in doing a good job. However, as with their opinions of their teachers' expertise, the picture is sometimes less rosy when viewed more specifically and concretely. A great many of the students (62.2%) were of the opinion that their teachers rarely tried different teaching methods in class (15). Indeed, only 5.5%

were willing to say that their teachers were even interested in exploring new methods (7)! The teachers' point of view here is somewhat different. Many say they would like to explore new teaching methods, but--and here they agree with the students--few actually do. This, I think, can be seen as the result of three factors. First, an obvious one, their lack of time and energy. Another relates to the fact that traditional teaching methodology has remained unchallenged for decades. Therefore, the introduction of alternative approaches would entail tremendous efforts on the part of both teachers and students. Thirdly, as there has been hardly any emphasis on teaching since the late 1970s, few teachers have the inclination to explore new teaching methods, even if they were exposed to them while studying abroad. Changing teaching methods is neither on the teachers' agenda, nor is it a central concern of the administration.

On the question of teaching preparation, the students and teachers again had different opinions, but this time the students' view was more favourable. Most students (70.1%) thought that their teachers came to class well prepared, with only 3.1% dissenting from that view (9). The teachers, however, admit that they no longer spend nearly as much time preparing for their teaching as they used to. One clear example of this is the fact that the weekly work meetings of the past, where teachers discussed their problems in teaching, no longer take place. One participant observed:

It's getting worse and worse in teaching...Years ago we were still serious about collective preparation for class activities, and we had some guidance from the experienced teachers....Even in 1993, the experienced teachers took the lead in the group for class preparations, and I learned a lot from them. But now there are only young teachers in the group, and they all mind their own business. As [a particular teacher] said, and rightly so, "Now it's enough for me to keep doing my job here. How can they expect me to do anything more considering the kind of treatment I get?!" It's quite amazing that teachers like us still go to classes on time, never miss our classes, and go over students' homework seriously. We still try our best to do a good job in teaching because of our conscience. (JT)

Although most of the teachers are conscientious about their teaching responsibilities, it sometimes happens that teachers are irresponsible. This has been known to occasionally go beyond being insufficiently prepared for class. According to one participant, teachers are sometimes late for class or take unacceptable shortcuts with their students. "I learned from the students that in [a particular course], their teacher just left a videotape for the students to watch without giving them any guidance or help they might need" (ST). An administrator told me about the extreme and, thankfully, unusual case of a teacher who once left the students in the classroom to go home to receive the new refrigerator he had ordered.

Teacher-Student Relationship

It is in the area of teachers' availability that the students indicated the greatest dissatisfaction about the work

of their teachers. They felt that they simply did not have enough access to their teachers when they were in need of help. Although 80.3% thought that a good teacher is always ready to help students (38), almost an equal number (78.8%) claimed that few teachers hold office hours after class (16), and nearly two-thirds (65.4%) said that they could see their teachers only in class (19). Almost none saw their teachers as taking the initiative to help: only a shockingly low 6.3% of the students surveyed agreed that their teachers would offer help after class, even when students were having difficulties understanding the materials being taught (11).

Not only is inaccessibility the area where the students found their teachers most lacking; it represents perhaps the most obvious change in teacher-student relationships over the years. Before the early 1980s, it was very common for students to have frequent and easy interaction with their teachers outside of class. Teachers used to be the first people from whom students sought help when they had difficulties, not only in their studies, but even in their personal relationships. At the time of this study, however, only 56.7% of the students felt that they could turn to their teachers for help (10), while 77.2% said they often turned to their fellow students when they were having difficulties with their studies (21).

This great change in teachers' accessibility does not seem to have influenced teacher-student rapport as much as one

might have expected: 57.5% of the students still think that most of their teachers get along with the students, and another 11.8% feel that many of them do (30). At the same time, this, admittedly, is not a resounding affirmation of students' satisfaction with their teachers' connection to them.

Overall Evaluation

At a more general level, the survey reveals clear dissatisfaction. Not a single student disagreed with the statement that a good teacher motivates students to learn more (40). Unfortunately, however, many of them apparently do not feel so motivated: although only 18.9% of the students agreed with the statement that after class, they have the feeling that they have not learned much, almost half of them (44.9%) were noncommittal, leaving only 36.2% to disagree (6). A related statement yielded results that were not very dissimilar: to the statement, "I am satisfied with my classes and the performance of my teachers," 35.4% disagreed and 33.9% were noncommittal, with a mere 30.7% in agreement (13). Worse yet, a paltry 16.5% judged most of the teachers they have had as good teachers (31), and when it comes to teachers improving their work, only 5.5% of the students disagreed with the statement that there was a great need for improvement in the performance of their teachers (27)! Yet, as great as the students see the need for improvement to be, only 24.4% could

disagree with: "My teachers are not keen on improving their teaching" (23). Even the annual evaluations of teachers do not serve to improve teaching in the eyes of most students: 56.7% thought they did not, and most of the rest, 36.2%, claimed neutrality or uncertainly, or did not answer. This left only 7.1% who thought otherwise (26). Perhaps this is because, at least from the students' perspective, teachers seem to be quite content with their teaching (25); not even one student strongly disagreed with this statement, and only 3.1% disagreed at all. Interestingly, most, 61.4%, chose not to say much on the topic, choosing "neutral" or "not sure". However, when it came to the most general statement of all, the students seemed to be more generous-spirited. To the statement, "Of all the teachers I have had, ___ of them are committed to their profession"(32), 63% responded "most" or "many".

Given what the teachers have reported about the relentless pressures on their time and energy, it should come as no surprise that they received such low marks from their students, particularly on statements dealing with overall assessments. And indeed, many of the teachers are also not happy with their performance. As for efforts to improve their teaching, most admit that they do little about it. Some young teachers find it absurd to even talk about improving teaching when their basic interests and needs are so grossly neglected by the administration. Others, however, feel that they simply

do not have the energy or the expertise to improve teaching even if they want to.

[The administrators] all know about the problems in [a particular course], but I guess it's hard to gather people to start working on it...The teachers for the course this term are themselves new graduates. It's the two of them, plus two graduate assistants. It's hard enough to keep the course going using the materials available. The same is true with [another particular course]...[Some] courses are just kept going with almost no experienced teachers. Under these conditions, when all the teachers are exhausted from what they have to do in teaching, you have no energy left to select materials, especially when you don't get a very supportive or positive response...from the administrators. (JT)

Another participant, who is responsible for some administrative work connected to teaching, explained:

We are short of hands, so who has the time to worry about the quality of teaching? It's good enough to just keep the classes going. In our teaching group, I have to be the fire-fighter all along, taking the place of one teacher who is sick today and another teacher who is away on business tomorrow. I don't have any time to pay attention to the quality of teaching, no time. (JT)

In addition to the lack of experienced teachers, the lack of time and motivation, and the lack of administrative support, the tendency to maintain the status quo also makes changes in teaching unwelcome to many teachers.

I'm working on the teaching materials we have been using.¹⁰⁴...You work day and night to produce something new, and then you run into opposition from every direction, because you've challenged some people's means of existence--the materials they've been using and are so familiar with.

¹⁰⁴ Teachers in this department often use textbooks and other teaching materials that have been prepared by teams of teachers in the department.

You're not getting any positive feedback even though you have worked your head off. (ST)

Sometimes it can be dangerous to even suggest that changes are needed. This same senior teacher said:

The students have been complaining about [the teaching materials]. So improving on them has long been an issue under consideration. But who is to do the actual work?...When I said we need to change, it became my job to compile new teaching materials. (ST)

We have seen quite a bit of agreement in the many critical and self-critical statements and analyses made by teachers about numerous aspects of their work as teachers and their problems in trying to make improvements. However, when it comes to questioning their commitment to their profession, there seems to be less agreement among them. Many of the senior and middle-aged teachers think that their commitment to teaching has not been very much affected by all the economic and social changes and by the great pressures on them. In their view, the problem lies with the excessive demands made on them. As for the young teachers, it is generally recognized that many have less concern about the matter of commitment to teaching. It is not a very important issue to them. It must be borne in mind that the young teachers live in a different world from the one their older counterparts inhabited for most of their lives. They face a different reality. Because they have less comparative experience than the older teachers, who taught during a time when deep commitment was valued and normal, it is hard for them to

understand what real professional responsibility means, let alone to be committed to it.

Although their diminished commitment to the profession is yet to be fully recognized by many teachers, the following observation by one middle-aged participant captures what I think has really happened to them since 1993:

I don't think teachers are as committed to teaching as they used to be....Mainly because there are more and more other opportunities. You have many choices for projects...to make money. These opportunities from other institutions in society provide better...rewards. You can do it on a part-time basis...It shows on the one hand more opportunities for us teachers thanks to the economic reforms...but on the other hand, it means more distractions for teachers from their own commitment to teaching. That's the negative side of it....For instance, you used to spend two hours trying to work on one problem; now you can't. A lot of your time has to be spent on things other than preparation for teaching. I can feel the difference in my commitment to teaching. I am sure others also feel the same way. I'm sure people will admit that they aren't as committed to teaching as they used to be ten years ago. (MT)

Given the numerous pressures in the university setting, most teachers simply do not have much choice but to treat teaching as a job to be completed as they prepare to do a second and third job. Where responsibility to teaching and to society once suffused everyday life, necessity now demands a utilitarian calculation of time. There is hardly room in their lives for dedication or commitment to their profession.

It is no surprise that the most successful adaptation to the dismal conditions described in these pages is an almost complete removal from teaching.

The best thing to do now is to leave, just like X and Y, who teach a few hours a week on campus and then spend the rest of their time doing their own business. They can make a lot of money while still enjoying the benefits of being university teachers....They have both the housing and the medical care that public employees are entitled to, and at the same time, they have their own businesses, making big money in their spare time. This is the best way out for people to be happy in this environment...I wish I could have such opportunities. (JT)

University campuses are witnessing this new and growing phenomenon: teachers who stay on the university payroll with diminishing commitment to the profession and are present on campus only physically. In the absence of conscious and swift intervention, this new form of brain drain is leading to serious consequences for higher education. The increasing attraction of making money poses a serious threat to whatever commitment to the profession remains among whoever still remains at their posts.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The present research shows that tremendous changes have taken place in higher education since PRADEC was launched in early 1993. However, in spite of the government's pronouncement in PRADEC to increase financial investment in education and decentralize decision-making power to universities, little substantial improvement has taken place in either area. After two years of reform, university teachers are still under great pressure for financial security, and they still have little control over the issues that deeply affect the quality of their life and work in the university. In other words, the changes in higher education have not resolved the two most prominent problems that plague the universities: the lack of financial resources, and the centralized political process that denies grassroots involvement in decision-making on issues of major concern to the teachers. While the former is a relatively new development since the beginning of the economic transition in 1978, the latter reflects the more deep-rooted ideological phenomenon of distrust of intellectuals since the early years of the socialist revolution. The consequences of these two obstacles for the development of higher education has, at the time of this writing, not yet been fully recognized.

Implications of the Findings

Short-Term Financial Returns over Long-Term Public Benefits

Many teachers find it very hard to understand why the government does not seem to appreciate the need for more investment in education and why it has not honoured its promise to commit more funding to education. However, when viewed from the perspective of the broader social and economic context, we see that the chronic lack of government investment in education is not due simply to lack of vision or understanding of the importance of education by any particular individual officials. It is, rather, determined by the market-driven economic process.

When a society is dominated by the market value of nearly all activities, government investment priorities inevitably go to projects that yield quick financial returns, leaving less and less money for programs of public welfare whose financial benefits are less tangible or immediate. Under a market economy, the quantity and quality of social programs, including public education, are largely determined by the country's economic conditions. In developed countries, social programs thrive when they are most affordable and are usually the first to be slashed in times of economic pressure. In most developing countries, where there is a persistent scarcity of financial resources, such programs usually suffer an acute funding shortage most of the time, but in developing socialist countries, public programs generally receive

substantial government funding in spite of financial scarcity. Nevertheless, many teachers are sceptical and have pointed out that the pathetically small amount of money given to education does not mean that the government simply has no money. While funds may be less than plentiful, teachers identify the main reason as being that education no longer has priority on the government's agenda, because quick financial returns have become the primary concern in its investment policies.

As we have seen, new policies, such as charging tuition fees, redistributing teachers' salaries, and encouraging money-generating projects, have been implemented to relieve the financial difficulties in higher education. These policies have been accompanied by an ever-increasing number of discussions in the media to accustom people to the idea that the government is neither capable of more investment in higher education, nor should it assume the sole financial responsibility for it. The media have also advanced the idea that people should take more financial responsibility for their own education. One selling point for furthering this position is that even in the more developed countries (to which China looks more and more as a model for the future) people often pay for their own university education (Wang 1).

The focus of my attention is not to argue whether people should be responsible for their education under present Chinese circumstances. However, it is important to note that socialism has been claimed as a better model for China

precisely because of the belief that much of the social wealth of the country is to be used to benefit the great majority of people through public programs. Yet the market-driven economy and lack of government funding have put a constant strain on public programs such as education, medical care, pension plans, the arts and so forth. Through its inaction, the government has left itself open to legitimate challenges to its claimed loyalty to the principle of socialism. If socialism is to be meaningful in China, and if China is to attempt to build a market economy within a socialist structure, it has no choice but to greatly increase its investment in public programs. Only thus can China demonstrate its sincere commitment to socialism and prove that its present market economy is qualitatively different from the market economies of capitalist societies.

Uneven Development

It is generally recognized that the restructuring of higher education in the early 1950s that was based on the Soviet model created a generation of specialists with rather limited areas of expertise. The current restructuring of university programs based on market demands may also produce similarly narrowly trained specialists. More serious, however, is the problem of imbalance. With universities left largely on their own to resolve their financial crises, financial considerations have inevitably prevailed over

academic ones. Thus, as the more marketable subject areas attract more students to the universities, programs in fields such as engineering, business administration, international trade, and the foreign languages most used in the economically advanced countries, are expanding to the limit to meet the demand. At the same time, those subject areas that are not as marketable are dwindling or simply closing down for lack of student enrolments. University teachers, under such circumstances, tend to choose their fields of interest according to the market value of the subject as well as potential financial opportunities. Consequently, an imbalance is developing among faculties and fields of knowledge in the universities. On the one hand, more teachers engage in the marketable fields, and there seems to be an endless demand for them; but on the other hand, teachers in the less popular fields are forced either to work as administrative personnel for the more popular programs, thus gaining a small share of the new income generated from them, or to change their areas of specialization and seek other work either inside or outside the university.¹⁰⁵

The increase in the number and scope of popular programs designed to sell marketable skills is also leading to an unbalanced development of human resources in the society. As the imbalance in fields of knowledge within the universities

¹⁰⁵ Either alternative can be very traumatic, particularly for older teachers.

produces more and more people to be crammed into the presently more marketable fields in society, the other, less popular fields are left either without successors or without any potential for further development. Because the emphasis is on the fields that are seen to lead to economic advancement, the unbalanced development will be mainly to the detriment of those fields that focus on society and culture. It is worth noting that these very fields--some of the social sciences and humanities--had suffered severe setbacks because of ideological and political pressures in the 1950s and 60s, but began to recover in the post-GPCR era, just in time to again face a threat to their survival in the 1980s and 90s. However, this time it is a more profound threat. In the early 1960s, when these subjects were publicly condemned by those in authority, they were still held dear by people in these fields. In the 1990s, however, the devaluation of the social sciences and humanities within the context of a commercializing society comes not only from the social depreciation of these fields, but also from some of those very people who engage in them. It is very likely that the increasing market value of certain subject areas will further deprive the social sciences and humanities, already seriously neglected in China, of much chance for development.

Conflicting Interests

Centralized decision-making has always been a main feature of the political process in China. It worked effectively and successfully in the early days of the socialist revolution when there were common goals between those in authority and people at the grassroots. However, as time elapsed, the centralized political process failed to resolve the growing differences within the Party on the perceived and actual needs of the socialist revolution. It also created conditions for the development of a new privileged class and for corruption within it. Although the government had succeeded, through repeated political campaigns and movements, in curbing political differences for many years, the discrepancy between the actual daily concerns of the people and those of the leaders widened. Theoretically, the Party is supposed to represent the interests of the people throughout the entire period of socialism, but it had become a reality that those in authority and those at the grassroots shared fewer and fewer common interests.

The leadership crisis receded into the background with the beginning of the economic transition in 1978. The Party reached a common ground with the people by declaring that economic development would be the priority for China's national program until the year 2000, and, as we have seen, there have indeed been huge economic changes. These have had a drastic impact on virtually all areas of life, including

traditional, centralized decision-making, and have revealed an incompatibility between the political structure and the economic structure.

The financial crisis in higher education and the subsequent government policy to decentralize its financial responsibility is only a reflection of developments in the wider society. The discrepancy between the interests of top government authorities and the needs of local administrators that has developed under the new circumstances has again brought into full view the deficiency of the centralized political process. Because political centralization is inherently in contention with a market-driven economy, the demand for greater decentralization has surfaced. Its necessity for higher education was even officially recognized in PRADEC. Yet, the central government is still retaining control over major decision-making in the universities, even while it dispatches the universities to search for their own means of existence through various economic activities. The university administration mimics the central government: it controls decision-making and yet expects the departments to carry a heavy financial burden to ensure their existence. Consequently, universities are left with constant conflicting interests at different administrative levels and with the very dim hope of resolving them, in part at least, because of the absence of clear, two-way channels of communication. As a result of all this, social and administrative relationships

have significantly deteriorated at all levels.

In the face of irreconcilable clashes of interests, administrators at lower levels either apply a double standard--one for higher level administration, and the other for their local constituency--or they insist on protecting the interests of their constituency in spite of their obligation to implement the policies made by higher authorities. Either way, the highest authority, the central government, remains uninformed of what is really happening at the grassroots. It has become obvious that the only way for the government to control the situation as it really is is to either make adjustments to the traditional political process, or to intensify control in the hope of developing a better command over the real situation. The latter approach would only make the discrepancy between local concerns and those of the central administration even wider, but, unfortunately, the findings from this study indicate that this is exactly what is happening in the universities. The net effect of all this on the teachers is growing indignation, followed by cynicism, and finally indifference.

Negative Effects on Teachers and Their Work

With the universities being market-driven and in the grip of underfunding, yet still controlled by a centralized political process, teachers are among the first to feel the consequences. They are left with little choice but to spend

much of their time and energy working in the revenue-generating programs in the departments or elsewhere on or off campus. By doing so, they appear to have more concern for financial security than for any of the other problems they experience in the university setting. This situation is worsened by the fact that the interests and well-being of the teachers are being grossly ignored by the university in its focused struggle to improve its overall financial situation while keeping in line with the government policies.

One serious consequence of the new financial arrangements on campuses is a rapidly growing income gap among teachers. Insufficient government funding, the root cause of the problem, has, as we have seen, resulted in certain policies and other developments. One, the new salary policy, which redistributes 30% of teachers' salary among the teachers, in effect, punishes those teachers who are in poor health while legitimizing the activities of those who are willing to give up 30% of their official salary for more profitable projects elsewhere. Meanwhile, the point system, based on the financial condition of each university, has widened the income gap among teachers according to their rank and their responsibilities. Teachers from universities with more marketable programs make more money than those from universities with fewer marketable programs; teachers in the more marketable fields have far more financial opportunities than those in the less popular fields. The increasing

differences in teachers' income, although sanctioned by official ideology, goes against the earlier socialist drive to decrease such gaps between people.

Salaries also do not reflect individual teachers' efforts to improve teaching, nor do they encourage real commitment to the profession. What used to be close to an undivided commitment to doing a good job in teaching and in making other contributions through one's profession for the advancement of society has been replaced by an immediate concern by each individual for financial and professional advancement. There is no longer the sense of security that prevailed in the past when it was understood that if everyone worked hard for a common goal, they would be recognized, commended and rewarded for their commitment. In its place, universities encourage--with great material rewards in the form of money, apartments, cars--those who bring revenue to the universities through their talent and success in business.

The sense of community and collective spirit that once prevailed is breaking down. Teachers no longer have time to discuss teaching with their colleagues, or to help students with their difficulties. Through no fault of their own, their time has come to be valued in monetary terms, and such activities are no longer worth their time, as they were in the past. Nor do such activities serve to make them enjoy their work. Instead, they can be found rushing around all the time to meet their various commitments. The students, of course,

complain bitterly that they do not have access to their teachers except for the limited hours in class. Indeed, the teaching community that used to be alive with collective efforts to do a good job in teaching--through weekly meetings of teaching groups, observing of experienced teachers' classes, and frequent informal chats--has been replaced by a near total absence of communication about teaching, even among people who work in the same teaching group. Issues concerning teaching that formerly were decided through group discussions are now decided by the person in charge of the group, who then leaves messages in mailboxes or scribbles on the blackboard in the department office for everyone to read as they rush in and out during breaks between classes.

The patronizing protection of each employee by the traditional work unit that used to make people feel at once a sense of security and belonging as well as a sense of frustration and lack of freedom is no longer there. The "work unit" in the market economy is characterized by a lack of personal involvement; it is a place where people meet and talk to each other only about work-related matters, and this, only infrequently and as briefly as possible. The once-thriving value placed on collective effort in all teaching and research endeavours has been replaced by values relating to self-advancement and individual success through private channels. Support among teachers for the administrative work of the department also carries a price tag. At a time when voluntary

work and community service are becoming more and more valued in Western societies, in China, the free contribution of time and energy to the needs of the group, the work unit, or the society is considered impossible, or is viewed as just a naive concern of people who are influenced by stories of the old days when people had no sense of the value of time.

It would be indeed surprising if all these strains did not take a psychological toll. When teachers are left on their own to move ahead of or fall behind others, the inevitable differences in income that result, as well as the strains of a faster pace with no time to do the thorough job teachers want to do, and the breaking down of a community and collective spirit--these and other such sources of tension are bound to have a psychological impact, both on those who are left behind and on those who move ahead. Teachers in unpopular fields feel betrayed and discarded by the universities. They not only develop attitudes of self-abasement both towards themselves and their profession, they also have no choice but to engage in work that is without much academic significance to them. Thus, a teacher with expertise in the theoretical aspects of radio transmission finds himself repairing television and radio sets in the neighbourhood because it brings in ten times as much money as he gets from the university (ST). The market-driven university has made it clear to teachers that advanced research work in more theoretical fields is not only insignificant, but also that it

is impossible to pursue such work and still make ends meet. Teachers such as the one who repairs radios, and even more so, those whose fields are less translatable into marketable skills, often find themselves in a state of anxiety, frustration and anger, sometimes for reasons they cannot explain. Even those who are successful often feel tense and drained of energy from the pressure of working hard and fast and constantly looking for new opportunities. Some also worry about the negative feelings and attitudes that their less successful colleagues might be harbouring toward them. Both groups very often feel unfulfilled, because their lives are consumed with the search for money, and they have little time or energy left for much else.

The Changing Character of University Teachers

Findings from this research have revealed a significant change in the roles of university teachers from the early days of this century to the end of the century. As indicated in Chapter 3, many university teachers then actively engaged in efforts to promote social justice and progress. Indeed, China would not have subsequently had a socialist revolution without the dedication of those early intellectuals and their efforts to make changes in the country.

However, this early tradition of Chinese university teachers as engaged intellectuals has largely disintegrated with the century's drastic political and economic changes.

Many university teachers learned to disengage themselves from politics in the face of suppression and persecution by the Nationalist government, while others learned to align themselves with stronger political patrons for protection in times of fierce political conflicts. Experiences in the repeated political campaigns during the socialist revolution also taught many university teachers to remain uninvolved with social movements and to keep silent in the heat of political debates. Furthermore, some government and university administrative policies continue to subtly suggest hostility and suspicion of the political commitment of Chinese intellectuals. This is in spite of the fact that university teachers have supported socialism in China as strongly as people in any other sector in society. This lack of confidence and trust has contributed significantly to the teachers' political apathy.

Teachers' commitment to public affairs has been further devastated by the wave of commercialism that started in 1978. Although most are still interested in their academic fields, many teachers have lost pride in being teachers; some of them have learned to sell their knowledge and expertise to the highest bidder in the market. University teachers at this historical moment have become a group characterized by individualized commitments, which range from financial security and success, to political self-protection, to personal self-fulfilment. These changes in university

teachers stand in sharp contrast to the values and concerns of intellectuals earlier in the century. However, given the economic, social and political conditions of the last few decades, they are certainly understandable, indeed unavoidable.

Brain Drain: Old and New

Thanks to economic and political pressures, countless numbers of China's best teachers have left and are leaving the country for good, and many more have given up teaching for other opportunities that are more lucrative and where they are more appreciated. When the market economy created conditions that fostered individual competition, university teachers were left without much incentive to choose loyalty to their profession over their own monetary value in the market. Loyalty to the government and the country, according to ancient Chinese tradition, is expected from each individual as a personal obligation, but the university teachers' difficult circumstances have made their decision to leave compelling and understandable.

In addition to money, the lack of respect for teachers' interests and work within the universities also encourages them to sell their minds and their time in other markets. Like many Chinese products that do not sell well at home unless they can claim a name in the international market, important research of Chinese scholars often does not receive

much attention at home unless it is acclaimed abroad. Unfortunately, the tremendous loss of Chinese intellectual productivity to the world market has not aroused much concern by those in positions of authority. Zheng Enyun, a social scientist in China, is among the few people who have sounded the alarm about the vast loss of China's precious intellectual assets--the teachers:

The startling loss of intellectuals and academics from the country has started: students do not find the most competent teachers on campus; academic fields are starved for original, quality research....The most talented young and middle-aged scientists and experts are absent from the workplace without quitting their jobs.¹⁰⁶ They work at home to get their research findings published abroad; they stay on campus for the freedom to control their own time, which they then commit to projects off campus. As a result, while their academic performance at the workplace and in the country remains mediocre, they present impressive research results to the academic world abroad through projects funded by the international community but designed and implemented by Chinese scholars. (Zheng, 15)

Unfortunately, the evidence from my research very strongly suggests that whatever changes have occurred in higher education since 1993 have not succeeded in removing the causes of the brain drain that saw so many young and middle-aged teachers leave the universities in the 1980s. Instead, my findings show that the great loss of human resources in the 1980s has simply taken on a new form in the 1990s: more teachers have chosen to remain on the university payroll while

¹⁰⁶ They keep their university jobs for the benefits they receive, such as housing, medical care and so forth.

committing most of their time and energy to projects unrelated to teaching and research in higher education. Many university teachers, while still remaining at their posts, direct their energy and attention away from the frustrations of the campus, committing themselves to more meaningful projects in society that give them the sense of accomplishment and the financial security they need. They attend classes, they teach, they are physically present. But beyond that, their real interests lie elsewhere, and most of their energy goes to other pursuits.

This new form of brain drain reflects a serious disappointment by the teachers in the present policies for higher education, including many changes since 1993 that were supposed to improve the economic and political situation in the universities. It is more subtle than the usual kind of brain drain where people simply leave to work elsewhere in China or abroad. However, it is every bit as real and just as devastating for the universities. It is becoming a prevalent phenomenon in many universities, but its magnitude and impact on higher education are yet to be appreciated by teachers, university administrators or government.

This study has shown that university teachers in China have become a passive, marginalized, and individually oriented group of people, and that they have not been able to gain a social identity with a voice of their own. In spite of the glowing media reports on the changes in higher education since

PRADEC, university teachers' silence demonstrates the need for their empowerment.

Projections on Empowering University Teachers

The discussions so far have established the need for university teachers--the most indispensable force for the reform of higher education in China--to become more empowered. Based on the conceptualization of the three types of empowerment outlined in chapter 2, it is my view that, at this time in history, Chinese university teachers need to strive for the second type of empowerment--group empowerment. As we have seen, many teachers possess skills and knowledge currently in demand by the market. My research shows that economic insecurity has compelled many of them to sell these skills and knowledge. Thus, while they remain fairly marginalized and powerless as a social group, some university teachers are experiencing individual empowerment through their success as competitors in the marketplace. Improving the economic conditions and social status of university teachers is certainly a fundamental precondition for their intellectual and political empowerment. However, if it occurs only or primarily at the level of individual empowerment, it is possible and even likely that many individuals will become contented with their new conditions, thus diminishing the likelihood of teachers' collective empowerment and of progressive social change.

To be successful, the process of empowerment of university teachers must entail, in the first instance, the teachers' realistic efforts to improve their economic conditions as a group. This should serve to free many of them of their striving for individual empowerment through involvement in the money-making projects that now consume so much of their time and energy. It, in turn, may allow them to renew and enhance their traditional commitment and dedication to their profession. Through this process and the process of critiquing the conditions that have led to their devaluation as teachers, they should be able to rebuild their confidence in themselves. This may eventually put them in a position to strive for the third type of empowerment, whereby they may resume their tradition of taking a leading role in nationwide endeavours for social justice and social progress.

For the present, many barriers block the path of empowerment. The next section identifies some of the major obstacles to change in this direction. The last section discusses some hopes for the future.

Constraints on Empowerment

The overriding need for financial security

Given the present economic policies, any substantial increase in government funding to higher education seems unlikely. Therefore, the financial predicament of the universities will probably remain unresolved for some time,

and teachers will continue to be confronted with great financial insecurity. The gravity of the problem is not to be diminished. It is real and pressing. At the same time, however, because of the seriousness and immediacy of the problem, there is a tendency to see the lack of financial resources as the source of all problems in higher education. This is an oversimplified explanation of a more complicated reality. In effect, then, we can see two related constraints on teachers' empowerment here: the teachers' intense financial insecurity; and their tendency to minimizing the significance of other constraints on their empowerment.

The lack of a political voice

Like financial insecurity, the centralized political process has helped to create the brain drain in both its older and its newer forms. However, there does not seem to be sufficient consciousness about this problem. Perhaps this is because teachers who have lived in such a social climate for so long have either internalized this approach as being normal or feel powerless to do anything about it. Therefore, their voices are not very audible when it comes to concerns about the centralized political process. However, it is almost axiomatic that without a political voice, empowerment is impossible.

The lack of interest in administrative work

One way to make that voice heard is for teachers to actively participate in the administration of their own affairs. However, they often have little interest in spending their time and energy on administrative work. They tend, instead, to hope that there will be some administrators who will stand up for them and look after their interests, which is part and parcel of unquestioned acceptance of centralized decision-making. Teachers' empowerment will not emanate from the occasional sympathetic individuals in leading positions who are willing to work on their behalf. It can come only from their own active involvement in administering their affairs.

The absence of collective efforts to protect teachers' interests

Virtually all university teachers, regardless of seniority, have experienced various kinds of unfair treatment from different administrative offices on campus. In response, many teachers wage individual battles against various administrative pressures. These unhappy experiences are individualized, not because of the absence of a union. Teachers do, in fact, belong to a union, whose function is primarily to provide recreational activities for its members. This situation is further complicated by the fact that all teachers and support staff members are in the same union, but the groups often have different problems and needs, and hence,

different interests. Teachers presently lack the kind of independent organization that would provide an opportunity for them to share their experiences, reflect together, and take strong stands to protect their interests. This is clearly a constraint on increasing their empowerment. However, there is another side to this. As teachers' frustrations grow, their dissatisfaction is turning into increasingly audible rumblings for a new kind of teachers' union. Therefore, what now appears as a constraint on their empowerment could, in future, become a stimulus for collective organization.

The threat of business control over higher education

The powerful infiltration of the market economy into higher education and its impact on the empowerment of university teachers cannot be underestimated. The omnipresence of businesses on campus, which means the commercialization of program development, academic priorities and social relationships, is viewed as a conscious, but unhappy and unavoidable decision made necessary because of insufficient government funding. As the market economy grows deeper roots in society, the financial crisis in higher education becomes more acute. It is likely that more businesses, domestic and foreign, will continue to become financially involved in education in the coming years, thus making universities increasingly dependent on funding from businesses, both large and small, for their survival. This,

in turn, may make it less and less possible for universities to make independent decisions. Consequently, when faced with the obligation to satisfy many financial supporters, teachers will find that empowerment becomes even more remote.

Possibilities for Empowerment

A strong desire for change

Many teachers are frustrated by their present condition that leaves them no choice but to spend much of their time and energy on commitments in the market. The contrast between their positive experiences in the society and their difficulties on campus have led them to express a strong desire for change. Although many are confused about what should be done about the deep-rooted problems in the university, the desire for change and improvement is a message that clearly comes through in the voices of the teachers. The kindling of this desire could lead to efforts for collective empowerment and the revival of China's tradition of intellectuals as critical thinkers and leaders of social change.

The growth of esteem and self-confidence

One effect of the engagement of university teachers in marketable activities is that many are being recognized for their knowledge and expertise, and admired for their success. This is also helping to reverse their low self-confidence.

Considering their recent history, the enhancement of teachers' status is perhaps a small, but nonetheless, important step in their empowerment process. When people have confidence in themselves, collective identity and collective activity become more possible. However, this development is two-edged and has some constraining aspects as well. It does not necessarily enhance the status of teaching as a profession, and its positive effects exclude those many faculty members whose success in the marketplace is limited.

The desire for more political participation on campus

The reader will recall the extremely positive response by the teachers in the department under study to the experiment in 1995 where faculty at another university formed a committee to select their President. This response demonstrated the teachers' strong desire for more involvement in the university's political process. It whetted their appetite. Experiments like this are extremely rare, but they inspire the teachers with hope and expectations for their own future. Teachers want a voice, and they want their voice to be heard.

The desire for a support system within the community

With the growing demands on university teachers in both the universities and the marketplace, teachers find themselves fighting lonely battles on many fronts. Many expressed a clear desire to reach out for support and understanding from

fellow colleagues through informal networks based on common interests and needs. Such support systems would provide an arena for teachers to share their problems and opinions, and would foster understanding and mutual assistance among teachers, thus serving as a practical effort toward group empowerment.

The desire to renew a collective spirit

When university teachers express their concern over deteriorating relationships among faculty and the lack of collective effort at work, they are stating their desire for the revival of the collective spirit that prevailed in the early years of the socialist revolution and that proved to be essential in bringing about social progress in China. These expressions of concern by the teachers demonstrate that a tradition of community spirit has neither been forgotten nor given up as an important social value by many people in China in spite of the market economy and its accompanying individualism. On the contrary, with the increasing discrepancy in income and social status among people, and the withering away of community spirit, many people are becoming more appreciative of the collectivism that once prevailed.

The empowerment of university teachers means a challenge to the ideological tradition and a challenge to the reality

that teachers do not weigh much in the development of higher education. But most of all, it is a challenge to the teachers themselves. Empowerment is not given to people. People must empower themselves. University teachers need to become deeply interested in their profession again as they were in the not-too-distant past. They need to again become intimately involved with social affairs and assume public responsibility as in the past. Otherwise, their empowerment will be stunted, and they will not be able to become critics of society, a role expected of them and urgently needed in this historical transition period in China. Thus, university teachers' empowerment will come, first, from deepening their understanding of the constraints inhibiting their empowerment and the possibilities that facilitate it, and then, from exerting efforts to make things happen. As a member of this community, it is my hope that my research on this subject will contribute both to this understanding and to these efforts.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS (Translated from Chinese)

1. What strikes you as the greatest changes in this university in the last two years?
2. Have you noticed any differences in your Department in terms of program changes, policy changes or personnel changes?
3. If yes, what are these changes? Why have they occurred?
4. Do you like the changes? Are they good or bad for development of higher education in general?
5. Would you say they are creating a more positive or a more negative impact on you personally as a teacher?
6. Have they affected your teaching? If yes, in what ways?
7. Who is responsible for the changes?
8. Do the decision-makers in the Department try to enlist opinions from teachers when they initiate changes?
9. If the decision-makers do not consult, how do you feel? Why?
10. What do you think is the most important thing for the Department to accomplish now?
11. Have you ever brought this to the attention of the Chairperson?
12. If yes, what was the result? If no, why didn't you talk to him or her about it?
13. Has it ever occurred to you to leave the university for other opportunities?
14. What has kept you from leaving the university?
15. How would you assess your commitment to teaching now compared with two years ago?
16. What do you think is the most important thing that will keep teachers from leaving universities in China?

17. How would you describe your work life now as compared to two years ago? Would you say you are generally happier or more discontented? Why?
18. What do you value most about being a university teacher?
19. Tell me what is your greatest source of joy and your greatest source of frustration as a teacher in this university.
20. Have you found any differences in the school Party leadership in the last two years? How do you like the present situation?
21. Are there any other points, issues, etc. you would like to discuss?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS (Translated from Chinese)

1. What strikes you as the greatest changes in this university in the last two years?
2. Have you noticed any differences in Department X in terms of program changes, policy changes or personnel changes?
3. If yes, what are these changes? Why have they occurred?
4. Do you like the changes? Are they good or bad for development of higher education in general?
5. What do you think is the most important thing for Department X to accomplish now?
6. Have you found any differences in your administrative work now from what it was before 1992?
7. Do you find more or less control being exerted by higher authorities on you now as compared with three years ago?
8. Of all the decisions you have to make in a week, how many of them are subject to the approval of higher authorities for their legitimacy? At what levels?
9. How would you describe your relationship with higher level authorities now?
10. Have you found any differences in the school Party leadership in the last two years? How do you like the present situation?
11. When you make academically-related decisions, do you seek opinions from the teachers beforehand? Why/Why not?
12. Compared to what it was two years ago, have you found more or less support from teachers for your policies and decisions?
13. Do you think the changes in universities so far have made it easier or harder to retain teachers?
14. Do you think the changes you have mentioned are creating a more positive or a more negative impact on you personally as an administrator?

15. What do you think is the most important change that is needed to keep teachers from leaving universities in China?
16. Has it ever occurred to you to leave the university for other opportunities?
17. What has kept you from leaving the university?
18. How would you describe your work life now as compared to two years ago? Would you say you are generally happier or more discontented? Why?
19. What do you value most about being a university administrator?
20. Tell me what is your greatest source of joy and your greatest source of frustration as an administrator in this university.
21. Are there any other points, issues, etc. you would like to discuss?

APPENDIX 3

WRITTEN STATEMENT TO POTENTIAL TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PARTICIPANTS (Translated from Chinese)

January 1995

I am a teacher (at X Department in Y University) currently working on a Ph.D. degree in the School of Education at Dalhousie University in Canada. I have come here to conduct a case study to complete my Ph.D research.

My research concerns the possibilities and constraints of extending university autonomy under the current economic transition period in China. I am interested in finding out if the tremendous changes taking place in universities in the last two years have in any way enhanced university autonomy. I have read about some changes in that direction through newspaper coverage as well as from the "Program of Reform and Development in Education in China" issued by the State Education Commission (1993). It is stated in this document that universities should become independent entities responsive to the needs of society and that the government is committed to the concept of "decentralizing decision-making power to the universities."

I am particularly keen on finding out about your observations and comments on a number of issues. Has the "decentralization of decision-making power" in fact been actively implemented since then? Have you noticed any changes in the decision-making process at the department and university levels? What other changes have you noticed in the school? in your life? in the relationship between faculty and administration? in the teachers' commitment to education? What do you think is the most important task for reform in higher education? Your opinions on these and related issues are extremely important to me for a better understanding of

Chinese universities in the last few years and in the future direction of our higher education.

If you are interested in being a participant in this research project, I would very much appreciate your assistance. Your involvement in the research would consist of an interview with me of approximately one hour in length at a time convenient to you during the month of February, 1995. To avoid missing important information from our discussion, I would appreciate it very much if you would agree to having our interview recorded. However, I will respect your choice if you prefer to have the interview without a tape recorder. You may stop the tape recorder whenever you wish, you may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may also ask that certain sections of our talk not be transcribed or used. You may withdraw from the research at any time. We may need to meet briefly a second time to clarify or expand upon particular points.

The relevant parts of the recorded interviews will be transcribed and translated into English. The information collected during this process will be analyzed and used as part of the data for my research. If some of your observations are cited in the thesis, you will remain anonymous unless you wish otherwise, and all people to whom you refer, with the exception of known public figures, will also remain anonymous. The tapes and transcripts from your interview will be treated with great care, will be identified only by code and will be handled by this researcher only. I will erase all the tapes and destroy the transcripts as soon as the research is completed.

I will get back to you for confirmation of the transcribed version of the interview. At that time, you may make any changes you wish. I will not publish or distribute this thesis to official channels in China without first securing your permission.

It is my hope that the study will contribute to the

understanding of university autonomy as an important educational concept in the Chinese context and help identify priorities for reforms in higher education in China.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Zhou Yan

APPENDIX 4

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS' WORK IN DEPARTMENT X
(Translated from Chinese)

This is a questionnaire concerning the work of all teachers in your Department whom you have had since you came to study here. When you answer the questions, please try to make your judgment on teachers in general whom you have had rather than on any one individual teacher for any particular course.

In the following questions, you are given six choices on a scale for your estimation of the teachers' work-related performance. Your opinion is valuable for an understanding of teachers' work in this Department.

In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, please do not provide your name or your class. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please indicate if you are male or female. _____

The following categories appear with most questions. For each statement, please indicate one number that most reflects your opinion.

	strongly disagree = 1	disagree = 2	neutral = 3					
	agree = 4	strongly agree = 5	not sure = 6					
1	My teachers have shown a solid command of knowledge in the subjects they teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	My teachers have demonstrated great interest in the subjects they teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3	Teachers are generally not happy to see their views challenged by their students in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4	The students are generally provided with appropriate references for the subjects being brought up in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | When I have questions concerning the subject I am studying, I expect my teacher to be able to answer them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6 | After class, I often have the feeling that I have not learned much. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | My teachers are generally interested in exploring new teaching methods in class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8 | In class, we are given little chance to express our own opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | My teachers generally come to classes well prepared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | When I have difficulties with my work, I feel that I can turn to my teachers for help. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11 | When things are hard to understand, my teachers offer to help after class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12 | My teachers do not devote as much attention to teaching as they should. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13 | I am satisfied with my classes and the performance of my teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14 | It is useless to give teachers suggestions to improve their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 15 | My teachers rarely try different teaching methods in class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

16	Few teachers hold office hours for the students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	My teachers are generally interested in having discussions with students if they have different opinions about a subject brought up in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	When I have questions concerning the subject I am learning, I will set an appointment with my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	My teachers are available only during class hours.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	Whenever I have suggestions for the teachers, I do not hesitate to let them know.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	When I find things hard to understand, I often ask my classmates for help.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	My teachers often ask for our opinions on their teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	My teachers are not keen on improving their teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	My teachers have generally shown an interest in doing a good job in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	My teachers seem to be quite content with their teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	The annual evaluations of teachers do not serve to improve their teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6

- 27 There is great need for improvement in the performance of my teachers. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 28 Generally speaking, I am quite happy with the performance of my teachers. 1 2 3 4 5 6

In the following statements, please choose one that is closest to your opinion.

none = 1 a few = 2 some = 3 many = 4
most = 5 not sure = 6

- 29 Of all the teachers I have had, ___ of them have difficulties in expressing their ideas clearly. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 30 Of all the teachers I have had, ___ of them get along with the students. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 31 Of all the teachers I have had, I consider ___ of them good teachers. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 32 Of all the teachers I have had, ___ of them are committed to their profession. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Please indicate how you view the following statements.

very unimportant = 1 unimportant = 2 neutral = 3
important = 4 very important = 5 not sure = 6

- 33 As a student, I want my teacher to be famous. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 34 As a student, I want my teacher to know his/her subject well. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 35 As a student, I want my teacher to be in the rank of a full professor. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 36 As a student, I want my teacher to be readily accessible. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 37 A good teacher is very knowledgeable in his/her subject area. 1 2 3 4 5 6

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | A good teacher is always ready to help the students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 39 | A good teacher gets along well with the students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 40 | A good teacher motivates the students to learn more. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

APPENDIX 5

RESULTS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS' WORK IN DEPARTMENT X (Translated from Chinese)

strongly disagree = 1 disagree = 2 neutral = 3
agree = 4 strongly agree = 5 not sure = 6

My teachers have shown a solid command of knowledge in the subjects they teach. (Item 1)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	1	.8
3	13	10.2
4	77	60.6
5	33	26.0
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers have demonstrated great interest in the subjects they teach. (2)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	9	7.1
3	34	26.8
4	57	44.9
5	12	9.4
6	14	11.0
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Teachers are generally not happy to see their views challenged by their students in class. (3)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	4	3.1
2	58	45.7
3	41	32.3
4	17	13.4
5	2	1.6
6	5	3.9
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

The students are generally provided with appropriate references for the subjects being brought up in class. (4)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	10	7.9
2	49	38.6
3	22	17.3
4	38	29.9
5	6	4.7
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

When I have questions concerning the subject I am studying, I expect my teacher to be able to answer them. (5)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	10	7.9
3	31	24.4
4	67	52.8
5	14	11.0
6	5	3.9
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

After class, I often have the feeling that I have not learned much. (6)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	5	3.9
2	41	32.3
3	54	42.5
4	16	12.6
5	8	6.3
6	3	2.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers are generally interested in exploring new teaching methods in class. (7)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	12	9.4
2	61	48.0
3	40	31.5
4	6	4.7
5	1	.8
6	7	5.5
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

In class, we are given little chance to express our own opinions. (8)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	6	4.7
2	54	42.5
3	42	33.1
4	20	15.7
5	4	3.1
6	1	.8
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers generally come to classes well prepared. (9)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	4	3.1
3	25	19.7
4	65	51.2
5	24	18.9
6	9	7.1
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

When I have difficulties with my work, I feel I can turn to my teachers for help. (10)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	18	14.2
3	33	26.0
4	62	48.8
5	10	7.9
6	3	2.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

When things are hard to understand, my teachers offer to help after class. (11)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	18	14.2
2	55	43.3
3	40	31.5
4	5	3.9
5	3	2.4
6	6	4.7
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers do not devote as much attention to teaching as they should. (12)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
1	13	10.2
2	56	44.1
3	33	26.0
4	13	10.2
5	2	1.6
6	9	7.1
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

I am satisfied with my classes and the performance of my teachers. (13)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
1	12	9.4
2	33	26.0
3	40	31.5
4	35	27.6
5	4	3.1
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

It is useless to give teachers suggestions to improve their teaching. (14)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	3	2.4
2	30	23.6
3	44	34.6
4	33	26.0
5	7	5.5
6	10	7.9
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers rarely try different teaching methods in class.
(15)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	2	1.6
2	17	13.4
3	26	20.5
4	65	51.2
5	14	11.0
6	3	2.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Few teachers hold office hours for the students. (16)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
1	1	.8
2	8	6.3
3	15	11.8
4	75	59.1
5	25	19.7
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers are generally interested in having discussions with students if they have different opinions about a subject brought up in class. (17)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
2	4	3.1
3	20	15.7
4	80	63.0
5	19	15.0
6	3	2.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

When I have questions concerning the subject I am learning, I will set an appointment with my teacher. (18)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
1	9	7.1
2	30	23.6
3	34	26.8
4	30	23.6
5	3	2.4
6	20	15.7
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers are available only during class hours. (19)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	19	15.0
3	24	18.9
4	57	44.9
5	26	20.5
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Whenever I have suggestions for the teachers, I do not hesitate to let them know. (20)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	6	4.7
2	22	17.3
3	47	37.0
4	36	28.3
5	1	.8
6	15	11.8
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

When I find things hard to understand, I often ask my classmates for help. (21)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	3	2.4
2	5	3.9
3	19	15.0
4	87	68.5
5	11	8.7
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers often ask for our opinions on their teaching. (22)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	4	3.1
2	36	28.3
3	42	33.1
4	42	33.1
5	2	1.6
6	1	.8
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers are not keen on improving their teaching. (23)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	3	2.4
2	28	22.0
3	49	38.6
4	35	27.6
5	10	7.9
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers have generally shown an interest in doing a good job in class. (24)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
2	3	2.4
3	12	9.4
4	84	66.1
5	21	16.5
6	6	4.7
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

My teachers seem to be quite content with their teaching. (25)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	4	3.1
3	33	26.0
4	42	33.1
5	3	2.4
6	45	35.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

The annual evaluations of teachers do not serve to improve their teaching. (26)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	2	1.6
1	2	1.6
2	7	5.5
3	21	16.5
4	51	40.2
5	21	16.5
6	23	18.1
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

There is great need for improvement in the performance of my teachers. (27)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	6	4.7
3	45	35.4
4	47	37.0
5	26	20.5
6	2	1.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Generally speaking, I am quite happy with the performance of my teachers. (28)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	2	1.6
2	13	10.2
3	34	26.8
4	65	51.2
5	10	7.9
6	3	2.4
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

none = 1	a few = 2	some = 3	many = 4
most = 5	not sure = 6		

Of all the teachers I have had, of them have difficulties in expressing their ideas clearly. (29)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	12	9.4
2	86	67.7
3	24	18.9
4	5	3.9
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Of all the teachers I have had, of them get along with the students. (30)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
2	10	7.9
3	28	22.0
4	15	11.8
5	73	57.5
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Of all the teachers I have had, I consider of them good teachers. (31)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	2	1.6
2	27	21.3
3	40	31.5
4	37	29.1
5	21	16.5
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

Of all the teachers I have had, of them are committed to their profession. (32)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	11	8.7
3	32	25.2
4	34	26.8
5	46	36.2
6	4	3.1
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

very unimportant = 1 unimportant = 2 neutral = 3
 important = 4 very important = 5 not sure = 6

As a student, I want my teacher to be famous. (33)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	4	3.1
2	34	26.8
3	28	22.0
4	49	38.6
5	11	8.7
6	1	.8
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

As a student, I want my teacher to know his/her subject well.
 (34)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	1	.8
3	2	1.6
4	29	22.8
5	85	66.9
6	10	7.9
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

As a student, I want my teacher to be in the rank of a full professor. (35)

Value	Frequency	Percent
0	1	.8
1	6	4.7
2	50	39.4
3	38	29.9
4	19	15.0
5	9	7.1
6	4	3.1
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

As a student, I want my teacher to be readily accessible. (36)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	5	3.9
3	13	10.2
4	62	48.8
5	36	28.3
6	11	8.7
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

A good teacher is very knowledgeable in his/her subject area.
(37)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	1	.8
3	2	1.6
4	34	26.8
5	74	58.3
6	16	12.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

A good teacher is always ready to help the students. (38)

Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.8
3	8	6.3
4	49	38.6
5	53	41.7
6	16	12.6
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

A good teacher gets along well with the students. (39)

Value	Frequency	Percent
2	7	5.5
3	8	6.3
4	57	44.9
5	44	34.6
6	11	8.7
	-----	-----
Total	127	100.0

A good teacher motivates the students to learn more. (40)

Value	Frequency	Percent
3	4	3.1
4	25	19.7
5	81	63.8
6	17	13.4
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Total	127	100.0

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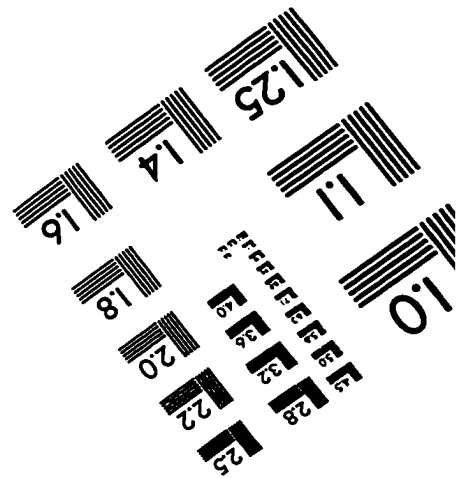
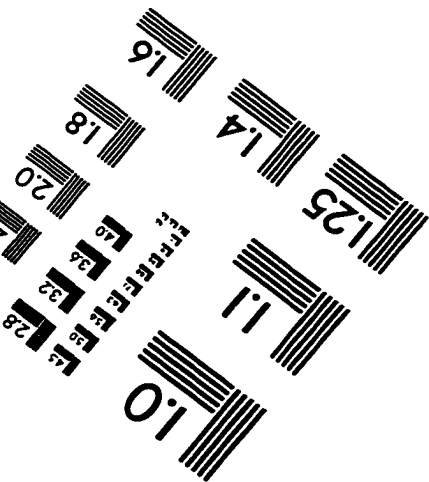
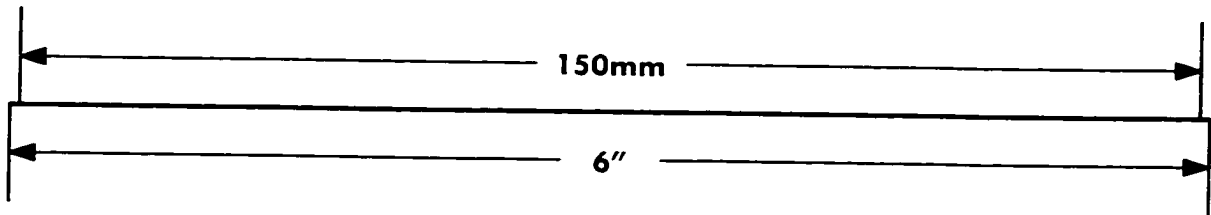
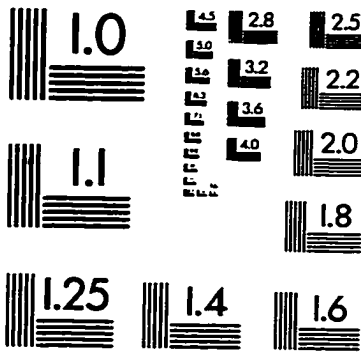
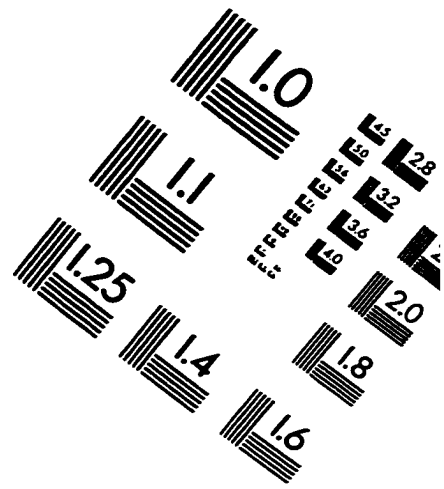
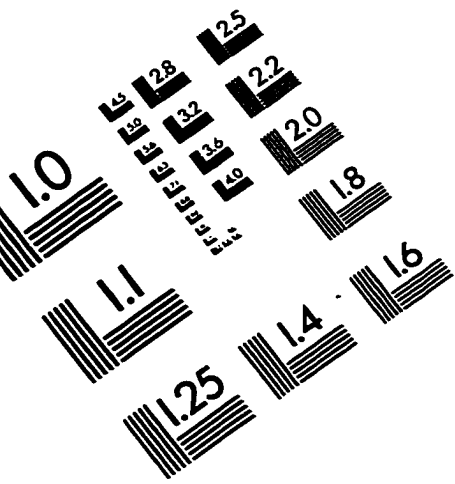
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