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RED GENESIS: THE HUNAN FIRST NORMAL SCHOOL AND THE CREATION OF CHINESE COMMUNISM, 1903-1921

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
2001

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ABSTRACT

The history of the Hunan First Normal School is a tapestry woven of Chinese traditional and Western modern threads. Chinese tradition figured significantly in the character of the school. Western ideas, as well as the contemporary social, political, and intellectual circumstances also contributed to its policies and practices. The school's system, educational philosophy, policy, practices, curriculum, important teachers and radical students as well as their intellectual transitions are examined and framed in the larger changing social context.

The dramatic story of the Hunan First Normal School combines several ideological threads from China's turbulent history in the 20th Century and weaves them into a colorful and intricate tapestry representing conflicting classes, forces and social agendas. This dissertation examines the ideological transformation of a generation of students and scholars associated with the Hunan First Normal School in Changsha, China. A group of students who attended the...
second decade of the twentieth century eventually became the founders, principal ideologues and activists of the Chinese Communist Party. It explores the process by which the curriculum, environment, staff, especially the teachers, political and social forces in the school and in the surrounding city contributed to the transformation in the thinking of the student body. It examines how traditional Confucian values played a role in their radicalization, their transformation into communism, and their early communist activities, which in turn, suggests that the early Chinese communist movement was not without connections with Chinese tradition. It also examines the processes of change and constancy at the school, of its peculiar blend of Western and traditional Chinese ideas. By analyzing the social, political, and intellectual backgrounds, and the generation of the students' ideological formation and transformation, I will provide a better understanding of China's transition into modernity and the triumph of the Chinese Communist party.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract........................................................................................................................................................................ii
Acknowledgments................................................................................................................................................................iv
Vita................................................................................................................................................................................vii
Table of Contents..........................................................................................................................................................viii
List of Tables..................................................................................................................................................................xi
Maps ................................................................................................................................................................................xii

Chapters:

Introduction....................................................................................................................................................................1

Chapter 1  The Historical And Intellectual Milieus Of Hunan, 1895-1907.................................................................29

Growth of the Reform Movement in Hunan, 1895-1896...............................................................................................31
Climax and failure of the Hunan Reform Movement, 1897-1898................................................................................35
Imperialism and the Opening of Hunan, 1898-1907........................................................................................................62

Chapter 2  From Confucian Academy To New-Type Modern School........................................................................73

Formation of the First Normal School and Educational Reform in Hunan, 1900-1911.................................73
The Predecessor of the First Normal School/Chengnan Academy..............................................................................82
An Overview of the First Normal School......................................................................................................................85
Evolution of First Normal and the Political Culture in Late Qing, 1903-1912.........................................................90
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>First Normal and Political Culture From Republican Revolution To The May Fourth Movement, 1912-1919</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Efforts At Reform In From The New Government After The Republican Revolution And The Political And Intellectual Situation In Hunan</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Reforms at the First Normal School</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Philosophy and Regulations</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Content and Examination Regulations</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for Faculty and Staff</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Management</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>The New Culture Community: The Teachers’ Generation</th>
<th>168</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Kong</td>
<td>172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Teacher Yang Changji</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Education</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Western Learning</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Teacher Xu Teli</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Studies Fang Weixia</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Teacher Wang Jifan</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Teacher Li Jinxi</td>
<td>239</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
<th>Provincial Boyhood: The Students’ Generation</th>
<th>252</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cai Hesen</td>
<td>259</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family background</td>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School days in Changsha</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinmin xuehui</td>
<td>280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Study Program in France and Cai’s Radicalization into Communism</td>
<td>285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>325</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Conclusion | 330 |
| Appendix | 344 |
| Glossary | 395 |
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1  School Admonition (1911-1918) ........................................................................125
2  Curriculum of Division One at the Undergraduate Department, 1913...............................130
3  Curriculum of Division two at the Undergraduate Department, 1913...........................................131
4  Students’ Family Background of the Preparatory Department (yuke), 1917..............................134
5  The Number of Staff Member at Each Post ..............................................................155
INTRODUCTION

The May Fourth Movement of 1919 was a pivotal event in modern Chinese history and ushered in decades of change with profound consequences. Because of its crucial historical importance, the May Fourth Movement has been the subject of numerous studies in China, the United States, Europe, and Japan. This dissertation, unlike most of the others, which focus on the events in the major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, seeks to explore the way it propelled China's transition into modernity on a provincial level by examining the intellectual transformation of a group of students and scholars who associated with the Hunan First Normal School in the second decade of the twentieth century. The investigation will focus on the events during the May Fourth period centered around the First Normal School. Events, political activism, and historical and intellectual backgrounds prior to the movement are also examined.
The May Fourth Incident was central to the development of the entire May Fourth Movement. The immediate cause of the Incident was the resolution of the Shandong question at the Versailles Peace Conference. Following World War One, the Chinese hoped and assumed that the territory and interests held by Germany in Shandong would be restored to China since China had been one of the Allies in the defeat of Germany. Many Chinese, especially the intellectuals, also hoped that the hegemonic Twenty-one Demands and other Sino-Japanese treaties and agreements would be readjusted and rejected at the Paris Peace Conference. The news the Versailles Conference would transfer Germany's former concessions in Shandong to Japan greatly shocked the Chinese. They immediately voiced disappointment and indignation. They realized that foreign nations would remain selfish and militaristic. The hope that all nations were equal was revealed to be an illusion. What was worse was that they believed their own government sold out the interests of their nation to Japan. Dejection and indignation among intellectuals turned into the May Fourth Incident of 1919.

On May 4, 1919, more than three thousand students from Beijing University and other educational institutions in that city held a mass demonstration in Tiananmen Square to
protest China's treatment in Paris, and to protest against
the traitors in the government. On the same day, Cao Rulin
(1877-1966), Minister of Communication and chief spokesman
for Japanese interests inside the Chinese government, was
attacked and his house was burned. Another pro-Japanese
cabinet minister Zhang Zongxiang was beaten. The protesters
confronted the police and over thirty students were arrested.

Immediately, there were calls for a general revolt. The
unrest spread quickly to all parts of China and lasted for
several months. The demonstrators soon won the sympathy of
urban merchants, workers, and residents who joined them
later in market strikes and boycotts of Japanese goods. Thus,
a demonstration to protest China's treatment at the
Versailles Conference developed into a national movement.
The Chinese government backed down. It recalled its
diplomats from Versailles and removed pro-Japanese officials
from their posts.

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1 China Social Sciences Institute Modern Chinese History Department, *Wu si aiguo yundong* (The May Fourth Patriotic Movement) (Beijing: China Social Science Institute Press, 1979) Vol. 1, p. 494-496. Also see Kuang Husheng's "Wu si yundong jishi" (Record of Actual Events of the May Fourth Movement), which was originally published in *Li da jikan* (Li da Quarterly) (1925), vol. 3, p. 65. Kuang Husheng (1891-1933) was a Hunanese. He was a senior student of mathematics at Beijing Higher Normal University during the May Fourth Movement. He was the first one to break into Cao Rulin's house on the May Fourth day, 1919. After graduation, he began to teach at Hunan First Normal School. He participated in Jianxue hui (The society of strengthening studies) and the movement to drive Zhang Jingyao out of Hunan.
These events were very remarkable in modern Chinese history, and the revolutionary potential of the movement was obvious and widely recognized. May Fourth has thus become the focus of numerous competing studies both in China and the West. In China, the official view is that the movement has led by iconoclastic students and intellectuals. It started as an expression of patriotism, but also involved severe attacks on Confucian tradition. When the students were joined by urban factory workers and opposed anti-imperialism and feudalism, the movement became a watershed event that marked the beginning of the Chinese "New-Democratic Revolution." It has also been identified as the historical moment from which the Chinese Communist Party developed.

In the West, Chow Tse-tsung's very influential 1960 book viewed the May Fourth movement as a patriotic awakening that featured radical attacks on Chinese tradition, an ardent embrace of modern Western concepts of science and democracy, and a strong drive for national salvation, which spread from major cities into the provinces. Since then,

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competing explanations about the movement have also been presented.

Leo Ou-fan Lee, in his *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, concludes that the movement is analogous not so much to the European Renaissance, as Hu Shi declared, but rather to the European Romantic Movement. Both China's Literary Revolution and Europe's Romantic Movement "represented a reaction against the classic tradition of order, reason, schematization, ritualization, and structuring of life. Both ushered in ... the primacy of subjective human sentiments and energies." For Lee, the spirit of Romanticism better characterizes the May-Fourth generation.

Vera Schwarcz, who holds the Chinese enlightenment view, maintains that the May Fourth Movement should be seen as marking the beginning of modern Chinese history. Like the May Fourth intellectuals themselves who believed that "they had achieved something unprecedented," Schwarcz, in her book, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, also argues that the May

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3 Hu Shih emphasizes the significance of the movement's cultural rather than its social and political activities. He paid a lot more attention to the new literature movement, especially the vernacular problem. That is why he regards the movement as "the Chinese Renaissance."
Fourth Movement had a far more enduring significance than its role in "political patriotism," — meaning the anti-imperialist protest and the demands for China's rights -- or in "the literary inventiveness of its participants." Instead, the May Fourth was marked by "enlightenment," which is defined by Immanuel Kant as "man's emergence from his self-inflicted immaturity." It "marked the first of a series of incomplete efforts to uproot feudal feudalism while pursuing the cause of a nationalist revolution."4

Some scholars, however, have begun to see beyond these themes and explore more deeper the complexity of the movement. Lin Yu-sheng argues that the totalistic anti-traditionalism of the May Fourth period came from Chinese tradition itself. Despite their radical attacks on tradition, the May Fourth intellectuals were not without traditional elements in their thinking. They were deeply influenced by a "monistic and intellectualistic mode of thinking" and therefore looked on Chinese society as a highly integrated organism shaped by fundamental ideas. Only by a complete transformation of the traditional Chinese worldview and a

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total reconstruction of the traditional Chinese mentality could China thus be regenerated.  

Hao Chang disputes the homogeneity of the May Fourth's discourse and in his synthesis defines it as the interaction of various cultural discourses. He points out that the May Fourth thinking transcended the themes of democracy, science, nationalism, and antitraditionalism. He holds that nationalism and internationalism, rationalism and romanticism, individualism and collectivism, skepticism and religiosity all co-existed within the May Fourth discourse. Part of its dynamism, he argues, reflects the tensions between competing poles. Therefore, where iconoclasm, or the discussion of liberation from tradition, was the major theme of the May Fourth discourse, around it revolved broad, complex, and sometimes conflicting ideals.

Because the May Fourth Movement holds such crucial importance in the development of modern Chinese history, it has fascinated many scholars. In the works just reviewed, the movement itself has often been considered the watershed

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6 Hao Chang, "Xingxiang yu shizhi: zairen wusl sixiang" (Image and Reality: a Reexamination of the May Fourth Thinking) in *Ziyou minzhu de..."
of China's modern cultural-intellectual transformation, a transformation which initiated a new era characterized by a complete break with China's past. Some scholars, however, have examined a deeper, more complex part of the country's cultural-intellectual transformation. In his study of Yan Fu (1853-1921), for instance, Benjamin Schwartz describes the inner-dynamics of the Chinese traditional value system for its self-transformation. In his study of Liang Qichao's intellectual transition, Hao Chang provided us a new dimension of the inner-dynamics of Chinese tradition, especially the Neo-Confucian tradition, and proved that China's modern cultural-intellectual transformation had begun by 1890 and lasted for over twenty years. In his later works, Chang further defines the period of intellectual transition from traditional to modern China as having lasted from 1895 to 1920. He calls this period a "transitional era" because of the breakthrough changes in

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sixiang yu wenhua (The Liberal and Democratic Thinking and Culture (Taiwan: Zili wanbaoshe, 1990), pp. 23-57.


institutions, in the media, and in the content of ideas which flourished during this period.\(^9\)

Kirk Denton calls into question the universality of Western literary values and the possibility of their being grafted seamlessly onto another cultural tradition without undergoing substantial metamorphosis. He argues that modern Chinese literary discourse and the discourse of modernity were not empty imitations unaltered from the Western cultural-historical context. Instead, the discourse was deployed by Chinese intellectuals and reinterpreted in its new context. And in the process of reinvention, tradition exerted an inevitable influence.\(^10\) No matter how much scholars may disagree in their interpretations of the May Fourth Movement, no one denies its vital importance in modern Chinese history.

The May Fourth Movement provided an electrified environment for young Chinese intellectuals, such as the students from Hunan First Normal School, to be exposed to the latest theories, including Marxism, which in turn facilitated their intellectual transformation. The historical, political, and intellectual situations of the

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1910s in Hunan, as well as the First Normal School itself, including its faculty, also played an important role in the intellectual formation and transformation of the generation of students who attended the First Normal in the 1910s. However, in the People's Republic of China, studies done on this period, such as China Social Sciences Institute Modern Chinese History Department's Wu si aiguo yundong (The May Fourth Patriotic Movement) Vol. 1, Hunan renmin chubanshe's Wusi yundong zai Hunan--huiyilu (The May Fourth Movement in Hunan--Reflections), Song Feifu's Xinmin xeihui (New Citizen Association), Zhonggong Hunan dangshiwei's Hunan renmin geminshi (The Revolutionary History of Hunan People), Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiushuo's Wusi yundong huiyilu (Reflections of the May Fourth Movement, Zhou Yanyu's Mao Zedong and Zhou Shizhao, and the reflections of Xiao San, Zhou Shizhao, Li Weihan and others, usually center around Mao Zedong. The thoughts, actions, lives, and memories of the Hunan radicals who became early active Communists evolved into the thought of Mao Zedong, becoming official orthodoxy in the People's Republic. Outside China, the study of the Hunan First Normal radicals

has been largely neglected in academic circles. Scholars of this period have frequently displayed a bias towards major cities and leading figures, while neglecting outlying areas and less famous figures, such as Cai Hesen, Li Weihan, and Luo Xuezan. This dissertation approaches the problem from a different perspective.

There is, however, a rich scholarly literature on early Chinese Communism. In China, Wang Xingguo (Mao Zedong: Towards Marxism; The Development Pattern of Young Mao Zedong's Thought),¹¹ Gao Jucun (Young Mao Zedong),¹² and Li Rui (Mao Zedong tongzhi di chuqi geming huodong (Early revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong),¹³ are among the leading scholars who have discussed the subject. Some of the scholarship, however, still has not broken from the Maoist focus. In the United States, Maurice Meisner and Stuart Schram are two influential scholars who have addressed the subject. Although their work and that of others provide much insight into the broader picture, there


¹³ Li Rui, Mao Zedong tongzhi di chuqi geming huodong (Early revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1957).
has not been enough attention given to the relationship between Chinese tradition and the early Chinese Communist movement.

Some scholars have gone to another extreme. In his analysis of Maoism, Jin Guantao claims that Marxism and Leninism were totally Confucianized by Maoist Communists. In his study of the relationship between Mao Zedong and Huxiang culture,14 Peng Dacheng maintains that Mao's thought mainly developed from Huxiang culture, especially from Wang Fuzhi’s (1619-1692), a famous Confucian scholar of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Both of them believe that Mao’s thought was developed from the Confucian tradition, and they downplay the influence that Mao had received from other sources, such as Western thought.

This dissertation draws on existing works about the May Fourth Movement and early Chinese Communism, but it is

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14 Huxiang culture refers to the heritage of the Hunan local culture. It was deeply influenced by the Confucian Li School (School of Principle). However, it added a unique characteristic of emphasizing "jingshi zhuyong" (bureaucratic statecraft) as an addition to classical Confucian tradition. "Jingshi" is conventionally translated as "bureaucratic statecraft". However, Hao Chang maintains that the literal translation of the phrase is "setting the world in order" or "ordering world." He corrects the prevailing view of jingshi, which is a one-sided interpretation of its meaning. He points out that jingshi includes three principal layers of its meaning in the historical context of the Neo-Confucian tradition. "Bureaucratic statecraft" is only one of the three layers of its meaning, and its broad meaning -- inner-worldly outlook orientation needs our more attention. Hao Chang, "The Intellectual Heritage of the Confucian Ideal of Ching-shih" in Tu Wei-ming, ed.,
mostly based on primary materials available in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province. This dissertation tries to break from the Maoist center by examining the intellectual transformation of the neglected, lesser known, but important figures in Hunan who were active in the New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement, the Work-Study Movement, and played a leading role in the early Chinese Communist period. By doing so it will give these so-called marginal persons the credit they deserved. Before, the past glory and credit had gone to Mao. This study also tries to avoid the weakness of the existing works. For one reason or another, the existing literature, either did not touch the relationship between Chinese tradition and the early Chinese Communist Movement, or went to another extreme by claiming Maoist Communism was totally from Chinese tradition. This dissertation tries to look at the issues and subjects involved from a more balance and objective viewpoint. It will examine the relationship between Chinese tradition and early Chinese Communist. The May Fourth Movement in Hunan, therefore, will appear in a new fuller dimension. Examination of the intellectual development of the Changsha radicals and their transition

will deepen our understanding of the dynamics of China's transition into modernity and shed light on the genesis of Chinese Communism.

Since the Hunan First Normal School was an ordinary normal school, how could it have fostered so many radical intellectuals in the second decade of the twentieth century, most of whom became important figures in early Chinese Communism during the early 1920s? This dissertation addresses this question. The intent of the study is to examine the historical, political, and intellectual milieus with which these Changsha radicals interacted. The historical and political milieus included the changes, chaos, darkness, humiliation, and crisis that the country experienced in the last years of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and during the early Republican period.

The intellectual milieu included the increasing crisis and radicalized ideological changes in China since the late Qing period. Because their country had been constantly beaten and bullied by foreign powers, these Changsha radicals faced a national and a moral crisis. The traditional value system was seriously challenged. They searched for the secret weapon that the West had and China lacked to regenerate their country in the modern world.
The history of the Hunan First Normal School is a tapestry woven of Chinese traditional and modern Western threads. Chinese tradition figured significantly in the character of the school. Western ideas, as well as the contemporary social, political, and intellectual circumstances also contributed to its policies and practices. The school's educational philosophy, policies, practices, important teachers and radical students as well as their intellectual transitions will be examined and framed in the larger social context. By analyzing the social, political, and intellectual backgrounds, I will provide a better understanding of its effects on the First Normal School policies and practices. However, historical facts or evidence, both theoretical and empirical, exist there passively, and need to be treated both topically and chronologically. Chronology alone is not history. A chronicle gives "a simple narrative" while history provides "a significant narrative." As W. H. Walsh maintains: "The historian is not content to tell us merely what happened; he wishes us to see why it happened, too."^15 This dissertation, therefore, will go beyond narrative description and present

a systematic narrative interpretation. It includes commentary, which delves into the intellectual development of Hunan radicals from the Hunan First Normal School. It will examine these radicals' intellectual formation and transformation at First Normal and their radicalization into Communism after they graduated from the school.

Hunan, an inland province in China, has been one of the most culturally sophisticated provinces in China for hundreds of years. It also had a reputation for anti-foreignism in the 19th century. It became the intellectual hotbed for modern Western ideas, including iconoclasm, Marxism, and Communism in the early twentieth century. The province also played a unique role in the modern Chinese revolution. Charlton M. Lewis compares Hunan to Prussia for having produced great generals and conservative aristocrats, to Hungary for having produced great nationalists, to Britain for having produced great reformers, and to France for having produced great revolutionists.¹⁶ In his study of Hunan, Lewis argues that the rise of Hunan stemmed from deep traditional roots. He also points out that Hunan, the most reactionary province in China from one point of view

produced a record number of radicals in the twentieth century. Although Hunan was one of the most culturally advanced provinces in China, it was conservative and comparatively backward compared to big coastal cities like Shanghai. However, within Hunan, Changsha was the major commercial city of the region, and it had stronger economic links with the sub-regions than any had with cities outside the region. Changsha had a dense population and a better transportation network.

In the May Fourth period, the most important and radical youths of the First Normal— Cai Hesen (1895-1931), Mao Zedong (1893-1976), He Shuheng (1876-1935), Zhang Kundi (1890-1930), Li Weihan (1897-1984), Chen Chang (1894-1930), Luo Xuezhan (1893-1930), Xiao Zisheng (1894-1957), and Xiao San (1896-1983) -- came from peripheral agrarian counties, Yongfeng, Xiangxiang, and Ningxiang in Hunan. These counties often lay in hilly regions, had less fertile soil and poorly irrigated land by comparison, and also relatively sparse population. They were often very conservative, comparatively isolated, and had strong faith in Confucian tradition. Yet, when the youths who came from these agrarian, backward, and conservative counties arrived in Changsha, they formed a

\[17\] Ibid.
significant radical force which directed fierce attacks on all forms of tradition.

The radicalization of the youth from peripheral counties seems to confirm the conventional view that the peripheries and regional frontiers have provided the base areas both for China's traditional rebellions and for her modern revolution. However, provincial radicalism is not the privilege of hinterlanders for expressing their frustration. Regarding the radicalization of the First Normal students in the May Fourth period, it was the specific historical and intellectual circumstances of Hunan, such as the Taiping heritage that left a powerful Hunan elite, the Hunanese xenophobia that made the Western penetration a slow in process, but abrupt after 1900, and the Huxiang heritage, with its emphasis on jingshi zhiyong, that played an important role in their ideological transformation.

Although Changsha was opened as a treaty port only in 1904, when the students from the conservative and peripheral counties came to the capital city to study at the First Normal School in the 1910s, they found themselves greatly astonished. These students faced a totally new world both in space and time, and were exposed to new ideas, new thoughts, new concepts, and new knowledge - so different from home.
Also, they immediately felt the great impact of the Western powers in the regional commercial center of Changsha, which they had rarely noticed at home. The sharp differences they felt between the two worlds, home and school, past and present, the national crisis and moral crisis they were facing, as well as the new knowledge and new ideas they learned from school, made them consciously and seriously think and question. Also, since they had imbibed Chinese traditional and Western learning, values, ideologies, and concepts in their complex and changing circumstances, and to solve the national, moral, and personal crisis they were facing, these Changsha radicals had to search among these values, ideologies, and concepts, which eventually led them to a radicalized, cultural iconoclasm and finally to their embracing communism.

To place Hunan in historical context, we see that its political economy held a significant position in the late Qing period. The proverb, "Hunan shu, tianxia zu" (If the Hunan harvest is full, the empire will have plenty), could itself illustrate something of the important economic position Hunan possessed at that time. The impact, the changes, chaos, and humiliation left by Western penetration, the Taiping Uprising, and civil wars between the warlords
also deeply affected the province. When we review the intellectual background of Hunan, we see that it not only had a profound Confucian tradition, but also developed its own local cultural tradition, Huxiang Culture. Wang Fuzhi, Wei Yuan, Zeng Guofan, Tan Sitong, Yang Changji, and Mao Zedong all made contributions to the idea of jingshi, and all came from the province of Hunan. Wang Fuzhi, a heterodox Confucian and staunch anti-Manchu fighter, who experienced the disasters the Manchu imposed on the Han people when they first conquered the Ming, emphasized that the national [ethnic] interests should be regarded the highest. Wang’s thought had great influence on later generations of the Hunanese literati. In 1827, Wei Yuan and He Changling edited a book called Jingshi weibian (Jingshi Collections), which deals with bureaucratic statecraft. This book highlighted the growing importance of jingshi in Confucianism. In the mid-nineteenth century, Zeng Guofan added one category -- jingshi -- to the Confucian syllabus with the intent of rebuilding the empire’s social-political order. Therefore, from the early nineteenth century on, the idea of jingshi became prevalent among Hunanese scholars and prominent in the Confucian syllabus.
Yang Changji (1871-1920), a well-known Neo-Confucian as well as a man of Western learning (he studied in Japan, Britain, and German for over ten years, receiving an M. A. in Japan and a Ph.D. in Britain), was a great admirer of Wang Fuzhi and Wei Yuan. An ethics teacher at the Hunan First Normal school before the May Fourth Movement, he was one of the most influential and respected teachers at the school. He urged his students to study all aspects of Western thought and institutions, but he never let his students forget their own national heritage. While guiding his students toward the radical Westernized and iconoclastic magazine, Xin Qingnian (New Youth), he also directed them to another group of scholars from Chuanshan xueshe (Chuanshan Association), who were seeking inspiration for a rebirth of their country within Chinese tradition itself, particularly in the writings of the great Hunanese scholar of the early seventeenth century, Wang Fuzhi (or Chuanshan). The teacher-student relationship back then was much closer in spirit to the traditional Chinese sage-disciple

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18 Tan Sitong's teacher, Liu Renxi, founded Chuanshan xueshe in June 1914 in Changsha. He then became the main lecturer of the Chuanshan xueshe, and the First Normal students often went there to listen to his lectures.
relationship. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine what a profound influence this had on his students.

Although historically the May Fourth Movement in Hunan was a part of the broad national May Fourth Movement, it had unique characteristics that made it distinct from processes in major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. The May Fourth Movement itself was constructed from many strands of activism. As Wen-hsin Yeh points out, there was a deep division among intellectuals over the issues of political activism even before the May Fourth Movement. Some believed that cultural enlightenment was their primary mission; others regarded social re-energization as their ultimate goal. Among the latter, several distinct threads of thought coexisted. Political activists who embraced the early Communist movement were one of these threads. These manifold intellectual trends of thought shared the historical moment of the May Fourth Movement, and the supporters of each school pursued their own goals within their own realm.¹⁹ Wen-hsin Yeh believes that the May Fourth radical youth from Hangzhou were the pioneering Communists. Thereby, the origins of the Chinese Communist Party should be traced to

the Zhejiang First Normal School in Hangzhou,\textsuperscript{20} which I do not agree. I will argue that the Hunan First Normal School played a larger role in the founding of the Chinese Communist Party.

Among the May Fourth activists was a group of radicals in Hunan, who were graduates and students of the Hunan First Normal School. On the one hand, most of these Changsha radicals were from poor families. They came from marginal, agrarian backwaters, and more conservative villages. On the other hand, they were serious-minded young people who had no time to discuss trivialities but only large matters—the nature of man, human society, China, the world, and the universe.\textsuperscript{21}

By 1918, they formed a more closely knit organization—\textit{Xinmin xuehui} (New People's Study Association). There were twenty-one founding members, but twenty of the twenty-one were from First Normal. The group played a leading role in the New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement, and the Work-Study Movement and had a widespread influence on the affairs and destiny of China. Although the \textit{Xinmin xuehui}

\textsuperscript{20} Wen-hsin Yeh, \textit{Provincial Passages -- Cultural, Space, and the Origins of Chinese Communism}.

members were split in the summer of 1920, some of the members advocated more moderate educational reforms as means to save China, the majority of its members embraced Communism. The Xinmin xuehui had over seventy members by 1920, and “nearly all of them later on became distinguished activists in the Communist movement in China.” Many became founding figures and important leaders of the early Chinese Communist Party (CCP) — Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, He Shuheng, and Li Weihan. The majority of the Xinmin xuehui members were killed by the Nationalist Party (Guomindang or KMT) in the 1927 White Terror (a massacre of Chinese Communist Party members and proto-CCP Chinese by Nationalist Party). Given that twenty of twenty-one founding members of the Xinmin xuehui were all from First Normal and many became the founding figures of the early CCP, one cannot overlook the immense contributions First Normal made to the student and youth movements during the May Fourth period and the Revolution, and a fostering place for so many young people’s intellectual transformation and radicalization, which in turn, had great influence on subsequent events in Hunan and all of China.

22 Emi Siao (Xiao San), *Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth*, p. 57.

This dissertation analyzes Hunan radicals' thinking and how it was formed and developed at the First Normal School. For instance, while radically attacking the Confucian tradition, especially the Confucian lijiao, or waifan daode (outer virtues, ethics of social constraints), they unconsciously had a strong reliance on Confucian values, which is Confucian neihua daode (inner virtues, ethics of virtues). It also examines their ideological transformation and radicalization into communism after they graduated from First Normal. By examining their intellectual transition, this dissertation will show that some of the figures in the May Fourth Movement and early Chinese Communism generally considered marginal need a new appraisal. The study will also reveal that Confucian values played a certain role in their intellectual transformation, and their early communist activities, which in turn, suggests that the early Chinese communist movement was not without connections with Chinese tradition.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part one examines the historical, political, and intellectual milieu of Hunan. It will be further divided into two sections. The

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*24 For detailed discussion on "waifan daode" and "neihua daode," see Hao Chang, Youan yishi yu minzhu chuautong (The Democratic Tradition and the
first section of part one deals with the situational factors and intellectual background of Hunan, especially the formation and development of Huxiang culture and the Hunanese scholars' contribution to the Neo-Confucian tradition -- making jingshi prominent in the Confucian syllabus towards the end of the Qing dynasty. The second section of part one deals with the historical and intellectual background of Hunan from the late Qing to the May Fourth period.

Part two moves to the provincial capital city of Changsha, focusing on youths who came to the First Normal School to study from peripheral counties. This part is divided into four sections. The first section of this part examines the practices and philosophy of the Hunan First Normal School from 1903, when it was founded, until the early Republican period, actually prior to 1912. The second section of this part examines the refined and reconfigured content, practice, curriculum, policy, and philosophy of the First Normal's education, in response to the changing political and historical circumstances in China in the period from the Republican Revolution until the May Fourth
Movement. The third section looks at the teachers' generation at the First Normal School during this period. Through the study of both their own and their students' writings, diaries, letters, texts, and class-notes, I will show what a profound impact they made on their students' lives and their intellectual development. The fourth section will examine the students' generation of the First Normal during the period from the Republican Revolution until the May Fourth Movement through textual study of their writings, lives, and activities. It examines the ideological transformation of the generation of students at the First Normal who eventually became the founders, principal ideologues, and activists of the Chinese Communist Party. It explores the process by which the curriculum, environment, staff, political and social forces in the school, in the surrounding city, and in the surrounding countryside contributed to the transformation in thinking of the student body. It also examines how traditional Confucian values played a role in the students' radicalization. It further examines the process of change and constancy at the school, its peculiar blend of Western and traditional Chinese ideas that brought clarification and lucidness to an understanding of China's modern history. Finally, it examines the
students’ transformation into communists through a study of their writings, lives, trends of thoughts, and activities, where one sees linkages between the rise of early Chinese communism and the Hunan First Normal School in Changsha. It also analyzes the complexity of these youths’ thinking when they turned toward communism. It reveals the part, which Chinese tradition played in the early Chinese Communist movement, for instance, the emphasis on subjective initiative, the unity of knowledge and action, and labeling themselves as the xianzhixianjue (the farsighted).
CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL MILIEUS OF HUNAN, 1895-1907

The Chinese people were well known for their great cultural pride. China, with its vast territory, large population, and long history, was the core civilization in East Asia for centuries. It was a role model for her neighboring nations in cultural affairs, politics, institutions, and economic life. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Chinese pride was seriously shaken by a series of humiliating foreign military incursions, beginning with the Opium War of 1839-1842. Worse came when China was defeated by Japan, seen as a "petty oriental barbarian," in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. As a result, China was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki,¹ which exposed clearly the weakness of the Qing

¹ The Treaty of Shimonoseki of April 1895 required that China recognize the independence of Korea, cede Taiwan, the Pescadores and the Liaodong Peninsula, pay an indemnity of 200 million silver taels, open four ports and allow Japanese to manufacture locally in China.
The defeat in the Sino-Japanese War and the impositions of Shimonoseki infuriated the nation, especially the intellectuals. It also greatly shattered national prestige and traditional self-confidence. Externally, these setbacks invited further encroachment in the "scramble" for concessions, and internally they encouraged movements for reform and revolution. They made Chinese intellectuals pay serious attention to the reform of their country with the goal of standing up to the imperialist powers. Chinese intellectuals realized that if China were to survive in the modern world, she would have to relinquish some of the old, and assimilate some of the new.²

This chapter discusses the rise, the growth, and the climax of the reform movement in Hunan in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It discusses the reforms that the reformers carried out in Hunan in the last few years of the 1890s, as well as the conservative opposition to reformist ideas. It also discusses the Western impact on the leading Hunanese and the rise of nationalism.

² Liyan Liu, Yixue boshi Hume zhai Zhongguo (Edward H. Hume M.D. in China) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Yinhe Press, 2000), pp. 6-8.
The Growth of the Reform Movement in Hunan, 1895-1896

In Hunan, the reforms began three years before the Hundred Days of Reform of 1898. They were encouraged, as Charlton M. Lewis points out, by a fortunate combination of reform-minded officials. First was Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), the governor-general of Hunan and Hubei from 1889 to 1896(?) ; he had promoted educational, railway, mining, and industrial projects since 1889. In 1895, he supported Kang Youwei’s (1858-1927) Society for National Strengthening (Qiangxue hui) and his newspaper, the Qiangxue bao. He had close connections with a number of reform-minded officials and elites in Hunan. He worked closely with a second important official in the province, Chen Baozhen (1831-1900), who served as the governor of Hunan between the years of 1895 and 1898. A third important official was the education commissioner, Jiang Biao (1860-1899). A native of Suzhou, Jiang received the highest, jinshi, degree in 1889. Besides his deep learning in classics, Jiang was also well versed in Western learning. He was interested in foreign affairs and had studied at the Interpreters College (Tongwen guan) in

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3 Chen Baozhen was a reform-minded Hunan xunfu from 1895 to 1898, which is equivalent to today’s Governor of Hunan province.
He was a founding member of the Society for National Strengthening in 1895.

Early reforms in Hunan accorded with the national atmosphere of the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1894). They began with the reform-minded governor Chen Baozhen’s memorial of 1895, which advocated establishment of a government mining bureau and other innovative commercial and technological projects. In 1895, Chen Baozhen established a Mining Bureau to exploit Hunan’s extensive mineral resources. In the following years, a telegraph line between Changsha and Hankou, a police bureau, an arsenal, a chemical company, and a company that provided electric lighting for schools and examination halls were established. The electric company, however, only lasted until 1899 when it went bankrupt.4

More impressive was the attempt given to reform the educational system. As soon as Jiang Biao took the position of Education Commissioner of Hunan in 1894, he began to reform the traditional Confucian academies by emphasizing “Jingshi zhiyong.” He added geography and mathematics to the classical subjects required in the civil service

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4 Hunan Shengzhi: Hunan jinbai nian dashijishu (Hunan Provincial Annals: Chronological record of major events in Hunan during the past one hundred years) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1959), vol. 1, p. 126-129.
examinations for the first, shengyuan, degree. Jiang introduced classes in geography, mathematics, and foreign languages. He brought to school the scientific instruments, chemicals, and models for experiments in chemistry and electricity. He established a study society (the Xiangxue hui), and a reform newspaper, the Xiangxue bao (Hunan reform news), to promote a cautious program of reform. The Xiangxue bao mainly introduced Western politics, laws, and cultures, which included the news and knowledge of history, geography, mathematics, business, diplomacy, and science.

By 1897, the reform movements in Hunan were flourishing and Governor Chen Baozhen diligently sought to implement a thoroughgoing program of reform in the province. At first, his reforms received a broad consensus of support. For instance, even the senior Hunanese elites welcomed the approval of young activists like Tan Sitong (1865-1898) and Tang Caichang (1867-1900). However, those senior Hunanese elites, the "conservative" faction in provincial politics, later adhered to the traditional pragmatic conservatism of Hunan that emphasized jingshi (statecraft). Pragmatic conservatism had revived and enjoyed considerable success

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5 Ibid., p. 138-139.
6 Ibid., p. 138-139.
under the leadership of Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) during the Tongzhi Restoration. Since then, jingshi had remained a very important element in the culture of Hunan and its Confucian tradition. Those senior elites followed the statecraft theorists in stressing the importance of increased gentry involvement and power in local government. For instance, they invested heavily in new industrial enterprises.

Within the group, Wang Xianqian (1842-1918) was the most prominent member. He was a former Hanlin compiler and Jiangsu education commissioner who had returned to Hunan to be president of the famous Yuelu Academy in Changsha. Although he was a famous scholar, known for his classical commentaries, massive compilations, and extensive private library, Wang energetically advocated commercial investment by the gentry. He personally invested in a couple of commercial enterprises. Wang even supported the initial

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7 Zeng Guofan (1811-72) was a leading Confucian scholar, general and loyal statesman of the late Qing dynasty. Born in Hunan, Zeng had a successful official career, rising to posts in the Hanlin Academy and the Board of Rites. In 1853, he was ordered by the imperial court to raise troops, in his home province to suppress the Taiping Rebellion. His Xiang Army was the inspiration for Li Hongzhang's Huai Army. He was also a supporter of the construction of the jiangnan Arsenal and other Self-Strengthening Movement enterprises. Michael Dillon, ed., China: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary (Richmond, Surrey, GB: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 376.

8 Wang Xianqian was interested and successful in commercial affairs. For instance, he had a gold mine in Pingjiang, and had a big house in Changsha which was known as “the palace”. Fei Xingjian, Jindai mingren
moderate educational reforms of Jiang Biao. He encouraged his students to read the reformist *Journal of Current Affairs* (*Shiwu bao*), edited in Shanghai by Liang Qichao.

**The Climax Of The 1897-1898 Reform Movement In Hunan And Its Failure**

The reform movement in Hunan reached its climax in September 1897, with the opening of the Current Affairs School (*Shiwu xuetang*). Wealthy Hunanese financed the school’s buildings and equipment, and the government mines were expected to provide additional funds for the school. The school was widely supported by the Hunanese literati, as is evident from its endowment (an annual fund of twenty thousand dollars was subscribed by early July) and the keen competition for admission. Out of 4,000 candidates for the initial round of entrance examinations in September, only forty were accepted for the first class.*

The goal of the Current Affairs School was to train students to become a new type of capable men. Students were

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9 *Hunan Shengzhi*, p. 139-140; Sun Hailin claims that the Current Affairs School was set up by the famous Hunanese reformers Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, and Xiong Xiling, with the support and cooperation of Governor, Chen Baozhen and judicial commissioner, Huang Zunxian. The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949* (The History of Hunan First Normal School--1903-1949) (Shanghai: Shanghai Educational Press, 1983), p. 2.
well educated in traditional Chinese as well as Western subjects. Courses were divided into two categories — "extensive study" and "intensive study." Their textbooks were also divided into two types as "intensive reading" and "extensive reading". Since the philosophy and the curriculum of the Current Affairs School were totally new by then, the school played an enlightening role in Hunan's educational reform. It had a tremendous influence on subsequent educators in Hunan.

It was also in 1897 that the Hunanese gentry began to perceive a radical dimension in the educational reform program; this in turn destroyed the elites' support for reform one year later. The first radical shift apparent to the gentry was the appointment of Huang Zunxian\(^\text{10}\) in 1897 as salt intendant and later as the judicial commissioner. A native of Guangdong, Huang was a distinguished diplomat. He had twelve years of government service in Tokyo, San Francisco, London, and Singapore. He was also a dedicated reformer. He was deeply impressed with Japan's success in the Meiji period and was eager to apply the lessons of the Meiji Restoration to China. He wrote a book on Meiji Japan.

\(^{10}\) Huang Zunxian was a reform-minded provincial official, anchashi of Hunan in 1897, which is roughly equivalent to today's chief prosecutor of a high court.
which was widely read in Hunan. This book later helped to inspire the Guangxu Emperor’s Hundred Days of reform of 1898. Although he only stayed ten months in Changsha, Huang introduced some enduring reform measures to the province, and because of his influence, some other reformers from Guangdong province were brought to Hunan.\(^\text{11}\)

In the fall of 1897, Huang suggested that Xu Renzhu (1863-1900) replace Jiang Biao as educational commissioner. Xu, then 34 years old, was a son of a prominent Hanlin compiler, and a good friend of Tan Sitong. Xu was an active reform advocate in Beijing. As soon as Xu Renzhu took Jiang Biao’s place as educational commissioner in the fall of 1897, Kang Youwei’s teachings came to Hunan, with the support of Xu Renzhu. Xu was a sincere admirer and enthusiastic advocate of Kang’s ideas. Xu was also a good friend of Liang Qichao; he was able to mobilize considerable government support of Liang’s work at the Current Affairs School.\(^\text{12}\)


Huang Zunxian, the judicial commissioner of Hunan, was also a good friend of Liang Qichao. In 1896, Huang and Liang had worked together to set up the Current Affairs News (Shiwu bao) in Shanghai. Soon after he arrived in Changsha, Huang suggested that Liang Qichao be invited to accept the post of dean of Chinese studies at the new Current Affairs School; he also proposed that Li Weige, a translator for the Current Affairs News (Shiwu bao) be appointed as dean of Western studies. When Liang arrived in Changsha, he brought with him three Cantonese students of Kang Youwei, Han Wenju (1855-1937), Ou Jujia (n.f.), and Ye Juemai (n.f.), who became assistant deans at the school. The appointments of the faculty at the Current Affairs School were approved by the provincial elites. The school was soon dominated by Liang Qichao’s Cantonese friends and his Hunanese followers, a new group of young Hunanese gentry activists such as Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, and the director of the school, Xiong Xiling. These people were remarkably young. In 1897, Tan,


14 Ibid., p. 40.

15 *Hunan Shengzhi*, p. 140.
the oldest, was 32; Tang was 30; Xiong was 27; and Liang Qichao was only 24.

Xiong Xiling (1870-1942), a native of Fenghuang, Hunan, was the son of a military officer. He was a brilliant student and was regarded as the "boy genius of Hunan." In 1895, he obtained the highest, jinshi, degree at the remarkably early age of 24. In 1894, Xiong Xiling entered the political life of the capital with a three-year appointment to the Hanlin Academy. Then he was obliged to return to his native Hunan because of his series of memorials opposing peace with Japan during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895. Xiong worked with such reform leaders as Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, and Liang Qichao in the Nan xuehui (the South China Study Society). Xiong also served as the director at the Current Affairs School in Changsha.¹⁶

In the aftermath of the Hundred Days Reform, Xiong was cashiered and barred from the office, but he was soon called back to serve in the government. In 1905, he accompanied his boss on a tour of Europe and the United States to study constitutional government. He was soon appointed financial superintendent and later salt commissioner in Manchuria.

When the Republic was established in 1912, Xiong was appointed minister of finance. Between 1913 and 1914, he also served as premier of the first Republican cabinet. The formation of the "first caliber" cabinet marked not only the apogee of Xiong's political career but also the end of responsible parliamentary rule in early Republican China.¹⁷

Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang were the most radical reformers among the Hunanese activists. Both of them were brilliant scholars and ardent reformers with physical courage. They represented a new type of patriotic idealist that was just starting to emerge in China. Tan was born into a leading Hunanese gentry family in Beijing in 1864. He had a traditional education, but was attracted to knight errant ideals. Although his native town was the turbulent district of Liuyang, in Hunan, on the hilly Jiangxi border, most of Tan's time was spent outside Hunan. He also traveled very extensively throughout China. After China's defeat in the

¹⁷ After 1914 Xiong ceased to be of major political importance in China. But as his political stature waned, Xiong began earning a reputation for philanthropy and charitable works. He gained prominence for his direction of famine relief activities in north China after the tragic flood of 1917 in Hebei. In 1918, he founded a home for orphaned children located in the Western Hills near Beijing, which became widely and favorably known. He moved to Hong Kong in 1937 and died there in 1942 shortly after the Japanese occupation of that colony. Xiong Xiling therefore, was best known as the premier of the "first caliber cabinet" of 1913-14. After 1914, he was best remembered as a philanthropist and sponsor of charitable works. Boorman, ed., Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, Vol. 4., p. 108-110.
1894-95 war with Japan, Tan was shocked and began reading works on Western science and technology; he also contacted Kang Youwei and began to study Buddhism. He began to write his best-known work, Renxue (On Benevolence), as an attempt to synthesize Confucianism, Buddhism, and western science into a worldview. Tan believed that ren (benevolence) was the source of everything. He saw the inequality of traditional society, the "three bonds and five relationships"\(^{18}\) and the autocratic system of government as being in basic conflict with ren. His views were among the most extreme of the reformist group.\(^{19}\)

Tan took the civil service examination several times, but only earned the first, shengyuan, degree. He did not receive an official position in the government until the last three years of his life. In 1896, he received a supernumerary appointment in the local government at Nanjing. In the following year, he returned to Hunan at the

\(^{18}\) The three bonds refered to ruler to subject, father to son, and husband to wife; the five relationships refered to ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, brother-brother, and friend-friend relationships.

invitation of the governor Chen Baozhen to take part in a reform program.²⁰

Tang Caichang had a similar background to Tan Sitong. He also came from Liuyang. Like Tan, he studied under a local scholar, Ouyang Zhonggu (n.f.), who was a devotee of the Han learning and of the late Ming Hunanese Confucian scholar, Wang Fuzhi. Tang also spent a great deal of time traveling outside Hunan, and was exposed to the New Text scholarship. In 1896, the two men launched study societies in their home districts, where they earned a reputation as the "two heroes of Liuyang." In 1897, Tang went back to Changsha to join the provincial reform movement. In Changsha, the two men worked together in setting up the new-style Current Affairs School. They also cooperated in establishing a military academy and a newspaper, Xiangpao (Hunan News) in Changsha.²¹

After the reforms in Hunan were held up by conservative gentry officials, Tan left for Beijing in the early summer of 1898 where he was just in time to plunge into Kang Youwei's reform movement. He was given an

important governmental job in the Grand Council and played a key role in the Hundred Days of Reform. When the reform movement was broken off by the Empress Dowager Cixi's coup d'état in September of that year, Tan, with five other reformers, was executed. Tan's martyrdom was especially heroic because he had the chance to escape arrest, but he refused to do so. He was said to have declared that no foreign reforms had succeeded without shedding blood, and that the shedding of blood in China's reform movement should start with his.\(^{22}\) Chang Hao points out that death was something Tan sought rather than something that circumstances imposed on him. When death finally came, he accepted it with a contempt and courage that became legendary. Tan, thus, became the most dramatic figure among his generation.\(^{23}\)

By November 1897, Hunan's reform movement was led by a new reform leadership, headed by Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, Liang Qichao, Huang Zunxian, and Xu Renzhu. Changsha was now ready for more radical reform. Their movement coincided with

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\(^{22}\) Ibid. p. 308.

\(^{23}\) For more information on Tan Sitong, especially on Tan's quest for the meaning of life and death as a whole, see Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, p. 66-103.
the German occupation of Qingdao and Jiaozhou Bay, Shandong in November 1897 and the beginning of the "Scramble for Concessions" by the imperialist powers. The Jiaozhou disaster, the scramble for concessions, and the weakness of the Qing government fostered a sense of crisis. The fear that China, like a melon, was about to be sliced up and partitioned among the great powers haunted the reformers and strengthened the belief of these young patriots that radical solutions were urgently needed if China were to be saved.

The young reformers hoped to save the country from foreign aggression. As this new patriotism swept through Hunan, a sense of alienation from the Qing government spread quickly. Serving as the dean of the Chinese studies at the Current Affairs School, Liang Qichao also conducted lectures at the School on current events and "new learning." Liang and his colleagues also distributed literary materials revived from the Ming resistance to the Manchu conquest in the seventeenth century. Although racial consciousness began

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24 The term "radical" and its cognates refer to some new types of political activities, such as strikes and demonstrations or new modes of beliefs, such as new structures of political power, not recognized as legitimate by the authorities of the state. Thus advocacy of parliamentary government was "radical" in 1897-98, but would not have been after 1906, when the Qing court announced its own preparations for constitutional government.
to appear frequently in Liang's reminding the Chinese race of the alien rule and in calls for "people's rights" (minquan), Charlton M. Lewis argues that it is misleading to insist that the main goal of these radical reformers was to overthrow the Qing dynasty. The proof was that as soon as the Guangxu Emperor attempted a national reform, Liang and his Hunanese friends immediately rallied around him, and continued to do so even after the Hundred Days Reform ended.²⁵

The most striking notion radicalization was Liang Qichao's suggestion to Governor Chen Baozhen in December 1897 that in order to preserve a base from which to secure the future regeneration of China, one or two centrally located and prosperous provinces should declare their independence (zìlì) and reform themselves as an example to the rest of the nation.²⁶ Liang held that once Hunan was reorganized independently it could become a catalyst for the recovery of China. Liang argued that although this advice might sound disloyal or rebellious, it was a necessary action to prepare for the day when all other provinces would

²⁵ Lewis, p. 49-50.

be ceded to or stolen by foreign powers. Thus, it was China's only hope now. Liang was not promoting provincial independence on the romantic ground of "Hunan for the Hunanese." He was arguing on a rational basis. He believed that since Hunan had its own reform-minded governor and some reformist provincial officials, and it had its enlightened literati, the province was a perfect place to implement ideas which could eventually save the nation. Although there soon rose a fierce attack on Liang's radical teachings at the Current Affairs School, his proposal for provincial autonomy and local self-government was never objected to by the provincial elites. This proposal for provincial independence actually echoed in Hunanese politics for nearly thirty years. It was a touchstone for political thinkers of all stripes until the Northern Expedition of 1926. 

Liang's objective was positive. He hoped to popularize radical reform. As soon as he arrived in Changsha, Liang began to teach Kang Youwei's interpretation of Confucianism at the Current Affairs School. He emphasized the origins of

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27 Charlton M. Lewis maintains that this proposal of Liang Qichao was not particularly radical, because in Hunan where the provincial elite had sometimes defied the central government over the issue of foreign encroachment. Lewis, p. 50.

the Chinese political reform in ancient times. His lectures were based on the *Mencius*, the *Gongyang Commentary* (a New Text document), and Kang Youwei's book, *Datongshu* (The Book on the Ideal of Grand Unity), which regarded Confucius as a reformer. When students showed their notes to relatives and friends during the New Year vacation, a great stir was set off throughout the entire province. People were shocked by the radical ideas taught at the Current Affairs School.²⁹

Around the same time, Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, and their literati friends from Hunan were urging the governor to approve the founding of a new type of study society — the South China Study Society (*Nan xuehui*). The South China Study Society started as an officially sanctioned gentry debating society. To Liang Qichao, study societies like the *Nan xuehui* embodied the secrets of national power and wealth in the West, where scholarly organizations existed in each different field. Liang observed they had also appeared in ancient China during Confucius' time. Since they were not new to either China or the West, study societies were the places to cultivate an eclectic search for knowledge and the

²⁹ *Hunan Shengzhi*, p. 139-140.
kind of egalitarian philosophy which represented the main
threads of Kang Youwei's writings.\footnote{Ibid., p. 146-152.}

The South China Study Society was also regarded by
Liang as the predecessor of a provincial legislature, which
would help protect the independence of Hunan. He later
recalled:

As the theory that the great powers were partitioning
China arose, Hunanese men of purpose all made plans for
the period after the disaster. They thought to preserve
Hunan's independence, but the independence movement
could not be simply empty talk. It was first necessary
that the people be versed in the art of politics and
experienced in self-government. Thus, we established
this society to discuss the matter and as a foundation
for the future. Later [its example] could be spread to
the other provinces of the South so that even in the
event of future partition, South China would escape
destruction.\footnote{Liang Qichao, Wuxu zhengbian ji (An Account of the 1898 Coup)
(Taipei: Reprinted, 1964), vol. 8, p. 10b.}

Many of the debates of the South China Study Society
were later published in the Xiang bao (Hunan News), a new
daily newspaper. The Xiang bao was planned by Xiong Xiling
in the winter of 1897, and launched in March 1898 under the
editorship of Tang Caichang and Tan Sitong, with subsidies
from Governor Chen Baozhen. Newspapers were crucial to the
educational mission of the reformers, and the Xiang bao
became an important addition to such organs as Shiwu bao
(Current Affairs News) in Shanghai and the Xiangxue bao (Hunan Reform News) in Changsha. The Xiang bao was distributed throughout the province and its stated purpose was to "spread the new trends and expand awareness."\textsuperscript{32}

The Xiang bao published some vague theories about parliamentary government, political parties, and people's rights which were derived from the classics and the example of the ancient sage-kings. Besides these radical theories, the Xiang bao also published some more moderate concrete proposals by Tang Caichang, Tan Sitong, and others for military academies, a modern Western-equipped army and navy, and improved training of officials in the ways of the West.\textsuperscript{33}

Stimulated by the newspapers and the South China Study Society, other reform institutions proliferated during the spring of 1898. Other associations grew up with more specific reformist objectives, such as one advocating marriage reform, a ban on foot binding, and a kind of program for women's liberation, and another urging people to simplify the wedding ceremony and to end fancy forms of

\textsuperscript{32} Xiang bao leizuan (Topical collection from the Xiang bao) (Shanghai, 1902; Taipei: Reprinted, 1968), vol. 1, p. 157.

\textsuperscript{33} Xiang bao leizuan, passim; Esherick, 15-16.
dress and expensive ways of entertaining guests.\textsuperscript{34} The young reformers were questioning basic social norms and the very style of gentry life.

Clearly, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, and the young reformers were using the new-style schools, such as the Current Affairs School, the new-style study associations, such as the South China Study Society, and the new-style newspaper, such as \textit{Xiang bao} (Hunan News), as instruments to launch a major reform movement. Under the inspiration of these reform activities, other reformist institutions sprang up rapidly in the province. At that time, there were fifty-one new-style schools, new-style study associations, and newspaper publishing houses in China. Among them, sixteen were in Hunan.\textsuperscript{35} The formation of the Current Affairs School especially inspired the enlightened intellectuals and young students. These reform activities also made gentry elites in the province vie with each other in following the model of the Current Affairs School to reform the old system of Confucian academies into modern

\textsuperscript{34} Hunan shengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (Committee for the Hunan provincial gazetteer), ed., \textit{Hunan jinbainian dashijishu} (Chronological record of major events in Hunan during the past one hundred years) (Changsha: Hunan People's Press, 1959), p. 150.

\textsuperscript{35} The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, p. 2.
schools, and to create new-style schools in Hunan. In this regard, the Current Affairs School was a pioneering experiment in Hunan's educational reform.

In the thrilling atmosphere of the day, the students and faculty at the Current Affairs School were occasionally allowed to criticize the autocracy and misgovernment of the Qing dynasty. Some forbidden works of the long-deceased Ming loyalists were reprinted. "The atmosphere in the school," Liang wrote later, "became more radical day by day."

In the South China Study Society, Liang Qichao and his reformer colleagues were talking about "equality" among all members of the study society and within the elite. The South China Study Society became part of the grand plan that Liang was preparing for Hunan. In a letter he sent to Governor Chen Baozhen in January 1898, Liang defined the goal of reform and outlined his ideal institutions. The Current Affairs School and the South China Study Society made the people enlightened; this popular knowledge (minzhi) should be extended as a basis for the peoples' political rights (minquan), and the people should share equal power with the local elite and government officials under a system of 

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American-like checks and balances. These young reformers, especially Tan Sitong, exhaustively studied the ancient writings of Mencius, the Gongyang Commentary, the Six Classics, and other classics, to show that people's rights really were inherent in the Chinese tradition.

Although the young reformers worked hard to search Chinese antiquity for reform precedents, some of their radical theories and ideas began to alarm the powerful and more orthodox members of the Hunanese elite. Among the group of the more orthodox Hunanese elite, many themselves had been supporters of Western-style studies and institutions. Only when they realized how fundamentally Kang's ideas and the radical theories of the young reformers threatened the core values and institutions of the social order did they question the motives of the young reformers and gather opposition to their radical reforms. According to these critics the reforms and the theories of these radicals were not aimed at a defensive self-strengthening of China to protect tradition and to save the country, but were aggressively subverting Chinese tradition and making revolutionary changes in the social order. They saw the

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37 Liang Qichao, Wuxu zhengbian ji, vol. 3, p. 130-137.
ideas, institutions, and traditional socio-political structure under attack.

In the summer of 1898, the opposition was headed by Wang Xianqian (1842-1918) and Ye Dehui (1864-1927). They gradually gained the support of reform-minded officials like Zhang Zhidong and Chen Baozhen. Wang Xianqian (1842-1917), a native of Changsha, was a senior member of the Hunanese gentry and was very influential. With the highest jinshi degree and membership in the prestigious Hanlin Academy, Wang had a distinguished career which had its focus on scholarship and education. He served as educational commissioner in Jiangsu; he was the chief examiner for provincial examinations in Yunnan, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang; and he held posts in the State Historiographer’s Office (Guoshi guan). In 1889, he retired from government service and returned to his hometown in Hunan to head the Chengnan Academy; he later became the principal of the Yuelu Academy in the capital city of Changsha.38

A good friend of Governor Chen Baozhen, Wang had done much to support the initial moderate reforms in Hunan. Yet, according to Wang himself, it was only in February 1898,

38 Shao Yanmiao, Xinhai yilai renwu nianli lu (Who’s Who from the Republican Period to Present) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 84.
when he attended the inauguration of the South China Study Society with governor Chen Baozhen that he began to doubt the course of the reform movement. The inauguration of the South China Study Society was held at the Changsha Hall of Filial Purity (Xiaolian tang) on February 21, 1898. Provincial officials and gentry, such as Chen Baozhen, Huang Zunxian, Tan Sitong, Xiong Xiling, as well as commoners altogether over three hundred people attended. The opening address was given by the new chairman, Pi Xirui, which was followed by speeches given by Huang Zunxian, Tan Sitong, and the governor, Chen Baozhen. Wang was alarmed by the unorthodox tone of the speeches at the inauguration. Articles subsequently published in the Xiang bao (Hunan News) sounded even more threatening. Later, when Ye Dehui brought him the materials from the curriculum of the Current Affairs School, Wang was completely convinced that Kang Youwei and his followers were plotting rebellion.

Ye Dehui (1864-1927), a native of Xiangtan, Hunan, was only thirty-four years old in 1898. He was quite different

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39 This was the main hall of Xiaolian Academy, one of Changsha’s leading literary academies.


from Wang Xianqian but equally important. Ye was a brilliant scholar and bibliophile and earned the highest jinshi degree in 1889. He had served on the Board of Civil Appointments before he retired on his father's large inheritance. Much of his wealth was spent on books. He was also a connoisseur of painting. He firmly believed and enthusiastically proclaimed that study was the gateway to moral cultivation. As for the nation, Ye believed that China's best hope was to avoid all kinds of Western influence, so he had never taken any part in the self-strengthening projects in Hunan's reforms. His extreme rightist views, which conflicted with those of the young reformers, forced the Hunanese gentry to find a middle ground, a quest which became the conservative reaction of 1898.

Actually when the radical reformers were talking about "equality" in the South China Study Society, they meant equality within the elite. Their explicit goal was to expand gentry power. Many of them were influenced by such early Qing thinkers as Gu Yanwu, who had suggested that hereditary magistrates serve in their own provinces. Kang, Liang, and the young reformers often expressed opposition to the "law

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42 Shao Yanmiao, Xinhai yilai renwu nianli lu, p. 152.
of avoidance," which clearly showed their attempt to extend local gentry influence.⁴³

Wang Xianqian and the senior Hunanese elite not only needed to preserve the gentry's elite position, but to fight against the radical reformers' theory of "equality" within the elite. The idea that young men like Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang should be treated the same as the senior Hanlin scholars was unacceptable to the senior Hunanese gentry like Wang Xianqian. He and the emerging conservative gentry felt that the essence of Confucianism was opposed to such new theories as challenged the hierarchic order of society. Wang and the senior gentry were also disturbed by the young reformers' new interpretations of the classics; these interpretations they sincerely believed to be heterodox because they had devoted their whole lifetimes to the study of the Confucian classics. However, they were also inclined to defend Confucian orthodoxy on the basis of pure self-interest. With Kang Youwei rising to pre-eminence in Beijing and Liang Qichao uniting young Hunanese in schools and study societies in Changsha, Wang and the senior Hunanese gentry feared that their long-established gentry domination of Hunanese society and politics was going to be destroyed.

⁴³ Hunan xianzhi: Hunan jinbainian dashijishu, p. 147.
They were also concerned that the prominence of the Hunanese in the imperial bureaucracy was going to end. Even worse to Wang and the conservative elite was the likelihood that Kang, Liang, and their new Cantonese group already controlled the youth of Hunan. As one Hunan conservative put it, "Above, they [the reformers] have Cantonese support; below, they have a factional mob." Wang Xianqian himself also warned Governor Chen Baozhen:

Kang Youwei’s sentiments are perverse and rebellious. This everyone knows. His sworn partisans from Guangdong province support him most strongly. The situation is particularly difficult to fathom. They use Western studies to make themselves cultured and contact Western individuals to make themselves important. Their basic intention is to move north into Hunan, and their activities (to this end) have not changed.

It was clear that the Western learning which Kang, Liang, and their devotees from Guangdong advocated also threatened the Hunanese conservatives and enhanced their resistance. First, conservative gentry like Ye Dehui, firmly believed that keeping Chinese learning pure and keeping away all sorts of Western influences were the best hope for China. Secondly, the conservative Hunanese gentry never forgot how fiercely Hunan had resisted the pseudo-Christian

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Taiping rebels from Guangdong and Guangxi provinces half a century before, and how courageously the Xiang Army (Hunan Army) under the leadership of Zeng Guofan finally put down the rebellion. They often seemed to see a reincarnation of the Taiping rebellion in Kang and Liang. Although charges that the reformers were spreading both Western learning and Christianity were somewhat paranoid, the likelihood that a "factional gang" of New Text scholars from Guangdong would gain control of the educational apparatus of Hunan seemed possible and was very threatening. If Kang's or Liang's theories eclipsed the conservative orthodoxy, Wang and his colleagues and students would be cut off from participation in the educational or political bureaucracy. Everybody knew how close and intimate the relationship between scholarship and political power in China was since it had been institutionalized through the civil service examination system.

Prominent members of the elite as Wang Xianqian strongly opposed the Kang-Liang group and furiously protested their radical ideas. Tensions and accusations gradually increased in Changsha. In early June 1898, a group of students at the Yuelu Academy headed by Bin Fengyang,

45 Wang Xianqian's letter in Su Yu, p. 397.
petitioned Wang Xianqian to request that Governor Chen dismiss Liang Qichao as dean at the Current Affairs School. They condemned Liang's unorthodox ideas of "people's rights" and political "equality." "If the authority (of the emperor) is brought down, who will govern?" the students petitioned. "If the people can govern themselves, what is the function of the emperor? These (political ideas) will lead the empire to chaos." "[These radicals] will mislead the students to become rebels with no respect to their fathers and the emperor." 46

The petition from the students at the Yuelu Academy elicited an angry response from the students at the Current Affairs School. Xu Renzhu, the educational commissioner, initially supported the students at the Current Affairs School and attacked Bin Fengyang. But when Wang Xianqian came to Bin's defense, Xu's voice was surpressed. As a result of Bin's protest, Wang Xianqian, Ye Dehui, Zhang Zhidong, and seven others petitioned Governor Chen to replace Liang Qichao. 47

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46 Hunan xianzhi: Hunan jinbainian dashijishu, p. 142-146; also see Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi, Hunan sheng weiyuanhui wenshi weiyuan huibian, Hunan jin 150 nian shishi rizhi, 1840-1990 (The Daily Records of Hunan's Historical Events in the Latest 150 years, 1840-1990), p. 40-42.

47 Hunan xianzhi: Hunan jinbainian dashijishu, p. 151-152.
Wang Xianqian and several leading Hunanese gentry and academic heads not only petitioned the governor but took their protests to Beijing about activities at the Current Affairs School and at the South China Study Society. Xiong Xiling, therefore, recommended replacing all the conservatives (academic heads) with "enlightened, upright, universal scholars" so as to keep the conservatives "out of touch with current affairs."®

Xiong's suggestion was not adopted. Radical discussions and bitter debates continued, but the conservatives soon increased their pressure, and the radical reform leadership began to fall apart. One by one the young reformers left Hunan. Some were virtually driven out; some, like Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong, found that although their reforms were terminated in Hunan, greater opportunities opened up for them in Beijing, since the imperial One Hundred Days of Reform was just starting in that city.® On June 8, 1898, Pi Xirui resigned his chairmanship at the South China Study

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® Ibid., p. 143.

® The Hundred Days of Reform edicts began on June 20, 1898. The imperial court ordered both Tan Sitong and Huang Zunxian (Huang was appointed minister to Japan) to go to Beijing and to participate in the national reform movement. Tan was ill and did not reach Beijing until early September. Huang was also ill and only arrived in Shanghai after the Hundred Days of Reform was crushed by the Empress Dowager Cixi on September 21, 1898.
Society and left Hunan for his native Nanchang. In the middle of June, Xiong Xiling resigned his directorship at the Current Affairs School, and the assistant deans who came to the school with Liang Qichao also left for Guangdong. Later, Governor Chen Baozhen enforced stricter censorship of the Hunan News, at the insistence of Zhang Zhidong. Late in the summer of 1898, Tang Caichang also headed for Beijing, at the invitation of Tan Sitong, but he had only just arrived in Hankou when he learned of the death of his friend, Tan Sitong.

After Empress Dowager Cixi’s coup at the capital, the imperial court wiped out the remnants of radical reform in Hunan, bringing changes in the province to an abrupt end. The imperial government then appointed the conservative lieutenant-governor, Yu Liansan, to replace Chen Baozhen as governor of Hunan.\(^5^0\) The Empress Dowager Cixi issued a decree on October 6, 1898 in which she ordered Zhang Zhidong to close down the South China Study Society and the Police Bureau (Baoweiju), and to burn all reform documents from the

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Study Society. The Current Affairs School lingered for a short time under the supervision of Wang Xianqian. However, only about forty students remained, and all the progressive faculty and students left or were expelled. In 1899, the school was moved to another location in Changsha, and the name was changed to the Academy for Practical Learning (Qiushi shuyuan). The Hunan News had already ceased publication in August. Of the important reform institutions, only the Police Bureau (Baoweiju) was maintained intact: the new governor explained that actually it is only a different name for baojia, the traditional system of neighborhood security.

Imperialism and the Opening of Hunan, 1898-1907

It was easy to expel the radical reformers of 1898 from Hunan and to close down the institutions they established in the province, but the remains of the reform controversy over the Confucian doctrine were to persist well into the twentieth century. Because of the controversy, the province became divided into two groups, which were conventionally known as the “new faction” -- the radicals -- and the “old

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51 Joseph W. Esherick argues that the motive of Zhang Zhidong’s order to destroy all the records of the South China Study Society was undoubtedly to protect many gentry participants. Joseph W. Esherick, Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 18.
faction" — the conservatives. Although the chief
distinction between the two groups was their different views
on educational and political reforms, there was also a
difference of age between the generation of young reformers
in their twenties and early thirties and senior gentry like
Wang Xianqian, who was in his late fifties.

The controversy over Confucian doctrine also hardened
into political divisions. Influential senior gentry like
Wang Xianqian and Zhang Zhidong, who supported the initial
stage of the reform movement, now joined with those
conservatives who believed that the change had gone too far.
They thought that the radical reformers' principal views,
especially Kang Youwei's new interpretation of Confucian
doctrine, changed orthodox principles too greatly, and
thereby threatened the state. Therefore, they pledged their
loyalty to the Empress Dowager Cixi after her coup and took
up the task of reaffirming Confucian orthodoxy while
strengthening the traditional social and political order.

Although exiled and suppressed, the young Hunanese
radical reformers of 1898 held onto their vision of social-
political progress and national power. The young patriots
with new ideas were determined to break into or destroy the
established gentry domination of local social and political
power. The enduring spirit of the reform movement never died out in Hunan and was to be carried into the twentieth century. However, when the reform movement of 1898 in Hunan was violently suppressed by the Qing court, the radical reformers became rebels against the legitimate government. Their political status was now no different from that of the revolutionary, Sun Yat-sen, or from the more powerful secret society leaders. Since their regular road to advancement and their usual access to legitimate sources of political influence were cut off, the radical reformers of 1898 joined Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and other Cantonese as exiles in Japan.\footnote{After the suppression of the reform movement of 1898, Tang Caichang was soon reunited with Liang Qichao in Japan. In the next year, Liang established a Great Harmony High School (Gaodeng datong xuexiao) in Tokyo and eleven former students from the Changsha Current Affairs School came to Japan to continue their studies with him.}

Like Sun Yat-sen, the radical reformers also sought help from the secret societies to fulfill their nationalist aspirations. For instance, in 1900, Tang Caichang and other Hunanese radical reformers of 1898 recruited a large army from the Gelaohui (the Society of Brothers and Elders) in Hunan and Hubei provinces for a revolt against the Qing government. Lewis argues that the cooperation between the radical reformers and the secret societies helped to attract
the masses' participation in the movement for change.\textsuperscript{53} Tang Caichang mobilized the Gelaohui in the Yangzi valley, with the encouragement of Kang Youwei's \textit{Baohuang hui} (Protect the Emperor).

In the spring and summer of 1900, Tang and his followers formed the Independence Society (\textit{Zili hui}) to prepare a revolt to overthrow the Empress Dowager Cixi and to restore imperial power to Emperor Guangxu. Tang's uprising of 1900 was suppressed. He and his followers were beheaded on the Wuchang execution grounds in 1900. It is reported that Tang and his followers faced death with bravery and coolness. They extended their necks for the executioner without showing the slightest fear.\textsuperscript{54} At the age of thirty-four, Tang died a martyr to reform as had his friend, Tan Sitong. Tang's head was displayed outside a Wuchang gate the following day, on Zhang Zhidong's orders. It was reported that his eyes remained open, staring outward.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Lewis, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Hunan xianzhi}, p. 172-175.

\textsuperscript{55} Li Shoukong, "Tang Caichang yu Zilihui" (Tang Caichang and the Independence Society) in Wu Xiangxiang, ed., \textit{Zhongguo xiandaishi tongkan}, vol. 6, p. 41-159.
The hope of many young Hunanese reformers to establish a strong and reformed imperial China died with Tang Caichang on the Wuchang execution grounds in 1900. Thus, the surviving Hunanese reformers were disheartened and turned toward a revolutionary violent overthrow of the political system. On the other hand, the conservative Hunanese gentry, threatened by Kang-Liang heterodoxy, backed up the provincial officials in their effort to maintain the conventional social political order and to cultivate orthodox values.

Meanwhile, a new generation of students in the new schools experienced a similar transformation between 1900 and 1906. The new generation of students was the product of the educational reforms of the early twentieth century. They were more numerous, more alienated, and more cognizant of the direct threat of imperialism. Unlike the radical reformers of 1898 who first became committed to reform, then committed to revolution, the new generation of students never committed themselves to reform; and their priority concern was the immediate threat of imperialism. Disappointed in the government's willingness and ability to support their anti-imperialist struggle, they turned to revolution. Some of them, later on, played important roles
in the massive worker-peasant uprising of Ping-Liu-Li of 1906.\textsuperscript{56}

After 1898, foreigners began to penetrate into Hunan. Hunan was a province long known for its anti-foreignism. Throughout the nineteenth century, Hunanese had fought fiercely and successfully to prevent any foreigners from entering the province. However, the events of the preceding years\textsuperscript{57} that had forced social and intellectual changes upon Hunan had an enduring influence and rendered the traditional Hunanese xenophobia out of date. Even in the early 1890s, Hunan's provincial officials were able to moderate the xenophobia of the Hunanese literati. During the reform controversy of 1898, xenophobia was rationalized intellectually by both radicals and conservatives. As anti-foreignism began to break down, imperialist penetration into Hunan proceeded rapidly. Missionaries hoped to convert the Hunanese and save their souls, while merchants were eager to open the resources and markets of central China.

\textsuperscript{56}For more information on the Ping-Liu-Li Uprising of 1906, see Esherick, p. 58-65; Lewis, chapter 9.

\textsuperscript{57}The events referred to are the British belligerence of 1891, the Japanese victory over the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, and the scramble for concessions of 1897-1898. The events should also include the Self-Strengthening Movement starting from the middle of nineteenth century to 1898.
In the eight years from 1899 to 1906, four treaty ports, Yuezhou (1899), Changsha (1904), Changde (1906), and Xiangtan (1906), were opened in Hunan. The capital city of Changsha was opened in 1904, which was very encouraging to the foreigners. The opening of Changsha was the key to Hunan, not because of Changsha’s economic importance, but because it was the political and cultural center of the province. The Hunanese resistance to foreign entry was based on political and cultural xenophobia; thus, the opening of the capital city signified an overcoming or at least, a neutralizing of Hunanese anti-foreign influence.

Meanwhile, foreign commercial interest in Hunan increased rapidly. As foreign commercial expansion got well underway in Hunan, it accompanied and assisted the missionary intrusion into the province, too. Superior and powerful gunboats on the rivers of Hunan protected and reinforced the privileges and the treaty rights of the Western merchants and missionaries. Large amounts of cheap manufactured goods were imported to Hunan, which interrupted the traditional pattern of trade, and threatened the authority of the local gentry. More important, it helped to awaken Hunanese consciousness of their economic rights.

Hunan xianzhi, p. 170-198.
However, the expansion of foreign interests did not meet the traditional hostilities in Hunan, which were confined to remote areas of the province after 1900; instead, expansion was facilitated by the protection and cooperation of government officials and provincial elites.

By now, the earlier absolute anti-foreignism, based on faith in orthodox Confucian doctrines, gave way to political nationalism. The Hunanese now realized that the security of China did not depend on doctrinal orthodoxy but on industrial changes, on demands for material power patterned on the West, and on the recovery of Chinese economic rights. The new China would not be built on moral principles but on railways and mines. Unlike the old literati-based anti-foreign movement, the emerging political nationalism which tried to turn back the imperialist tide called for a different response to confronting the foreigners. Instead of fearing and injuring the foreigners, the political nationalists advocated that the Chinese argue with them in a friendly way to recover their rights.

As foreign penetration extended into Hunan, the provincial elite strengthened reform programs which had begun in the 1890s. Driven by the rapidly increasing expansion of foreign enterprises in Hunan, the provincial
elite had to embark on industrial and commercial activities, which in many aspects were identical with the goals of the imperial court. By 1907, a strong reform movement led and dominated by the provincial elite partially restrained foreign expansion in Hunan. This strong reform movement appropriately fit into the national atmosphere of a new nationalism, which emerged in China during the early twentieth century.

Unlike the reform movement of 1898, which was only confined to the radical patriots, the new emerging nationalism involved many varied groups of people. As in the reform movement of 1898, the major impetus for change in the new nationalism also came from the central government and the elite. Directed by the proposals of Zhang Zhidong and other high officials, the central government set up a national school system, sent students for overseas study, formed a modern army, built railways, promoted industry, abolished the civil services examinations (1905), reformed the bureaucracy, and finally, in 1906, got ready for constitutional government.

In Hunan itself, the situation was similar; the impulse to reform also came "from the top," and it continued to be strong. After the suppression of the radical reform of 1898,
members of the provincial elite became leaders in the new nationalist movement to recover provincial rights to mining, railways, and industrial and transportation enterprises.\textsuperscript{59} Although they were in relative agreement on promoting technological and economical reforms, they still held different views about issues of education reform. Some advocated Western-type curriculums, new types of schools, and the abolition of the civil service examinations. Others, including the conservatives who participated in suppressing the radical reform movement of 1898, defended the traditional values and institutions against the rapid expansion of Western learning. Meanwhile, in the central government, the more reform-minded elite became dominant in the educational field and a Western-style school system developed. In Hunan, the educational reforms initially met stout resistance from the provincial conservatives, but, after the abolition of the civil service examinations in 1905, the conservative gentry began to lose influence, and educational reforms entered the mainstream.

This chapter has provided a study of the growth, climax and failure of the reform movement in Hunan in the later years of the 1890s. It describes the effort the provincial

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Hunan xianzhi}, p. 160-197.
gentry made in opposing the reformist ideas. It examines the transformation of the Hunanese radical reformers into revolutionaries after the failure of the 1898 Reform Movement, as well as the Western impact on these people. Therefore, we can see that although the Reform Movement in Hunan had ups and downs, in general, reform, especially educational reform, were the dominant force in the province.
CHAPTER 2

FROM CONFUCIAN ACADEMY TO NEW-TYPE MODERN SCHOOL

The Formation Of the First Normal School and Educational Reforms in Hunan, 1900-1911

After 1900, the growing threat of imperialism became the dominant concern regarding Hunan's external relations, while education reform became the major focus of internal debate. Suppression of the reform movement of 1898 and the uprising of 1900 reestablished the conservative gentry as the dominant power in the province. Initially, they had the support of the conservative governor, Yu Liansan, who launched a reactionary attack on the new educational policies. However, the conservatives were no more successful than before in preventing the forceful reintroduction of reforms this time. In fact they were

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driven from the center stage in 1905 when the civil service examinations were abolished by Beijing.

In the early twentieth century, when the Hunanese conservative elites were reacting against the educational reforms in the province, the central government and public opinion elsewhere were favoring reform in response to the catastrophe caused by the Boxer Rebellion. In the meantime, educational reform projects became very popular, new-style schools, new-types of study associations, and newspaper publishing houses kept springing up around the country. The Qing court, therefore, announced a political reform known as the Xinzheng (New Policies) in 1901.

The most significant aspect of the New Policies was education reform. One of Beijing's first decrees in this regard was an edict issued in September 1901 ordering all Confucian academies to be converted into new-style schools.

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In 1902 and 1903, the Qing government issued additional new decrees on education reform. These new policies were aimed at abolishing civil service examinations, reinforcing the establishment of new-style schools, and sending students overseas to study. Under the reform decrees, all the Confucian academies were to be converted into a regional hierarchy of modern-style schools at the provincial, prefectural, and counties levels. The provincial academies were to be converted into great-level universities (Da xuetang), the academies of the prefectures to middle-level universities (Zhong xuetang), and the academies of the counties to small-level universities (Xiao xuetang).

In Hunan, Governor Yu Liansan (n.f.), supported and encouraged by conservative elites like Wang Xianqian and Ye Dehui, did not respond positively to the new government decrees on education and even resisted them as far as he thought possible. In response to the call for converting traditional academies (shuyuan) into modern universities (xuetang), Governor Yu and his subordinates, with the support of the local conservative elite, argued that the education at the three main Confucian academies in Changsha

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4 The decree was called Renyin xuezhi in 1902 and guimao xuezhi in 1903.
was too classical and the students were too old to adapt their classical studies to a new curriculums. Yu and his supporters simply wanted to maintain the three leading academies unchanged. They turned only the former Current Affairs School into the modern school, which the reforms required in each provincial capital.

In response to the call for sending students abroad to study, Governor Yu and his subordinates permitted twelve students to be sent abroad to study for six months. The twelve students were carefully selected. All were mature degree holders and were most likely well-grounded in traditional Chinese learning. In June 1902, when the provincial Bureau of Education (xuewuchu) was established, the governor announced a set of pedagogical principles: 1) nurture a virtuous character so as to produce loyal and obedient (students), 2) encourage knowledge for practical use, and 3) stimulate ambition so as to shake off lethargy.

These educational principles of Governor Yu sounded similar to the spirit of the Self-Strengthening Movement of the

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5 Hunan xianzhi, p. 176-177.

6 Hunan shengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (Editorial Committee for the Hunan Provincial Gazetteer), Hunan jinbainian dashi jishu (Chronological record of major events in Hunan during the last hundred years) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1959), vol. 1. p. 177-178.
nineteenth century, and were not even close to the essence of the twentieth century reform movement.

Although the Hunanese conservatives, with the support of Governor Yu Liangsan, were able in some degree to subvert the intentions of Beijing's educational reform edicts, educational reforms were well outside Hunan. After new decrees on educational reform issued by the Qing court in the first three years of the twentieth century, almost all the Confucian academies were converted into modern schools. The new-style schools proliferated throughout the nation. Since the newly established Western-style schools were springing up rapidly, new kinds of teachers were urgently needed. After the regulations for new-style schools were issued by the Ministry of Education of the Qing government in 1902, regular teachers' training education formally began in China.

Under the pressures of these circumstances, Governor Yu established the Hunan Normal School (Shifan guan) in February 1903. The Normal School was located in the Changsha mansion of a rich member of the gentry. When the new Normal School was set up, Governor Yu appointed Wang Xianqian, a

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leading provincial conservative and Yu's key advisor on educational affairs, as the director of the school. By doing so, he hoped that even though the educational structure was new, the content would remain unchanged.

In its first year, the Normal School had only sixty students, all in the same class. The mission of the new provincial normal school was to train county elementary school teachers. Its curriculum included mathematics and other scientific subjects. It had fifteen or sixteen subjects in total but it still adhered to the philosophy of "Chinese learning for essentials, Western learning for practical use." One fourth of the curriculum consisted of reading the classics in the old-fashioned way and developing literary skills. Its teaching method and administration mainly followed that of the Yuelu Academy and the Chengnan Academy. However, it trained its students in mathematics, arts, and other "Western" subjects which had never been taught in Confucian academies before. It, therefore, functioned as a model in the province in the effort to abolish the civil service examination system, and to convert the old-style Confucian academies into new-style modern

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8 Ibid., p. 4.
schools. The founding of the Hunan Normal School also marked the beginning of teachers' training education in Hunan.

Not until early in 1903, when Yu Liansan (n.f.) was replaced by a new governor, Zhao Erxun (1844-1927), did effective reform measures take hold in the province. Zhao Erxun was a Hanlin scholar, Chinese bannerman, and an official whose word carried some weight. Governor Zhao was committed to a modern curriculum. He soon converted the Yuelu and Chengnan academies in Changsha into modern schools. He ordered the building of many new primary and secondary schools, introduced Western subjects and Western-style curricula, and saw to the purchase of modern textbooks. In November 1903, Zhao sent a memorial to the throne to convert the Chengnan Academy into the Hunan Provincial Normal School. His proposal was soon approved by the Qing court. Zhao appointed the reform-minded scholar Liu Diwei (n.f.) to be the principal of the new school.

The conservative gentry did not like Zhao's reform measures at all. In particular Wang Xianqian and Liu Caijiu, the respective heads of Chengnan and Yuelu academies,

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protested these reform measures vigorously. Wang and the conservatives were unhappy about the curricula of the new school system and condemned the helter-skelter pace of classroom training. Wang wrote:

> Whenever the bell rings, students rush into the classroom and pick up books to recite. How can they expect to obtain true comprehension through this kind of training? It is said in the Great Learning that 'only with calmness of mind can one attain serene repose; only in serene repose can one carry on careful deliberation.' Now the classroom instruction is broken into several sessions and many students are crowded into one room. How can students in this kind of situation possibly have any 'calmness of mind' or 'serene repose,' not to mention 'careful deliberation?'

Wang urged that the new schools be closed and that students study at home for the civil service examinations so that Chinese learning can at least be preserved ... The vast amount of money now being spent on these schools can perhaps be better used in developing our industry.

The conservatives also deplored the new schools' stress on lectures to large groups of students, which to them seemed structurally closer to Christian churches (Jiaotang) than to any traditional Chinese system of education.

However, the conservative elite as represented by Wang Xianqian had no influence with the new governor, Zhao Erxun,

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10 Wang Xianqian, Xushou tang wenji (Collected writings from the studio of pure reception) (16 juan in 2 han. N.p., 1921), I, 15a-b.

11 Ibid., I, 15b-16.
who would not listen to Wang's suggestions as had the previous governor. In protest, Wang resigned his position as director of the Normal School (Shifan guan) and "sat and looked on while the atmosphere daily deteriorated."\(^\text{12}\)

Governor Zhao, therefore, appointed the reform-minded scholar Liu Diwei to take Wang's place as the director of the Normal School (Shifan guan). When the Chengnan Academy was converted into the Hunan Provincial Normal School in November 1903, Liu was also the principal of the school. While taking charge of the original Normal School, Liu also introduced numerous reforms in the old Chengnan Academy, now the newly converted Hunan Provincial Normal School. Then he combined the two schools into one modern school - the Hunan Provincial Normal School, which was the predecessor of the Hunan First Normal School. Liu was active in reforming the school's philosophy, curriculum, and administrative system. In the following year, the school had 130 students, divided into three classes.

In 1904, Hunan established two more normal schools. The three normal schools admitted students from neighboring

areas. The schools were also named after their particular districts. The Hunan Provincial Normal School was located in Changsha, in the central part of the province. It was, thus, named the Hunan Central Route Normal School. The other two schools were the Hunan West Route Normal School and the Hunan South Route Normal School.\textsuperscript{13}

**The Predecessor of the First Normal School, 1100s-1903**

**The Chengnan Academy**

The Chengnan Academy, the predecessor of the First Normal School, was founded by a famous Southern Song Confucian, Zhang Shi,\textsuperscript{14} in the twelfth century. The teaching method of the Chengnan Academy combined independent study, questions and answers among students, and gathering for public lectures. Its main curriculum was the study of the Confucian classics. The students also occasionally had discussions on current affairs. The Chengnan Academy had a profound impact on the development of Hunan’s academic thinking and culture and was in fashion in the twelfth century.


\textsuperscript{14} Zhang Shi (1133-1180 A.D.), alternative name: Jingfu, courtesy name: Nanxuan, was from Mianzhu of Hanzhou (today’s Sichuan). He was a well-known Confucian in the Southern Song Dynasty and enjoyed equal popularity with other two contemporary famous Confucians, Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian. They had the reputation of being “The three sages of the southeast” (dongnan sanxian).
century. It thus became known as the place “whose yard was filled with the fragrance of orchids; the place where great scholars with virtue and ideals of the past enlightened and taught the young generations; the place where people could benefit from associating with people of noble character; and the place where all the students who studied became men of tremendous promise or were the pillars of the state. Scholars of great accomplishment from Hunan vied with each other in coming here to teach or study.” (xixian guohua zhidi, lanzhi shengting, qizi rushi, ze xiangzhong zidi zhenglai jiangxue zhiqu ye).¹⁵

After the death of Zhang Shi (1180 AD), and the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty (1279 AD), the Chengnan Academy experienced many ups and downs until the early nineteenth century. In 1820, Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796-1820) of the Qing Dynasty approved Imperial Inspector Zuo Xingzhuang’s proposal to reconstruct the Chengnan Academy. The reconstruction took two years to complete. In 1822, when the reconstruction was finished, a temple named “Temple of Southern Confucian Master”(Nanxuan fuzi ci) was built at the peak of Miaogao Hill in memory of Zhang Shi. That same year,

¹⁵ Quoted by the editing committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, in Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, p. 1.
Emperor Daoguang (r. 1821-1850) wrote four Chinese characters "li ze feng chang" in his own handwriting to praise the Chengnan Academy. The four Chinese characters mean: "With the bounty which is like the gentle wind blowing and the radiant sun shining, bestowed by the Chengnan Academy, people's knowledge is greatly broadened and enriched." The Emperor's handwriting was inscribed on a framed board hung horizontally at the main lecture hall of the Academy. Afterwards, the Chengnan Academy once again became one of the three largest and most prestigious academies in the province. Well-known scholars, such as He Shaoji (1799-1873) and Chen Benqin (n.f.), were the main lecturers at the Academy. Huang Xing, the revolutionary of

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16 He Shaoji (1799-1873), a native of Hunan, was a famous poet and calligrapher. After receiving his Jinshi degree in 1836, He served as a compiler in the Hanlin Academy, and engaged in various literary activities at the Qing court during the years 1839 to 1852. In the meantime, He was also in charge of the provincial examinations in Fujian and Guangdong. In 1855, he was accused of making imprudent proposals to the emperor, and was dismissed from the office. He became the head of the Chengnan Academy in 1863 and held the position for three years. Afterwards, he moved to Suzhou and found himself a highly esteemed calligrapher. Arthur W. Hummel, ed. *Eminent Chinese of the Ch‘ing Period (1644-1912)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 287.

17 Huang Xing (1874-1916), one of the founders of the China Revival Society Huaxinghui. After a failed uprising in 1904, he fled to Japan. In July 1905, Huang, Song Jiaoren and Sun Yat-sen met and agreed to form a merged revolutionary organization, the Tongmenghui, the "United League," and Huang's journal, *Twentieth Century China* (Ershi shiji zhongguo), became the League's official journal. He became Minister of War in the Republican government under Sun Yat-sen that emerged after the Revolution of 1911. When Yuan Shikai replaced Sun, Huang took a series of more modest postings. Michael Dillon, ed., *China: A Historical*
the Republican Revolution of 1911, twice studied here between 1893 and 1898. The famous Confucian scholar Zeng Guofan (1799-1873) and Li Yuandu (1821-1887)\(^\text{18}\) also studied at the Academy during this period.

An Overview of the Setting of First Normal School

The Hunan First Normal School was located outside the south gate of Changsha city at the foot of a hill known as Miaogao Feng. Actually Miaogao Feng was just behind the school. The Hunan First Normal School was the only really modern building in Changsha in the early years of the

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\(^{18}\) Li Yuandu (1821-1887), a native of Pingjiang, Hunan, was an official and scholar. He received his Juren degree in 1843. In 1852, he joined the staff of the provincial director of education in Manchuria. He then had access to the so-called "veritable records" (Shilu) of the Qing dynasty, and thus became familiar with political events of that period. He was also interested in geography and literature. In 1853 he sent a long letter concerning military defense to Zeng Guofan who was then organizing his Hunan Army for the suppression of the Taiping rebels. Zeng was pleased with the letter and invited Li to become his assistant. In the following ten years Li fought against the Taipings in Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guizhou, and Zhejiang. As a reward for his achievements in the preceding years Li was promoted to an expectant intendant of a circuit in Zhejiang, and then to Anhui. In 1860, he lost the city of Huizhou to the Taipings and was cashiered. In 1861, his title of judicial commissioner was restored to him and he also became the lieutenant governor of Zhejiang in 1862. But he was once more stripped of his ranks and returned home for a few years of retirement because of submitting untrue reports of military victories. In 1868, his previous ranks were restored to him because of his success in subduing the bandit in Guizhou. In 1885, he was appointed provincial judge of Guizhou. In 1887, he was promoted to lieutenant governor of Guizhou but died in office that same year.

Li was a literary man by nature and was very prolific as an essayist and a biographer. He was also a talented and speedy calligrapher. Arthur W. Hummel, ed. *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period (1644-1912)*, p. 497-498.
Republic, and local people used to call it the "occidental building." The school was surrounded by a wall, and outside the main gate was a road from which branched out several lesser streets. The city itself lay to the north, while to the south was a flight of some five hundred stone steps leading to the railway.

A little farther on was the bank of the Xiang River, the largest river in Hunan province. It passes by in front of the school. It is navigated by a constant stream of boats of varying sizes. In the middle of the river there is a long island. On this island, thousands of orange trees had been planted, earning the island its popular name Zhu Zhou, Orange Island. When the oranges were ripe, from a distance the isle looked like a golden-red cloud floating on the water. Students from the First Normal often composed poems referring to the "orange clouds" and the "orange-cloud isle." A couple of miles farther on was the well-known Yuelu Mountain. The beautiful Yuelu Mountain and the First Normal School faced each other across the Xiang River. With green undulating hills behind and the surging Xiang River in front,

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19 Siao Yu (Xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 34.
20 Ibid., p. 34.
the First Normal School merged into a very beautiful and picturesque scene.

The First Normal School was a public institution founded in 1903 by Yu Liangsan, governor of Hunan. It was first named the Hunan Normal School (Hunan shifan guan). In 1904, the Hunan Provincial Normal School (Hunan quansheng shifan xuetang) was renamed the Central Route Normal School (Zhonglu shifan xuetang). After the Republican Revolution, the name of the Central Route Normal School was changed to Hunan Public First Normal School (Hunan gongli diyi shifan xuexiao) in 1912. The school was renamed the Hunan Provincial First Normal School (Hunan shengli diyi shifan xuexiao) in 1914.

The first fifteen years after the Republican Revolution of 1911 was a period of full bloom for the First Normal School. Before the Revolution, the school had been converted from a Confucian academy to a modern school by offering a Japanese-style curriculum combining traditional Chinese and modern Western subjects. In 1926, the First Normal School, together with other Hunan secondary institutions, converted the Japanese-style curriculum — a double-track system that separated the ordinary middle schools from normal schools —

\[21\] Ibid., p. 34.
into an American-style curriculum, -- that is a comprehensive secondary education.\(^{22}\)

During this period (1911-1926), the First Normal School had Tan Yankai,\(^{23}\) Kong Zhaozhou (n.f.), and Zhang Gan (1884-1967) as its principals. Tan, Kong and Zhang were the three most influential and most accomplished principals in the school's history. During their headmasterships, they launched reforms in the school's policies, philosophy, practices, and curriculum. The First Normal was soon among the foremost educational institutions in the province and

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\(^{22}\) The editing committee of _Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949_, p. 5-6.

\(^{23}\) Tan Yankai (1879-1930) was a Hanlin scholar. He was a native of Chaling, Hunan, but he was born in Hangzhou. At the time of his birth, his father was governor of Zhejiang. The young Tan's mother was a concubine, and he was the third child in the family. Tan and his brothers received thorough training in the Chinese classics. Tan Yankai passed the juren degree examinations in 1902. He earned the highest jinshi degree in 1904 at age 24, and became the top candidate in the initial part of the examination, -- an achievement which moved Wang Kaiyun, a well-known scholar of the New Text School of classical scholarship, to write in his diary on 29 May 1904: "It fills a sense of incompleteness felt in Hunan for 200 years." Tan Yankai became one of the last Chinese scholars to receive the coveted appointment of compiler in the Hanlin Academy. With these orthodox credentials and an inheritance (when his father died in 1905) estimated at one million taels, Tan was destined for prominence. In the following years, Tan was the president of the Hunan provincial assembly who served several times as governor of Hunan in 1912-20 periods. He was also the principal of the Hunan First Normal School in 1905-06 periods. Tan was regarded as the leader of the gentry reformers in Hunan. Beginning in 1924 he held high government and Guomindang posts at Canton, and he directed National Government affairs during the first stage of the Northern Expedition. From October 1928 until his death, he was president of the Executive Yuan at Nanjing. For more information on Tan Yankai, see Howard L. Boorman, ed., _Biographical Dictionary of Republican China_ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), Vol. 4., p. 220-223.
attracted many well known and highly respected teachers, such as Yang Changji, Xu Teli, Li Jinxi, and Fang

Yang Changji, literary name, Yang Huaizhong, (1871-1920), was a well-known Neo-Confucian as well as a man of Western learning. Yang was a native of Changsha, Hunan; he spent the period 1903-13 studying abroad in Japan, England, and Germany. He received the M. A. from Japan and Ph.D. from Britain. While studying in Germany he came to regard himself as a neo-Kantian idealist. At the same time, he was a great admirer of Wang Fuzhi and Wei Yuan. After his return to China, Yang Changji taught ethics at the First Provincial Normal School at Changsha from 1913 to 1918. He was one of the most influential and most respected teachers at the school. There he gave his students some exposure to Western ethical theory and urged his students to study all aspects of Western thought and institutions, but he never let his students forget their own national heritage. While guiding his students toward the radical Westernized and iconoclastic magazine -- Xin Qingnian (New Youth), he also directed them to another group of scholars from Chuanshan xueshe (Chuanshan Association) who were seeking inspiration for a rebirth of their country within the Chinese tradition itself, actually in the writings of the great Hunanese scholar of the early seventeenth century, Wang Fuzhi (Wang Chuanshan). For more information on Yang Changji, see Howard L. Boorman, ed., Biographical Dictionary of Republican China (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), Vol. 4., p. 1-3; Wang Xinguo, Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang (Life and Thought of Yang Changji) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981); Also, I will talk more about Yang Changji in later chapters.

Xu Teli (1877-1968), native of Changsha, Hunan, was from a poor peasant family. He attended private tutorial school in native village irregularly due to poverty, 1886-1892. He tried to continue his grandfather's occupation as doctor of Chinese traditional medicine for two years, 1893-1895. Then he made himself private tutor and continued in that occupation for 10 years. He entered short-term normal school in Changsha from which he graduated after 4 months of study. He established a primary school in Changsha and learned geography, history, and mathematics during leisure hours. He was invited by several schools to teach at their school and became a well-known educator in the province. He taught pedagogy in the First Normal School between 1913-1919 and was well received by the students. For more information on Xu Teli, see Who's Who in Communist China (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969), Vol. 1., p. 277-279; I will talk more about Xu Teli in later chapters.

Li Jinxi was a famous linguist. He was a history teacher at the First Normal School between 1914-1915. He was only a couple of years older than the students. The students, at least Mao Zedong, regarded him as both a respected teacher and a close friend. I will come to him again in later chapters.
Weixia. The school had a large faculty and student body comparable to other educational institutions in Hunan. The school's admission policy was strict. Students took several entrance exams, and only those with top scores were admitted. During the first decade of the Republic, First Normal became the most distinguished academic institution in Hunan. It graduated about one thousand students during the period between the Republican Revolution of 1911 and the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Among them, many became prominent figures in the Chinese Communist movement and in the Chinese educational field. Some of them were even founding figures of the Chinese Communist Party. He Shuheng, Mao Zedong, Cai Hesen, and Li Weihan all graduated during this period.

Evolution of First Normal and the Political Culture in Late Qing, 1903-1912

In the first few years of the twentieth century, there was an obvious alternating pattern of progress and reaction.

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27 Fang Weixia (1879-1935), native of Pengjiang, Hunan, was one of the leading figures of the early Chinese Communist Party. He graduated from the accelerated program of the First Normal School in 1906 and graduated from the Hunan Higher Normal School in 1909. After that, he went to study in Japan and returned to China in 1911. He taught science and agriculture at the First Normal School from 1911 to 1919. From 1916 on, he became the academic supervisor of the school and was the second most influential person (the next man to Principal Kong Zhaoshou) at the school. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1924 and was an active leader in the party and the army. Later on, he was sent to study in the Soviet Union. He came back to China in 1931 and served in a couple of high rank positions in the Soviet government. In 1935, at the age of 56, he was arrested and killed by the Guomindang in Guidong, Hunan.
in Hunan's government leadership. First was the reform-minded governor Chen Baozhen followed by the conservative governor Yu Liangsan; then came the reform-minded governor Zhao Erxun followed by the conservative governor Lu Yuanding. First events moved ahead, then the pace of reform was retarded. This frustrating situation lasted until 1907. During these years, there was no consistent policy of reform carried out, and three more governors followed each other in rapid succession.

In May 1904, the energetic and reformist governor Zhao Erxun was replaced by Lu Yuanding, an educational obscurantist. Advised and supported by the conservatives, Lu suppressed a newly opened girls' school, condemned the loss of moral cultivation in the converted Yuelu Academy, now a new-style high school, and established a more conservative school, which required its students to have a strong background in the Chinese classics before moving on to Western learning. Although Lu's governorship in Hunan slowed down the pace of educational reform, the damage was not great as he only stayed in his position for six months. Governor Lu was succeeded by the energetic Manchu reformer Duan Fang, who himself only stayed in Hunan for seven months.
until summoned to the capital in the summer of 1905.  

Although Governor Duan Fang only stayed in Hunan for a short time, during his stay, reform activities, especially educational reforms, were carried out earnestly.

Because of the rapid change of governors and the inconsistent policy of reform, by the year of 1907, the development of the Hunan school system was uneven, and limited to the major cities, especially to the capital city of Changsha. At 419, the number of lower primary schools was small.  

Hunan, however, had made great progress in secondary education, such as the upper primary grades, middle school, normal schools, and technical schools. Most of these schools were located in Changsha and other cities. Modern education therefore tended to be concentrated in urban areas.

During the first few years of the First Normal School’s existence, although several principals followed each other in rapid succession, the school, in general, was developing, and witnessed a lot of reforms. In September 1905, Tan

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Yankai became the principal of the First Normal School, and the civil service examination system was abolished in the same year. Tan Yankai did away with the former objectionable practices and reformed the school system. Under the headmastership of Tan, the auditorium and students' dormitories were built, and the scale of the school was enlarged. In the following year, the school had around 250 students who were divided into six classes. Tan Yankai reformed the old school system and adopted the Japanese-style curriculum. He was the first person in the school’s history to enforce the teaching of the Japanese-style curriculum. After that, the First Normal School continued to use the Japanese-style curriculum until the May Fourth Movement period (1905-1925). Principal Tan also established an accelerated Normal School (jianyi shifan xuetang),\(^{30}\) which was the equivalent of a junior normal school, on the Miaoguo Hill. Tan Yankai was regarded as one of the most influential and accomplished principals in the school’s history.

In November 1906, Tan Yankai resigned as principal of the First Normal School. Liu Renxi (1840-1917), a reform-

\(^{30}\) The enrolled students at the accelerated Normal School (jianyi shifan xuetang) must be over seventeen years old. The Editing Committee of the
minded scholar, succeeded Tan. Liu Renxi continued Tan’s reforming policies and practices during the years he was principal. Liu Renxi was regarded as one of the most influential principals in the school’s history.

In October 1908, Qu Zongduo (n.f.) assumed the principalship. In the following year, he formally clarified the mission of the school as training county elementary school teachers. He changed the different divisions of the accelerated training program (two-year program), junior normal program (one-year program), and advanced normal program (four-year program) into a single secondary normal school program. He standardized the different lengths of the different divisions into a single length program, which was a five-year program whose first year was a one-year preparatory period. The students must be over fourteen years old to enroll in the Preparatory Department for the first year and over fifteen to register in the Undergraduate Department. After 1909, First Normal became a formal secondary normal school with a unified admission system, training goals, and length of schooling. First Normal has remained as a secondary normal school down to the present.

In April 1910, the school was suspended for a few months because of the Changsha Famine Refugees' Rebellion. In 1911, the school had another brief interruption because of the Wuchang Uprising. After the Republican Revolution of 1911, Tan Yankai became the governor of Hunan. In February 1912, Tan renamed the Central Route Normal School the Hunan Public First Normal School.

The curriculum changed very little during the first nine years of the school's history. Included in the curriculum, were sixteen subjects: Chinese literary skills, Confucian classics, moral cultivation, education, English language, translation (from Manchu into Chinese), history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, science, crafts, drawing, music, and physical education. Many of the courses were Western subjects new to the Confucian academies. The teachers of the school were chosen by a strict selection process; only those who were well educated could be hired. Although the Principals of First Normal in the first nine years of the school changed rapidly, the teachers and curriculum established reformist continuity at the school. Besides, these Principals were well educated and were all

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31 Another name for the Republican Revolution of 1911.
regarded as "the most learned man with the most accomplishments for their time" (jie biaobingguan yishi), although some of them were politically conservative. The first principal of the school, Wang Xianqian, was a well-known scholar of the Han school of classical philosophy who wrote and edited large numbers of influential books. Principal Tan Yankai was a member of the prestigious Hanlin Academy. Principal Wang Da (n.f.) was a famous scholar of geography. Principal Wang Fengchang was a well-known specialist in education. And all the teachers were academically accomplished also. This was especially true during the period of Tan Yankai's headmastership when he hired a whole group of reform-minded gentry to conduct classes at the school. Tan even invited two foreigners to be teachers, one from Japan and the other from the United States.\textsuperscript{32} The teaching staff of the school was small in number,\textsuperscript{33} but highly professional and capable.

First Normal was generously funded by the provincial government and attracted the best students in the province.


\textsuperscript{33} In 1909, for example, First Normal only had twenty-nine faculty and administrative staff for two hundred and twenty-five students in four classes. The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, \textit{Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi—1903-1949}, p. 8.
The school enlarged its physical plant with new construction. The auditorium and the south building were built in 1906. New teaching materials for history, geography, and science were purchased. More books were added to the school’s library. First Normal also had a large student body compared with other educational institutions in the province in the first decade of the school’s history. With an enrollment of sixty students in 1903, the school grew to 252 students in 1911. After 1904 the enrollment quota was fixed at about 250. During the year when Tan Yankai was principal, however, the enrollment reached 400. The school graduated about 450 students during the first nine years of its existence (1903-1912), and 190 who graduated after the Republican Revolution. Among the over 450 graduates, about forty went to Japan to study, about 100 continued to pursue advanced studies, and many became leading figures in Hunan educational reforms.

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34 In 1910, the school was burned in a big fire, but was soon rebuilt with 5000 tael, or ounces of silver (the unit of currency used in traditional China). In 1938, after the Japanese conquered Wuhan in Hubei province, they began to attack the city of Yueyang in Hunan. The Guomindang provincial officials of Hunan were terrified by the fierce Japanese. They ordered the burning of the city of Changsha on the night of November 12. First Normal was once again burned in the Changsha Fire. Today’s First Normal was reconstructed according to the original feature of the school in 1910. Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949, p. 2; Hunan shengzhi, p. 259-260 and 704-705.

Education in the First Normal School in the first nine years was always subject to a reforming process, but continued to manifest various inconsistencies and contradictions. On the one hand, the school was converted from an old-style Confucian academy into a modern school by adopting new teaching methods and the new Japanese-style curriculum, which taught a lot of Western subjects; on the other hand, the school still emphasized the educational philosophy of "Chinese learning for essentials, Western learning for practical use." Its curriculum laid great stress on literary courses but underestimated scientific subjects. Confucian classics, moral cultivation, and translation were required courses for all students. Confucian classics were especially important as they composed a large proportion of the curriculum. Even so, the First Normal School was still one of the most distinguished academic institutions in the province of its time, because it attracted the best students from Hunan and many well-known scholars to teach at the school.

This chapter has discussed the predecessor of the school, and examined the transformation of a Confucian Academy into a new-style modern school. It discussed the formation and the development of the school from 1903 to
1912. It also discussed the educational reforms taken at the school and the political culture of the school in the first decade of the twentieth century, which laid a favorable foundation for later reforms taken at the school. The favorable circumstances, in turn, helped facilitate the intellectual transformation of the generation of the students who attended First Normal in the 1910s.
CHAPTER 3

FIRST NORMAL AND POLITICAL CULTURE FROM REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION TO THE MAY FOURTH MOVEMENT, 1912-1919

After the Republican Revolution in the fall of 1911, the Qing Dynasty collapsed. The First Normal School, which had been relatively closely linked to the old regime, survived the collapse of the old political order and went on to play a formative role in the society that followed. In this chapter, I will discuss the new Republican Government's efforts at reform, the political and intellectual situation in Hunan, and the educational reforms at First Normal School. The philosophy, regulations, and curriculum of the First Normal will be examined, as well.

Initial Efforts at Reform from the New Government after the Republican Revolution and the Political and Intellectual Situation in Hunan

After the fall of the Qing, a new government, the first republic in Chinese history, was founded. Its provisional
capital was established in Nanking. As soon as the new government was organized, a series of reform policies were issued in 1912. In the educational field, Cai Yuanpei was appointed in January 1912, by Provisional President Sun Yat-sen as the Republic of China's first Minister of Education. This clearly showed that educational policy was to change profoundly under the new regime. Cai Yuanpei had earned the highest civil service examination degree of jinshi in 1890, at the age of twenty-three. He thus became one of the youngest candidates ever. In 1892, he was selected a member of the prestigious Hanlin Academy. Two years later, he became a compiler there.\(^1\) As a jinshi and as a former member of the Hanlin Academy, Cai Yuanpei had the best credentials and the highest marks of distinction available under the imperial system. He was regarded as one of the most learned classical scholars of his day.\(^2\)

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2 After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Cai Yuanpei turned to modern education as a way to save China. In 1901 he moved to Shanghai to teach at the reformers' elite engineering school, the Nanyang Public College (Nanyang gongxue). Soon after that, Cai served as the first president of the China Education Society (Zhongguo jiaoyu hui) and the head of the Patriotic Girls' School (Aiguo nuxue). Both the China Education Society and the Patriotic Girls' School were revolutionary educational organizations. By 1903, Cai was one of the leading figures of the revolutionary movement in early twentieth century Shanghai. In 1906, Cai went to Europe for extended study. For more information on Cai Yuanpei, see Wen-Hsin Yeh, Provincial Passages: Culture, Space, and Origins of Chinese Communism, (Berkeley: University
In 1906, disillusioned with the revolutionary politics he had once supported enthusiastically, Cai Yuanpei left for Europe for extended study. He stayed in Europe, mainly in Germany, for five years and received a bachelor of arts degree in 1910 from the University of Leipzig. With such deep exposure to both Chinese and Western education, Cai was an ideal candidate to run the Ministry of Education for the new Republic. So, at the invitation of Sun Yat-sen, Cai quickly returned to China from Germany to take part in educational reconstruction under the new government.

Serving as the Minister of Education, Cai quickly got together a group of talented young scholars as his staff at the Ministry. He appointed Fan Yuanlian (1875-1927) to be the vice-Minister of Education. Fan had been the assistant professor who had helped organize the anti-Russian

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3 William Duiker, Cai's American biographer, maintains that Cai's study in Germany "provided him with the philosophical basis for a new world view." With the New World view, Cai's study of the evolutionary view of history shattered his belief in the universal value standard of Confucianism and made him realize the importance of modern science. However, Cai did not wholly embrace a materialist view of the world because he had long been drawn to the moral strain in Confucianism. Therefore, Kant, who tried to mediate materialism with the transcendent moral force, and the Neo-Kantian philosopher Friedrich Paulsen, who emphasized morality, held great appeal for Cai Yuanpei. For more Cai's years in Germany, see William Duicker, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei: Educator of Modern China (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), Chapter 3.
demonstrations at the jingshi daxue tang (Statecraft University) in 1903. Cai appointed Jiang Weiqiao (1873-1958) to be the Chief Secretary. Jiang had been involved in the China Educational Association, and later became principal of the Patriotic Girls' School. Cai invited Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren, 1881-1936), who had studied medicine in Japan before the revolution and later became the best-known writer in China, to serve in a junior position at the Ministry. During his ministership, Cai published the Republic's new educational codes in an article entitled "Opinions Concerning Educational Principles" ("Duiyu jiaoyu fangzhen zhi yijian") in February 1912. In that article, Cai maintained that education in the imperial Qing dynasty had been subordinate to politics, and that education under the new Republic had to be based on the people's will, and therefore beyond government control. Cai opposed the educational principles of the Qing that were laid out in 1906. He pointed out that the imperial educational principles' stress on loyalty to

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4 The article was published serially in Linli bao from February 8th to the 10th; it was published under the title "Duiyu xin jiaoyu zhi-yijian (Opinions concerning new education). See Gao Pingshu, ed., Cai Yuanpei guanji (Collected works of Cai Yuanpei), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chuban she, 1988), vol. II, p. 130-137; for an English language translation, see Ssu-yu Tenq and John K. Fairbank, eds., China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 235-238.
the emperor was totally incompatible with the essence of republican government, while the educational principles' advocacy of reverence for Confucius was entirely contrary to the spirit of freedom in belief. Cai advocated that education should proceed from creating happiness in the world while finally realizing the "world of reality" (shiti shijie) or the "world of substance" (guannian shijie). He held, however, that the Qing educational principles' emphasis on military, utilitarian, and moral education should be retained. He said that all three plus "education for citizens morality" were the basis for creating "happiness in this world" (xianshi xingfu). He also called for "education for a world view" (shijie guan jiaoyu), and "aesthetic education" (meigan zhi jiaoyu). "Education for a world view" was intended to break the monopoly status of Confucianism by emphasizing the importance of non-Chinese philosophies, as well as other native Chinese thought. Cai believed that "education for a world view" amounted to seeking the "world of reality" (shiti shijie). "Aesthetic

5 Timothy Weston points out that Cai Yuanpei's education for citizens' morality (gongmin daode) represented a clear break from the moral education of the past, in that it was explicitly grounded in the French Revolution ideals of "liberty, fraternity, and equality." See his Beijing University and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1920, (diss.), p. 88.
education" was an alternative to the religious spirit of Confucianism by teaching students the Kantian idea that beauty and solemnity can link the phenomenal world and the world of reality, therefore allowing people to feel closer to the force that created the universe. Cai held that "aesthetic education" was a means for reaching the "world of reality" (shiti shijie).

Cai Yuanpei's educational viewpoint provided the essential pedagogical foundation for the Republican government to work out its own educational principles. At the Provisional Educational Conference in 1912, Cai also advocated reforming schools by changing the length of the school year, having the elementary-school boys and girls study at the same school, and abolishing the course on intensive reading of the Confucian classics. Soon after that, the Ministry of Education issued a series of principles dealing with comprehensive school education. The principles were embodied in documents called "Principles for Education" (jiaoyu zongzhi), "The School System" (xuexiao xitong), "Decree on Elementary Schools" (xiaoxue xiaoling), "Decree on Middle Schools" (zhongxue xiaoling), "Decree on

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Universities" (daxueling), "Regulations for Students" (xungexiaosheng ling), "Emphasis on the Military Spirit" (zhuzhong shangwu jingshen ling), "Decree on Education of Normal Schools" (shifan jiaoyu ling), and "Regulations for Normal Schools" (shifan xueyao guicheng). Collectively these principles were summarized and became known as "The School System in the Years 1911 and 1912" (Renzi, guichou xuezhi). They were promulgated in late 1912.

When the principles were issued, Cai Yuanpei had already resigned his position as Minister of Education to protest Yuan Shihai's dictatorship. Nonetheless, the newly issued educational principles still provided a favorable context for educational reforms in Hunan. Moreover, the spirit of literati reformism never really ceased in Hunan. The provincial literati dissidents had consciously detached themselves from their own heritage; beginning in 1898, they first became known as radical intellectual reformers. They then became known politically as anti-Qing revolutionists, and finally, in an ideological and social context, they

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7 Cai resigned as Minister of Education in July 1912 along with premier Tang Shaoyi, and three other cabinet members, Wang Chonghui, Song Jiaoren, and Wang Zhengting. These three cabinet members were also members of the Tongmenghui (Revolutionary Alliance). Soon after his resignation, Cai went back to Europe to continue the extended studies he had pursued before the revolution of 1911. Fan Yuanlian took Cai's place
became Marxists and Marxist organizers of the masses. After the revolution of 1911, although the conservative politics of stabilization still dominated the province, there was an obvious, rapid growth of the "liberal regime" headed by Tan Yankai. This "liberal regime" made great efforts in education, judicial reform, and modern industrialization; collectively they should be regarded as an extension of the late Qing reforms.

As soon as Tan Yankai replaced Jiao Dafeng in the post of military governor of Hunan (October 1911), he undertook a policy of political stabilization in Hunan and actively supported the national revolutionary cause. Actually, when Huang Xing called on his Hunanese revolutionary friends to cooperate with Tan in establishing a stable base for the revolution, Tan, for his part, telegraphed his contacts in Guangxi and Fujian provinces to convince these associates to also swing over to the revolution. Once his power was secured, Tan sent concrete aid to Wuhan in the form of men and rice for the armies. Back in Changsha, Tan's policy was

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as the Minister of Education but only served at his post for six months. He also resigned, in January 1913, in protest.

stabilization described by his close advisor, Tang Qianyi, as follow:

The initial impulse of all of Tan’s appointments was to seek accommodation for the sake of the country. Local officials were not replaced unless they had already left their posts and were not changed unless they repeatedly offered their resignations. There was no swift reorganization of any administrative offices so that structural changes could be stopped at a time when great difficulties had arisen, and the people could be given an opportunity to rest. This was the fundamental principle.\(^9\)

Therefore, during the period of revolution, Tan’s priority was to avoid turmoil and to keep the situation peaceful and calm.

In his effort to do this, Tan Yankai quickly formed a provincial government, which was made up of fellow members of the Provincial Assembly and returned students from Japan. Since Tan selected all his government officials, all the appointees, of course, essentially shared his views. Also, all the appointees were residents of Changsha during the time of the revolution. And the returned students were always sons of well-to-do gentry families. Thus, the new provisional government was very much a regime of the new urban elite.

The most important departments of Tan Yankai's government were the civil government (internal affairs), finance, and foreign affairs units. These important departments initially were all headed by Tan's closest associates in the Provincial Assembly and were under Tan's direct leadership. And a new Charter of the Hunan Military Government was issued in December, which made the military governor the supreme power in the province. However, in his regime, although Tan Yankai had clear supremacy, there was one radical, Zhou Zhenlin, who worked in his administration.

Zhou was the head of the Revenue Bureau. With support from several intellectuals and some radical elements in the army, Zhou was responsible for a brief, limited, but real episode of promoting egalitarianism in the regime. The treasury was empty, and the vastly expanded army needed urgent financial support. Tan Yankai, thus, allowed Zhou to coerce some of the wealthiest families in the province into making large contributions, probably about ten percent of their total wealth. Making these exactions was one way to practice Zhou's iconoclastic egalitarianism. The intention of the Revenue Bureau was to tax all the rich, especially the former officials of the Qing, and their families. Those taxed by Zhou were not the modern industrial and mining
entrepreneurs of the reformist elite, but the provincial conservative elite whom Tan Yankai and his allies were in the process of replacing.\textsuperscript{10} Tan Yankai, therefore, gladly used Zhou Zhenlin as a temporary ally on the left to attack the wealthy and powerful gentry on the right, without infringing on the interests of the reformist elite.

The liberal regime that Tan Yankai had built fit into the liberal atmosphere of the nation in 1912. The republican revolutionaries and the leading figures of the Tongmenghui, Huang Xing, Song Jiaoren, Chen Tianhua, Liu Kuiyi, and Tan Renfeng all came from Hunan. Hunan was also the one of the two provinces first to respond to the Wuchang Uprising in 1911.\textsuperscript{11} The province, naturally, became a fortress of the new Nationalist Party (Guomindang), which had mainly grown out of the Tongmenghui. The province had a broad foundation for mass participation, and there was a ready and favorable response to the Guomindang among the masses.\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{11} The other province that was first to respond to the Wuchang Uprising in 1911 was Shanxi. Shi Zhongwen, ed., Zhongguo quanshi (The Complete History of China) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994), vol. 91, p. 9; Hunan shengzhi, p. 284-285.

\textsuperscript{12} Hunan shengzhi, p. 285-289.
Tan Yankai, with the support of the most important provincial gentry, the reformist elite, cautiously selected his administration, bringing the irritable and unresponsive generals to submit, while filling the empty treasury. One of his first acts was to trim the swollen military. That meant reducing the budget for army pay and dismissing some troops from service. Soldiers who were anxious to keep their jobs and protect their livelihood, of course, resisted this. However, for the sake of ensuring enough funds for economic, educational, and political reforms, reducing military expenses was necessary. Therefore, in the summer of 1912, Tan Yankai sought and received aid from General Zhao Hengti, a Hunanese commander of Guangxi troops. With the help of General Zhao, over forty thousand men were discharged in August and September. After the swollen armies shrank, the generals of 1911 were never again militarily important in the province.

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13 Zhao Hengti (1880-1971) was educated in Japan, and a follower of Huang Xing. He was also the leader of the Left Wing of the revolutionary armies in the battles with Yuan Shikai’s Northern forces in 1911. He came from a well to do Hengshan gentry family. He was a ju ren degree holder. He was young, ambitious, and proud, in hence, he became the dominant figure in Hunan during the early 1920s. Shao Yanmiao. *Xinhai yilai renwu nianli lu* (Who’s Who from the Republican Period to Present) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 720.

14 Throughout most of 1912, the political situation of Hunan was dominated by friction between Tan Yankai’s government and the armed forces. After Tan reduced the army in the fall of 1912 with the help of
After the 1911 revolution, Tan Yankai also launched a reform on the three-hundred-year-old tax collection system, which had grown to be both complex and corrupt. After the Provincial Assembly passed the "Announcement of Improvements in the Land Taxation System," Tan issued a series of new regulations, in January 1912. The new regulations unified most of the old and various extra levies. There were also developed standards for the development of government force or landlord-led militia in the extraction of rent from peasant tenants. Rents were to be collected before the landlords paid taxes. Previously, land tax proceeds had belonged to the national treasury; now the money was retained in the provincial treasury.¹⁵

These accomplishments, together with a number of others, demonstrated the efficiency and competence of decentralized, federalist government by provincial elites. They also showed Hunan's strenuous objection to Yuan Shikai's efforts at bureaucratic and financial centralization. Soon after Yuan

Shikai was inaugurated as president on March 10, 1912, Hunan began to focus on resisting his bureaucratic centralization by supporting its own industrialization projects, and making major efforts in education reform and judicial reform. By the end of February in 1912, Hunan resigned itself to Yuan's presidency and confined its opposition to the maintenance of the capital in Beijing.16

With aggressive political manipulation and campaigning, Tan's government sought republican legitimacy in the elections of 1912-13. In party politics, Tan's regime opposed Yuan Shikai but supported and adhered to the Nationalist Party. The Nationalist Party was founded in Beijing on August 25, 1912 out of the old revolutionary Tongmenghui (Revolutionary Alliance) together with other four smaller parties. Meanwhile, those who generally supported Yuan Shikai had come together in the Republican

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16 To the Hunanese, Yuan's presidency looked like a continuance of the metropolitan bureaucracy of the Qing. In 1913, Hunan refused to accept the salt commissioner appointed by Yuan, who had to control this post in order to obtain a foreign Reorganization Loan using revenues from the Salt Gabelle as collateral. Hunan also resisted Yuan's customs commissioners until a Hunanese was appointed. In general, Tan Yankai and his supporters wanted to maintain their power in the province; and once their power was secured, they could accept the forms of subordination instituted from Beijing. Here the key issue was money. That was why Hunan insisted on controlling its own revenues to finance its own reform projects. Hence, the most important reason for Hunan to resist Yuan Shikai was Yuan's policy of financial centralization. Hunan xianzhi, p. 332-348.
Party (Gonghedang), which was also formed in August 1912. Tan Yankai was invited by the Nationalist Party headquarters in Beijing to be the chairman of the Hunan branch. Tan accepted the position and brought the entire Hunan urban elite with him to the Nationalist Party. The goal of the Nationalist Party was to unify the opposition to Yuan Shikai and to check his power by gaining a parliamentary majority in the elections scheduled for 1912-13. The Nationalist Party, in the end, did win an overwhelming victory in the elections of 1912-13 in Hunan. It did so not as a popular revolutionary party, but as the representative of the liberal urban elite and its opportunist allies.

Although there were some problems in the provincial power, Tan Yankai's government, after all, represented a liberal regime, as well as a continuation of the reforms begun under the Qing. Most strikingly was this apparent in education, where Tan and his elite reformist associates had won an enormous triumph over their conservative adversaries. Thus, the way was open for the large-scale establishment of modern schools. Several professional training schools, such

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17 Zhongguo quanshi (The Complete History of China), Shi Zhongwen, ed. (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994), vol. 91, p. 29.

18 Ibid., p. 28-31.
as the engineering school, the law school, and the business school were set up in the province. Modern education developed very fast in Hunan. The new schools were so numerous and opened so quickly that one reporter described the situation as equivalent to their "growing like trees in a forest."^°

Educational Reforms First Normal, 1911-1919

The general atmosphere of educational reforms in the province certainly provided a favorable environment and condition for the First Normal School to explore and develop modern education according to its own practices. The fact that the First Normal School could initiate educational reforms in Hunan province and play a leading role in fulfilling them was the result of the victory of the provincial reformist elite over their conservative opponents. It was also the result of the First Normal’s practice of Cai Yuanpei’s reformist ideas and of the educational principles of the Ministry of Education.

After the revolution of 1911, First Normal had a four-month interruption and resumed instruction in February 1912. In the summer of the same year, First Normal (then named The Hunan Central Route Normal School) rearranged its original

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19 Tang Qianyi, Xiang shiji, vol. 2, p. 4b.
190 students of six classes into five classes. In September 1912, the school enrolled another 40 new students. In April 1913, the reformist educator, Kong Zhaoshou (f.n.), replaced Zeng Peilin (n.f.) as principal of the First Normal. Principal Kong was an advocate of Cai Yuanpei's educational philosophy. He energetically began to implement the reforming principles of the Ministry of Education at First Normal, and he embarked on a full-scale reform movement in the school's practice. However, in January 1914, the military governor, Tang Xiangming, ordered the arrest of the reformist principal Kong Zhaoshou for his opposition to Yuan Shikai. Kong had to flee to Japan.

In March 1914, the provincial government had the school officially renamed the Hunan Provincial First Normal School and ordered the Fourth Normal School merged into the First Normal. Zhang Gan, the mathematics teacher from the First Normal, was appointed as principal of the school. Zhang not only retained but expanded Principal Kong's educational

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20 During the Changsha riot of 1910, the angry protesters burned and destroyed the governor's yamen, churches, semi-foreign hotels, foreign-connected shops, government schools, banks, police stations, foreign firms, and rice shops. The First Normal School was burned during the riot of April 1912. Principal Wang Da allocated fifty thousand taels from the central government to rebuild the school at the original site. The reconstruction of the school was completed in May 1912; the First Normal moved back to its original campus, but with completely new buildings. The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949, p. 6-10.
reforms in the school. Zhang’s principalship lasted until August 1915. After Principal Zhang’s resignation, there were three more principals who followed each other in rapid succession.

During this period of time, Tang Xiangming was the governor of Hunan. Tang was a foreign-trained naval officer from Hubei province. In October 1913, Yuan Shikai appointed Tang to succeed Tan Yankai as governor of Hunan. Tang’s task was to uproot “disorderly parties” and strengthen central control over Hunan’s administrative machinery. In August 1913, Yuan had already closed down the provincial assembly and other representative bodies. When Tang arrived at Changsha in October, he selected his own men to take all the important positions. He even had sixteen former officials of Tan Yankai’s government, who had spoken or acted against Yuan Shikai, arrested in order to win favor with Yuan’s central government. Yet Tang realized that the hostile relationship between his force from the North and the local elites could not be allowed to remain for the long term. He needed cooperation and support from the provincial elites. For their part, some members of the provincial elites were

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21 Hunan xianzhi, p. 335-336.
prepared to cooperate with Tang for the sake of preserving peace and order and for maintaining their power and advancing in their careers. Therefore, it was not surprising that some of the provincial elites joined the Peace Planning Society in late 1915 to support Yuan Shikai's imperial ambitions. The seventy-one so-called "Hunan peoples' delegates" even voted to "respectfully ask our great president to assume the emperorship" on October 28, 1915.

During Tang's rule in Hunan (October 1913 to July 1916), Hunanese, including the common people, experienced a degree of terror imposed on them by Yuan Shikai's followers. For instance, a large number of special detectives conducted house-to-house searches looking for pro-Nationalist Party elements. They were said to have used all kinds of tortures, such as bamboo splinters under fingernails, prisoners forced to lie in hot coals, pulling off the skin of the skull, and so on. One of Mao Zedong's biographers, Li Rui, maintained that Tang killed around 5,000 people during his governorship.

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22 Ibid., p. 337-339.

23 The national leader of the Peace Planning Society in Beijing was Yang Du, who was a native of Xiangtan, Hunan. His associates in Changsha included Ye Dehui, educator Fu Dingyi, and the powerful merchant Zuo Yizhai.
in Hunan. Other reports had lower figures than that. Tang’s cruelty and dictatorship did not scare the Hunanese; on the contrary, it provoked strong rebellions, especially from the oppressed lower orders of the society.

After Tang Xiangming left Hunan, Tan Yankai was then recommended to become governor of Hunan again. On August 20, 1916, Tan assumed for the second time the formal leadership of the province as civil and military governor. Tan’s second administration lasted for a year, until September 1917. In September 1916, he appointed Kong Zhaoshou, who just returned to China from Japan, to be the principal of First Normal again. Kong Zhaoshou accepted. His second principalship lasted for two years until September 1918. During this period, the New Culture Movement began to exert strong influence around the country. Kong was an ardent supporter of the New Culture Movement and responded to it very positively. Under his leadership, the First Normal School quickly entered the mainstream of the movement. Kong used what he had studied abroad to further reform education

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25 Hunan xianzhi, p. 69.

26 Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi—1903-1949, p. 11.
at First Normal, making it more regular and systematic. Kong Zhaoshou, therefore, was the second most influential and the most accomplished principal next to Principal Tan Yankai in First Normal's history.

The years between the 1911 revolution and the May Fourth Movement of 1919 were the best in the history of First Normal. During this period, the school became very active and dynamic academically and rapidly grew to become the most distinguished public academic institution in Hunan. During this period, First Normal had the reformist, energetic educators Kong Zhaoshou and Zhang Gan as its principals, and also boasted a group of progressive and learned teachers, particularly Yang Changji, Xu Teli, Li Jinxi, and Fang Weixia, on the faculty. First Normal at that time had the largest faculty and student body in the province. It graduated 583 students (not including those who delayed their graduations until after the May Fourth Movement).  

School Philosophy and Regulations

During the first eight years of the second decade of the twentieth century, First Normal had several reformist

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27 Ibid., p. 11.
and energetic scholars as principals, such as Kong Zhaoshou. The First Normal School was, thus, accustomed to and readily receptive to educational reforms. It also had a better understanding of the position and function of normal schools. This can be seen clearly in the school’s advertisement for students. The first paragraph of which declared:

The rise or fall of a nation totally depends on its people of talent; the increase or decrease of the nation’s people of talent entirely relies upon the nation’s education; whether the nation’s education is good or bad is largely dependent on the education of normal schools. Normal schools offer education for educators; therefore, normal schools are the place to train models for the citizens to follow, (because the teachers of the schools were usually to function as leaders to promote a new civic spirit in the local community). In this way, normal schools can be regarded as the fountainhead for building up a young, strong, and wealthy society, the new China.”

For that reason, the First Normal made it clear that its purpose, its philosophy, its rules and regulation, its curriculum, its length of schooling, its admission system, enrollment, and assignment of graduates, were centered on the goal of training elementary school teachers.

In September 1912, the Ministry of Education of the new Republic issued the “Decree on Principles for Education” (jiaoyu zongzhiling), which emphasized military, utilitarian, and moral education. However, moral education
was deemed essential, while utilitarian and military education were subsidiary. Moral cultivation, the Decree made clear, should be completed by means of "aesthetic education" (meigan jiaoyu). Based on this "Decree on Principles for Education," First Normal put together its own principles for educating students, which were combined with its own principles for teacher training. The statement was named "The principle purpose of educating students" (jiaoyang xuesheng zhi yaozhi). The main articles declared:

1. Since a healthy body provides the solid foundation for a healthy mind, we urge students to keep fit and to participate in sports.
2. Since building good character and having resolution are of the utmost importance in becoming a good teacher, it is important to train our students to be aesthetically aware and virtuous.
3. Being patriotic and law-abiding are the key element in becoming a good teacher. We should let students know the fundamental importance of building up our nation, and let them understand that every citizen should take his share of responsibility and do his (or her) part of a task well.
4. Independence and universal love are of the utmost importance in becoming a good teacher, thus we should train our students to be morally cultivated and to develop their self-governing ability. We should train them to be humanitarian, to respect every individual, and to treat public affairs and the public interest as of the utmost importance.
5. Our Republic's philosophy of education emphasizes real practice, so we should let students understand the general situation of the current day, investigate the social realities, and seek truth from facts, so they can become people who work hard.

28 Ibid., p. 11-12.
and contribute to society, and not become individuals who sit idle and enjoy the fruits of others' work.

6. Education for a worldview and an outlook on life is essential for spiritual education, so we should urge our students to study a philosophy of life so they can develop noble interests.

7. When giving lectures, the teacher should pay attention to his teaching methods, so when students become teachers in the future they will know how to teach.

8. When choosing materials for teaching, we should make sure that these materials are practical and useful to our students when they are teaching in the future. ...

9. Learning does not totally depend on professors’ lectures. We should train our students to increase their interests in independent studies, so they can develop a capacity for individual initiative.  

These stipulations of the school’s principles for educating students clearly show that First Normal focused particularly on moral, utilitarian, and military education, especially on moral cultivation. The school paid serious attention to aesthetic education and education on a worldview. The school also advocated voluntarism and self-governance. The emphasis on moral education, physical education, voluntarism, self-governance, and training for elementary school teachers later on became the tradition of the school.

With respect to its educational policy, First Normal adopted the version articulated by decrees and officials of

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the republican government, which took the "people" as the essential focus. The school admonition or slogan (xiaoxun) was centered on "knowing or remembering the national humiliation" (zhichi). The policy itself is outlined in Table 1, which was rather reformist at that time. Its policy of "knowing the national humiliation" (zhichi) was placed at the center of the school's admonition, while public-spiritedness, sincerity, hard work, and thrift were subordinated to it. Its contents contained three parts: moral, intellectual, and physical education. In order to thoroughly carry out the educational policy, First Normal added four requirements: (1) all professors should follow (and implement) the policy effectively in order to achieve a systematized and spiritual education; (2) one should constantly exploit "the national humiliation" to awaken the consciousness of the students; (3) all professors should advocate voluntarism; (4) Chinese is temporarily chosen as the united center of all departments.\(^31\)

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 13.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 14.
School Admonition (Xiaoxun) (1911-1918)

Knowing the national humiliation (zhichi):

Public-spiritedness & Hardwork &
sincerity thrift

Education based on the idea that
"People" are of the utmost importance

Moral cultivation  Physical activities  Social activities

Models
Connections with parents and sponsors
Administration inside & outside school
Admonition
Examination of students' conduct
Punishment
Model students elected by students themselves
Moral cultivation diary

Military (see below)
General
Amusement activity
Exercises during the break
Volunteer soldiers
outside class
Sports meets in extracurricular setting
Various sport departments under the leadership of the students' association
Sport teams
Hygiene

Social activities

Intellect

The trend of educational thought in the world
State of local education
What needs teachers' attention
Voluntary study
Common knowledge

Occupation

Extracurricular working meet
Various services (post, fire control, cooking, printing, cleaning, calligraphy)
Various skills (handcraft, books, music, various sport departments)
Fieldwork in the countryside
Fieldwork in factories
Fieldwork in commercial firms

Table 1: School Admonition (1911-1918)
In addition, the reformist school authorities composed their own school anthem. First Normal also had a school flag, which was fringed with red tassels like the army flag in ancient times. There was a yellow dart in the flag. The flag itself was blue green in color, and in the middle was a white star. A black Chinese character “shi” (normal school) was embroidered in the middle of the white star. The First Normal School also provided the students with school uniforms. All of these emblems and symbols indicate an effort to arouse the students' consciousness of patriotism and love of their school. It also showed the school authorities' endeavor to cultivate students' lofty ideals.

Under the direction of the "Regulations for Normal Schools" (shifan xuexiao guicheng) from the Ministry of Education, which was issued in December 1912, and under the leadership of Principal Kong, First Normal made some changes in the length of its school year based on consideration of its own state of affairs. There were two divisions in the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training (shi

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32 There were only simple 40 words in the school anthem, which was easy for young children to sing. The purpose of the anthem was to arouse the students' interests and pride in becoming teachers, and to foster lofty ideals of the students.
Division One and Division Two. The length of the course of study in Division One was five to five-and-half years. Before entering this division, all the students had to complete a one-year program of study, the first of five years, in the Preparatory Department at the school. The graduates of the Preparatory Department would then be entitled to advance into the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training (shifan benke) if they passed all their examinations. The length of the course of study in Division Two of the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training was one year.

According to its own particular situation and particular needs, First Normal made some changes in the curriculum and course of study. In the Preparatory Department at the school, they added four subjects -- history, geography, science and handcraft, to the original eight courses because they believed that history and geography were the key elements of Chinese Language and Literature (guowen); science and handwork were considered essential to the direction of agriculture.

In the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training (shifan benke), the school's leaders also added subjects. To
the first year's curriculum in the Undergraduate Department, they added geometry to the original mathematics class, geometric drawing to the original drawing class, as well as another two new courses - physics and agriculture. They believed that charting/drawing was fundamentally important for working, and regarded a clear understanding of the principles of physics and geometry as the basis for charting/drawing.

Furthermore, Hunan was an agricultural province and agriculture deserved to be particularly emphasized. That was why First Normal added four subjects to the first year's curriculum in the Undergraduate Department. First Normal added two new subjects - economics and business, to the third year's curriculum in the Undergraduate Department, because they saw the bitter economic competition in the world at that time, and realized the urgent need and practical value of offering such courses.

Since practice in agriculture and in industry was extremely important, First Normal made it a rule that each week all the students of First Normal, starting from the third year, should have three hours of practice either in agriculture or in industry after classes. The students could

33 For the original eight courses, see Table 2 in page 122-123.
choose freely between the two. Because more classes were added to the original curriculum, the length of the course of study in the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training was extended by six additional months in 1913. These initiatives can be seen in Table 2, the curriculum of Division One at the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training (shifan benke),\(^{34}\) and in the curriculum of Division Two, in Table 3.\(^{35}\)

After the Ministry of Education issued a series of reformist decrees on education in 1911 and 1912, the First Normal School, especially under the administration of Principal Kong in 1913, soon grew to be the key institution for carrying out these reforms in Hunan's provincial education. The First Normal School was a public institution. Funding for the school came from the provincial budget that was under the management of the governor's office. All students had a tuition waiver. The school also provided each student a certain amount of money for necessary expenses at the school. However, all the new students had to pay ten gold dollars (jin yang shiyuan) as a guaranteed deposit and an additional sum for their school uniforms and membership

\(^{34}\) *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi*, p. 16.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 16.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Preparatory Dept.</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year 1st &amp; 2nd Semesters</th>
<th>Fourth Year 3rd Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Hours</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
<td>Class hours per week</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Chinese Classics</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Calligraphy</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Chemistry</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwork</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music &amp; Choir</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>38</td>
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Table 2: Curriculum of Division One at the Undergraduate Department, 1913
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Class hours per week</th>
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<td>Moral cultivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese classics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Chemistry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwork</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music &amp; Choir</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Curriculum of Division Two at the Undergraduate Department, 1913

fees in the students association when they enrolled at the beginning of the school year. If anyone for some reason had to withdraw from the school, he had to repay the school for his tuition fees and board expenses. The ten gold dollars
were used as a guarantee that he had the money to return to the school.

Since the First Normal School was the most distinguished public educational institution in Hunan in the early Republican years, the school became a favorite choice for many students and attracted the best students in the province. In 1912 and 1913, First Normal admitted students from twenty out of seventy-five counties in the province. In 1914, its administration scale was enlarged to twenty-five counties. With a total enrollment that averaged 400 to 500, First Normal accounted for one third of Hunan's advanced normal school students.

First Normal had a very strict admission process. The candidates had to be physically healthy, possess a good character, and have top scores academically. In addition, the candidates must have applied voluntarily to First Normal. The candidate had to apply to his county government first to take the primary examinations held in the county. The county magistrate then chose ten to twenty qualified candidates of

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36 First Normal only accepted male students before 1927. The candidates for the Preparatory Department (yuke) of the Undergraduate Department of the Teachers' Training (shifan benke) had to be over fourteen years old and graduated from a higher elementary school or equivalent. The candidates for Division One of the shifan benke had to be over fifteen years old and graduated from the yuke of First Normal or equivalent. The
the highest scores who had passed the county level examinations and sent these qualified candidates, as well as their examination papers and their diplomas, to First Normal. Those candidates who had passed the county level examinations would take another entrance examination at the First Normal School.

The entrance examinations at the First Normal School consisted of three parts: written, oral, and physical examinations. The written examinations included the Chinese classics, mathematics, history, geography, science, and English language. The written examination was divided into two parts: a preliminary examination and a re-examination. Only those who had passed the preliminary examination were able to take the re-examination. And only those who had passed the re-examination were able to take the oral examination and physical examination. Admission was based on the candidates' total scores (the written examinations accounted for 75 percent of the total; the oral examination and physical examination constituted 25 percent together). Only those with the top scores were admitted. In the first decade of the Republican years, the First Normal School candidates for Division Two of the shifan benke must be over seventeen years old and graduated from secondary school or equivalent.
admitted around 100 students out of a pool of several hundred applicants each year.

Since the school provided students with a tuition waiver, free board and lodging, and financial aid, First Normal was very attractive to those who came from families of modest means. However, it was still unrealistic for those who came from really poor families to be admitted by First Normal, because of their hard-up financial status as well as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparatory Department (yuke)</th>
<th>Scholar</th>
<th>Peasant</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Merchant</th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>Medical Doctor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 16</td>
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<td>Class 17</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Students' Family Background of the Preparatory Department (yuke), 1917 (scholars refered to those who were educated; officials refered to those who held government posts.)

the school's strict entrance examinations. For instance, of the 120 students admitted to the Preparatory Department
(yuke) at the school in the fall of 1917, only thirty-eight (32%) came from peasants' families, shown in Table 4.\textsuperscript{37}

After the new students enrolled at the school, they had to endure a four-month trial period. During the first four months, if any student was found to have done any of the following, he would be ordered to leave school immediately: (1) somebody else took the examination for him under his name; (2) have bad conduct; (3) have poor health; and (4) miss a lot of classes. After the trial period, the students were guided by the school's rewards and punishments regulations.

After graduation, the time for the graduates to serve society arrived. It was written into the rules that after graduation, the students from Division One of the Undergraduate Department of the Teachers' Training had to teach for seven years in the county elementary schools of Hunan; the graduates from Division Two had to teach for two years in an elementary school in the province. If for some exceptional reason a graduate could not do so, he must obtain a service waiver from the provincial authorities. Otherwise, he would have had to pay back to the school the

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 20.
sums expended on his tuition and other expenses he had incurred while studying at the school.

After the students were admitted by the school, they were guided through a demanding curriculum in the classics, as shown in Table 2. During the first year at the Preparatory Department (yuke), students had ten class hours of Chinese classics per week. During the following four and half years in the Undergraduate Department of Teachers’ Training, Chinese classics were a major subject in the curriculum. Six class hours per week of Chinese classics were taught during the first year at the Undergraduate Department of Teachers’ Training, four class hours per week the second year, and three class hours per week in each of the remaining three years. Chinese classics, therefore, took the most class hours in the school’s curriculum. Besides Chinese classics, the students were also drilled by the school authorities about an educated man’s moral character and political responsibility.

Moral cultivation was a required course each semester starting from the first year in the Preparatory Department (yuke) through the fifth year at the Undergraduate Department of Teachers’ Training. Physical education was greatly emphasized and took a large portion of the
curriculum, too. During the five school years, the students had four class hours of gym every week. Therefore, during the first decade of the Republic, while First Normal became a center of Republican ideals, it continued to promote old-style moral and literary teaching in the province.

**Course Content and Examination Regulations**

During the 1910s, First Normal also became a model for integrating modern Western subjects and old-style moral and literary teaching into its curriculum. There were seventeen subjects all together. Besides the modern Western subjects, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and science, the students also had to master a demanding curriculum in moral cultivation, as well as in Chinese classics.

The moral cultivation course was called ethics (xiushen), which was a required class for the students in each semester. The students had to attend the moral cultivation course once or twice each week, starting from the first year through the fifth year. The gist of the moral cultivation course at First Normal was to foster lofty moral values in the students. Moral cultivation, actually, was something of an intrinsic value that stood on its own. It

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38 The detailed content of moral cultivation course were: 1) (Since students of each grade had their own ethics textbooks, each grade's ethics textbooks had their own items of moral cultivation clearly listed

137
was autonomous and seen as free of all utilitarian considerations. In that sense it was very different from the newly added Western subjects, which were more concretely defined and were intentionally designed for the future "vocation" (zhiye) of the students.

Besides fostering lofty moral values in the students, the ethics class encouraged them to practice in their daily conduct what they had learned in class. Since the students would be elementary school teachers in the province, it was very important for those future teachers to know and to live in accord with the lofty moral values. Teaching in those days was viewed highly and respected by the public. Teachers were regarded as having an important social mission; thus,

for their class to follow.) The ethics professor should educate students to live according to the specifications of moral cultivation listed in the textbooks, and train students to practice lofty moral values in daily life, so students could cultivate a noble moral character (gaozhi rang); 2) With quotations and remarks from the Confucian classics, moral principles should be set clearly for the students to follow; 3) With citations of fine conduct and remarks about moral cultivation of well-known scholars from both China and the West, the Great Unity of moral cultivation would be made clear to all; 4) To commend model figures (to demonstrate the exemplary deeds and words of the model figures); 5) To give speeches and instructions at various ceremonies and meetings of commemoration. 6) To train students in moral cultivation in accordance with each individual student's personality and weakness so that he could cultivate a good character and good habits. 7) To put an emphasis on students' rite education, so the students would act courteously and in the right way when coming and leaving the offices, for instance. 8) For students of the third and the fourth grades at the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training (shifan benke) the professor should teach ethics pedagogy. The professor should also teach the students how to put into practice the items of moral cultivation listed in elementary school textbooks. Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949, p. 21.

138
each individual teacher should set a good moral example for his students as well as others in the community, besides transmitting knowledge and skills in the classroom. Therefore, the students of the First Normal School were expected to embrace a secular activism which affirmed the meaning of social action. The course of moral cultivation would also teach students classroom layout and pedagogical techniques of teaching moral cultivation in elementary schools.

Chinese classics was also a required course for students at every grade. Students were presented with a very demanding curriculum in Chinese classics, a course that took the most class hours in the school's curriculum.

The essence of the Chinese classics course was to help the students understand and master the Chinese language, so they could express their thoughts freely. In that way, students could cultivate an interest in literature, which in turn, would enlighten their moral and intellectual consciousness. The professor should teach and help the students to understand and to master the pedagogy of teaching Chinese classics in elementary schools.

Modern literatures should be taught first; pre-modern literatures second; then medieval and ancient literatures. The origins and development of Chinese characters, Chinese
grammar, and the history of Chinese literature should be taught, too. Students were able to familiarize themselves with and master the language; they could thus make practical use of the language both in daily life and in future classroom teaching.

There were specific requirements for selecting readings and poems to be taught in class. The selected readings should contain certain aspect of the nation, and a general knowledge of the world, and should have some connections with other subjects. The selected readings should be about the way of the world and the heart of human beings or about moral courage. They should be about brave and steadfast warriors, about people adept in the martial arts whose example gave rise to chivalrous conduct, about assassins and the like.\(^\text{39}\)

Reading materials were supposed to be given to students according to their level of education. For instance, the students in the Preparatory Department (yuèke) were to be introduced to narrative essays, then to letters, and finally to argumentative writings. Readings in poetry (cí) and rhapsodies (fu), as well as ancient poetry (gushi)(a form of

\(^{39}\) For details of Chinese literature course, see The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi*—1903--1949, p. 22-24. 140
pre-Tang poetry) were supposed to be taught in the fourth year. The policy, however, called for only a few poems and rhapsodies (fu) to be introduced. The selected readings of narrative essays should be clearly full and accurate in writing. The selected argumentative writings and letters should be simple, natural, and smooth in style. The selected rhapsodies (fu), poems, and folk songs were supposed to be elegant but not flowery, straightforward but not vulgar. There were specific requirements for teaching the selected readings, which included punctuating texts.  

There were also specific requirements for students in writing essays. The topic of the essay should be given in

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40 The specific requirements for teaching the selected readings were: First, the students should prepare the selected reading before going to class. They were supposed to mark certain words and phrases which needed their special attention with dots or small circles, or gave pre-lectures among themselves. Second, they should review each selected reading. Each time, after the professor finished explaining the selected reading, he would ask some students to explain in order to check whether the students truly understood it. Third, they were expected to think about the material. The professor would ask questions whenever necessary, so as to train the students' ability in reasoning. Fourth, the gist of the reading material should be made clear. The outline of the whole essay should be given to the students. Fifth, the professor should make clear distinction between one section and another. The main idea of each section and each paragraph should be made clear. Sixth, the professor should explain the theme of the essay, the structure of the essay, the sentence structure, and the rhetoric of the essay. Seventh, the professor should give the explanation of words in ancient books. Eighth, the professor should teach the students the right way of reading. The professor read it first as model, and then asked the students to read it together or separately. The professor was expected to correct the students' wrong pronunciation and intonation, and teach them the pinyin. Last, the professor should teach the students how to choose books to read after class. According to the students' level of education, members
accordance with the students' intellectual level. It should also relate to other subjects. The content of the essay should be associated with modern events. The students should practice writing narrative essays first, then letters, and lastly argumentative essays. When they wrote narrative essays their arrangement of ideas should be clear, unified, and coherent. Writings fabricated from pure imagination were disallowed. Argumentative essays and letters were required to be practical, reasonable, convincing, and systematic. The students were asked to write some wuyan guti poems (a form of Pre-Tang poetry, usually having five characters per line) only when they were in the fourth year.

When grading papers, the professor was supposed to point out the weakness of each paragraph and make comments, suggestions, and corrections on the side. All wrongly written or mispronounced characters, improperly used words and phrases, as well as slang should be corrected, too. The students of the fourth grade at the Undergraduate Department of Teachers' Training should be asked to grade elementary school students' papers as a kind of practical training.

of each class should select a couple of books for individual reading in their spare time.
During both summer and winter vacations, students were given essay topics to write on.

Besides moral cultivation and the Chinese classics, other subjects also had their own teaching goals and required teaching methods. There were three noticeable characteristics in the teaching goals and in the specific requirements for teaching each course: reflection of the Republican educational philosophy, which advocated democracy and science; emphasis on moral, utilitarian, and military education which would enable the students to develop morally, intellectually, and physically; and highlighting the educational characteristics of running normal schools with an emphasis on vocational training for elementary school teachers.

During the first ten years of the Republic, First Normal faithfully carried out the educational principles of the Ministry of Education. In order to train qualified graduates for the new Republic, First Normal not only had its own systematic and complete curriculum, syllabus, and teaching contents, it also had its own strict and comprehensive examination system. Examinations obviously emphasized three aspects: moral, intellectual, and physical education, which were named "check on students' conducts,"
"examinations on students' school work," and "physical examination."

On the "check on students' conduct" were twelve items: etiquette, appearance and manner, speech and deportment, disposition, ability, hobby, sociability, academic work, community service, vocation, sports, and cleanliness and neatness. Evaluation of students' conduct was carried out by giving each student a grade, Jia, yi, bing, and ding (A, B, C, and D), at the end of each month or at the end of each semester. The grade was given by the faculty in accordance with each student's conduct based on the aforementioned twelve items. The principal, the dean of studies, teachers, parents, sponsors, and fellow students all had the responsibility to check the students' conduct. The principal, the dean of the studies, and other faculty members were responsible for writing down the students' good or bad conduct on their conduct reports. Parents and sponsors were required to report their sons' conduct to the school when they were asked to do so. So far as the students themselves were concerned each year, they were asked to select model students from among themselves who met the required standard. This became one of the traditional methods for checking students' conduct at the First Normal School.
The standard for selecting model students among students themselves focused on three aspects: moral, intellectual, and physical education. There were specific requirements and concrete contents for each. The concrete requirements and content of moral cultivation included such characteristics as honesty, sincerity, self-control, eagerness to learn, self-restraint, thrift and simplicity, and volunteer service. The specific requirements and concrete contents of physical education included: courage and insight, hygiene, gym, martial arts, and sports. The specific requirements and concrete contents of intellectual education included: literature, science, aesthetic perception, profession, ability, and speech.

Expectations regarding moral cultivation included the honesty and sincerity, self-government, self-restraint, eagerness to learn, thrift and simplicity, and volunteer service. "Honesty" and "sincerity" meant having a sense of honor and of shame, moral courage, care in choosing friends, and having the will power to refuse outside temptation. "Self-government" meant observing discipline, paying attention to etiquette, and being careful about one's speech and jokes. Ability to learn meant not being absent from classes, being diligent in one's studies, frequently...
reviewing what one had learned, and willingness to use reference materials. "Self-restraint" included stopping bad hobbies and bad desires, such as laziness, drinking, gambling, and womanizing, and being able to bear hardships and stand hard work. "Thrift" and "simplicity" included not being too fastidious about one's food and clothing and valuing an economical, simple life.

The requirements and contents of physical education included the quality of courage, as well as skill in gymnastics, martial arts, and other sports. "Courage" and "insight" included being adventurous and always forging ahead or keeping alert. The quality of hygiene included living a regular life, being clean and tidy, and having a shower or bath regularly. Gym included being skillful at setting-up exercises during the break, being fond of sports, and so on. Martial arts included being good at Chinese boxing/gongfu and swordplay. Sport championship included being skillful at ball games, at track and field sports, and at swimming.

The requirements and contents of intellectual education included literature, science, aesthetic perception, profession, ability, and speech. "Literature" meant being good at Chinese classics, poetry, prose, and the like.
"Science" required being good at English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, and geography. "Aesthetic perception" required being good at calligraphy, drawing, and music. "Profession" referred to taking the practical trainings in agriculture, in factory, and in business firms seriously. "Ability" applied to having the ability to deal with an emergency or complicated situations, being capable and careful in handling affairs, and the like. "Speech" included being good at giving speeches, at debates, and at repartee.

The election of model students was probably created by Principal Kong Zhaoshou in 1913 and probably never done before in Chinese schools. It was one way to check the students. Every student could cast three votes and each vote was only good for one person. They could select the candidates from their own class or from outside their class. All candidates should meet the standard of model students. When voting for a candidate, the detailed items and contents of the standard that the candidate had met should be listed on the vote. The listed items of the candidate should match the reality. No one was allowed to vote for a candidate out of gratitude. No fraud or trickery was allowed either. Because the standard was high and the requirement was strict,
not many students were selected. Each year only a few students were elected as model students. For instance, in the election of 1917, there were 575 students in twelve classes who participated the election, but only 34 students were elected as model students. Among the 34 model students, Mao Zedong received the highest votes and Zhou Shizhao the second highest. Others who were elected included Li Weihan, Zhang Kundi, Zhang Guoji, He Guo, Jiang Zhuru, and etc.

The determination of students' academic grades was divided into two parts: grades of daily schoolwork and examination grades. Grades of daily schoolwork were constituted of four parts. First, it was answering questions, which was one of the best ways to encourage students to study independently, as well as to stimulate their interests in studies. Students were encouraged to prepare, review, and think independently for each course. Preparation for a course required students to read the material before going to class. Before teaching the material, the professor would ask the students to tell the main ideas of the material. They believed that would help the students have a better understanding of the material. Review required the students to go over what they had learned. When a new lesson was taught, the professor would ask the students to answer the
major points of the old lesson, in order to help the students see the connection between the old and the new. Independent thinking referred to the professor’s questions from what the students had learned or what they were going to learn. When the professor raised a question, students were free to decide how to answer it. They could do some researches on the question before answering it. The professor should let the students talk about the question first before giving them his explanation. In this way, students would be encouraged to think independently and be on the right track.

Second, the grades of daily schoolwork came from homework. For instance, every essay from the Chinese classics class or English class, and every mathematics assignment, or calligraphy homework was graded by the instructor. Third, was the practical training grade, such as teaching practical training, volunteer service, volunteer soldiers, sport activities, choir and orchestra, and practical training in agriculture, industry, and business. Fourth, the grade of daily schoolwork meant taking notes, which included taking lecture notes and writing diaries. The professor would check students’ notes at least once every
semester. Examinations were administered at the end of each semester, each school year, and just before graduation.

The grading policy of First Normal was strict and clearly defined. So, the students were very serious not only about their examinations, but also about their daily schoolwork from the first day they began to study at the school, because daily schoolwork constituted 60 percent of the total grade.

In order to promote academic exchange, to encourage students to learn from each other, and to enhance interests in their studies, it became annual activity at First Normal for the school to hold a schoolwork exhibition. The schoolwork exhibition included examination papers of students who did excellently. It would exhibit the best essays from both Chinese classics and English classes, the best drawing and handcraft works of students, the best

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41 The grade of daily schoolwork constituted 60 percent of the total grade. Among the 60 percent, answering questions, homework, and practical training were made up of 40 percent, and notes took the rest 20 percent. Final examinations were made up of 40 percent of the total. The grades were divided into four levels: A, B, C, and D. Grade A was above eighty, grade B, above seventy, grade C, above sixty, and grade D was failed. If a student’s final grade were a D, he could not advance to the higher grade with other students. He would stay at the same grade for another year. If the student failed to pass the second year, he would be asked to leave the school. No matter a student failed either in his academic work, or in physical education, or in moral cultivation, he would not be allowed to advance to a higher grade or graduate at the end of the school year. If it were the second year he failed in one of the three aspects, he would be ordered to quit school.
lecture notes, excellent book reports, commentaries, and writings about what they had gained in studies, and practical trainings. At that time, although the best works from all the subjects in the curriculum were exhibited, essay writing from the Chinese classic class was considered all-important. If the essay was good, then the student was regarded as a good student. The exhibition was usually held in the schoolroom. Each student in the fifteen or so classes at the school was required to write an essay once a week. The best essay from each class was sent to a teachers' committee, which chose three to five to be hung in the glass-covered exhibition cases in the large display room for all the students to read as models. Xiao Zisheng's and Mao Zedong's essays were often honored in this way.

Besides the schoolwork and essay exhibitions, there was a proficiency test on essay-writing every semester. During the test, students were not allowed to bring anything except brush (pen) and blank papers; there was to be no plagiarizing, no talking, and no one was allowed to leave

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42 Xiao Yu (Xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 32.

43 Xiao San, one of the founding members of the "Xinmin xuehui" at First Normal, did not mention his brother, Xiao Zisheng, when he was discussing about the best essays exhibited at the First Normal in his
the classroom. The test lasted for five hours. During the proficiency test on essay writing in July 1917, 414 students out of 575 passed the test. Among the 414 students, only 30 students received A. This test system showed that First Normal was very strict in student training at that time.

In addition to tests on moral cultivation, conduct, and academic works, there were specific requirements on the newly-added Westernized physical examination, which included checks on height, weight, chest measurement, vital capacity, vision, hearing, spinal column, physique, teeth, hand wrestling, and illness. Physical examinations were usually done by school doctor (probably Western medical doctor), physical education teachers, and the dean of academic studies. One of four grades was assigned to a physical examination: jia, yi, bing, and ting. When checking students' height, weight, chest measurement, vital capacity, and hand wrestling, the examiners were asked to consider the examinee's age before giving him a grade. In that way, grading was supposedly fair to everyone.

Although First Normal had set a high standard with respect to evaluation of students' moral cultivation,
intellectual and physical education, most students could still meet the standard and pass the tests, due to the school's strict admission system and its efficient teaching policies and practices. The examination result for the grade of which Mao was a member in 1917 was an example. There were 173 students in that grade who took the examinations, and 166 passed the moral cultivation test, 172 passed the academic test, and 155 passed the physical examinations.\(^4^4\)

Requirements for Faculty and Staff Members

In order to maintain high academic standards, run a competitive athletic program, and cultivate the students' moral life, First Normal considered the role of the faculty to be very important. The school faithfully carried out the spirit of the "Decree of Instructions to School Administrators and Faculties" issued by the Republic's Ministry of Education in September 1912. They firmly believed that:

on campus, the school teachers and staff members should be reserved and dignified in front of their students, while outside school, they should set themselves as a public model for others in society to follow. They should possess a noble, determined, and faithful spirit, and take pleasure in fulfilling their lifelong duties.\(^4^5\)

\(^{4^4}\) Ibid., p. 39.
The First Normal authorities stated:

If all the school teachers and staff members could do these things, then the time when our nation’s academic development, the transformation of our corrupt customs, and our ability to develop at the same pace as the Western powers would arrive soon.\textsuperscript{46}

Therefore, all the teachers and staff members at the First Normal were required,

to do their utmost to fulfill their duties as long as they were at their posts, so as to take the responsibility of intellectuals, who were considered to have foresight. They were required to treat students as good friends, and to love students as their own children or younger brothers. They should also set examples for students to follow, exert favorable influences on students’ characters, and foster students’ abilities of independence and self-control.\textsuperscript{47}

In the first decade of the Republic, there were only two staff members at the First Normal who were appointed directly by the provincial government, the principal and the accountant. Based on the class size and teaching load, the principal submitted proposals to the provincial government calling for either increasing or decreasing the number of teachers. The school regulation was that below the principal, there were four directors of studies (xuejian), a certain number of teachers, one person in charge of general affairs,

\textsuperscript{45} Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi—1903-1949, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 39.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 39.
one accountant, one secretary, one librarian, one equipment administrator, one school doctor, and several office clerks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Member</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Teacher Number of people</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>&amp; Education</td>
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Table 5: The Number of Staff Member at Each Post (Fall Semester of 1917)

This division of labor was borrowed from Japanese schools' administration system. For instance, in the second semester
of 1917, there were 549 students divided into twelve classes, and sixty-two teachers and staff members at First Normal. The number of people for each assignment is shown in Table 5.48

In order to let every staff member discharge his responsibilities, First Normal had laid down not only the general principles for all staff members to follow, but also the detailed working regulations for people in different departments. The general principles were enumerated in fourteen items. It was stipulated that "all teachers and staff members were to be hired and appointed by the principal. They should discuss their work with the principal. They should be responsible, have good conduct, be honest and sincere, and set a good example for the students. They should be interested in the study of education, and be committed to their work."49 The general principles also had specific requirements regarding asking for leave time or absence without pay. The detailed working regulations included eleven items regarding the responsibilities of the principal, fifty-eight regarding the responsibilities of the directors of studies, and thirteen dealing with the

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48 Ibid., p. 40.
49 Ibid., p. 40.
responsibilities of the teachers. The obligations of and
requirements for each were written clearly and specifically
in the detailed working regulations of the school.

The First Normal School had routine meetings on
administrative affairs every Friday evening. The principal,
the directors of studies, the secretary, the accountant, and
the people in other administrative positions were required
to participate in the meeting. All the suggestions and
proposals regarding the school’s administration were
discussed and decided at these meetings. If something urgent
happened, a provisional meeting would be called.

In addition to the administrative meetings, First
Normal also had educational administration meetings. All the
school’s teaching work was under the direction and guidance
of the educational administration meetings. The educational
administration meeting attended by all teachers and was held
at the beginning of each semester. Before the meeting was
called, the principal or the directors of studies would
collect the professors’ opinions and suggestions about the
school’s curriculum or teaching, then bring them together
and prepare an agenda. The draft would then be distributed
to each professor to look over. After that, the principal
would convene an educational administration meeting to
discuss and decide the proposals concerning the new semester. If something important happened, the principal would convene a provisional meeting.

The principal usually presided over the meetings of the administrative affairs and the educational administration. In case the principal was unable to attend, the director of studies (xuejian zhuren) would take his place as presiding officer. All the people concerned were required to attend the meetings. A resolution was passed when over half of those in attendance voted for it. (The idea of voting probably came from the West). As soon as a resolution was passed, it would be issued to the public and be put into practice. The meeting system of the First Normal School thus conformed to the requirements of the statement of Republican educational principles. It was also supposed to help strengthen the school’s teaching and administration work so that the First Normal School could maintain its status as one of the most distinguished academic institutions in the province.⁵⁰

⁵⁰In the extant archives of the First Normal School, there were sixty-seven specific regulations in six categories, which had been used for students' management. Although these regulations seemed numerous and jumbled, they demonstrated the administration work of the school in 1910s. For details of the content of the regulations, see The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, p. 45-54.
The Students' Management

In addition to the obligations and responsibilities of the faculty and staff members of the school, First Normal also had specific requirements for supervising the students. When distributing the "Edict on Educational Reforms in Normal Schools" decreed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic in 1912, First Normal added a "preface" to the decree: "In governing the people, we should establish law and order. Without law and order, there is no way of governing the people. The law is something that people can rely on and is regarded as the governor."\(^{51}\) From that we can see that First Normal faithfully carried out the regulations and rules of the Ministry of Education to run the school, and to choose their teachers seriously. Furthermore, First Normal also required its students to devote themselves to academic studies and train themselves to be physically and mentally healthy. Everybody was free, yet "freedom is within the boundary of law. Everyone must follow the school regulations," the school regulations stated. Everybody was equal, yet "equality did not allow disorder. Everyone must follow the school's orders. If anyone did not fulfill his

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 45.
duty as a student but went off into wild flights of fancy, he wasted his young life. That means he did not strive to make progress, but gave himself up as hopeless. In that way, even if he realized his error and showed repentance later on, it was too late for regret."\textsuperscript{52} Therefore, the school "expected that all the students maintain a sound character, and was prepared to enhance his strength of independence and self-governing. The future of our Republic is entirely dependent on promising young people."\textsuperscript{53}

First Normal had very strict rules with respect to student conduct. Although these rules and regulations were rigid and rather conventional, they were in keeping with Republican educational principles. They were also in accord with the entire social, economic, and educational atmosphere of China at the time. Xiao Zisheng recalled,

The daily routine for students of the First Normal was very rigid and their activities were strictly scheduled to the last minute: the times for entering classrooms, the reading rooms, dining room, and the dormitory were all fixed and were indicated by sharp blasts on a trumpet, in imitation of the army bugle. When the trumpet sounded, the thousand or more students all

\textsuperscript{52} Quoted by the Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, \textit{Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi}, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{53} Quoted by the Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, \textit{Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi}, p. 45.
gathered like so many ducks and they directed by ten disciplinary officers. 54

The First Normal's regulation on students' management contained six aspects dealing with etiquette, conduct and discipline, service, schedule, public places, and awards and punishment.

Etiquette included three parts: etiquette at ordinary times, etiquette at special occasions, and etiquette at a provisional occasion. Rules of "ordinary etiquette" stipulated that the student should take off his hat and bow before coming in and leaving the faculty and staff offices, before the teacher started the class and after he finished his lecture, when running into a teacher or seeing a teacher. Etiquette for special occasions applied to these events: congratulations, beginning of school, end of school, graduation, and commemoration. On New Year's Day and National Day, the school would hold congratulation ceremonies. At the beginning of the semester and the school year, the school would hold opening ceremonies. On graduation day, there would be graduation ceremonies. On different commemoration days, there would be commemorative ceremonies. The expectations of etiquette on special

54 Siao Yu (Xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 56.
occasions included instructions (for all the students, teachers, and staff) about taking off hats and giving three bows to the national flag, and bowing to each other for students and faculty. At commencement, the graduates and the remaining students bowed to each other.

Etiquette for special occasions covered events arranged by the principal, for example when a government inspection group arrived or some special guests or organizations came for a visit. The general requirement in such situations was that no one was allowed to be absent from these ceremonies without a reason.

Rules of conduct and discipline included two parts: school order and hygiene. "School order" referred to the school's discipline, which could be summarized as the "twenty-eight forbidden practices." Hygiene stood for regulations of hygiene, for which there were eighteen clauses. The regulations of hygiene detailed, for example, how students should act when they were sick, as when suffering from an infectious disease. Regulations also

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55 In First Normal's disciplinary code, there were twenty-eight rules. Each rule stated that the students could not do a particular thing. For example, rule one: The students were not allowed to engage in managing any kind of non-academic enterprises. For detailed information on the twenty-eight clauses of the school's discipline, see The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, p. 47-48.
stipulated that students should sit up straight in class; they should leave the classroom only at breaks between classes; they were not allowed to drink alcohol or smoke; spitting was forbidden; they should often have showers, keep themselves clean, and keep their bedrooms, classrooms, and public places clean. Although some of the regulations were somewhat rigid and reflected the limited views of the time, adherence varied notably from person to person or from one administrative regime to another. For instance, during the years when the reform-minded Kong Zhaoshou was the principal of First Normal (April 1913-January 1914; September 1916-September 1918), some of the clauses of the school's discipline, such as clause 1. The students were not allowed to engage in managing any kind of non-academic enterprises; clause 2. The students were not allowed to join any kind of non-academic organizations and educational associations.

Services referred to the work of student cadres. Student cadres were called service workers (fuwu sheng) at the First Normal School. Those appointed included students on weekly duty from each class, the auditor at the student association, student volunteer soldiers, group leaders when

56 For detailed information on the eighteen clauses of regulations on hygiene, see Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, p. 48-49.
working at the school farm and school garden, assistants at the school shop, and those who were temporarily appointed to help at sports meet or academic exhibitions.

Their responsibilities included "passing on the orders of the faculty and staff to his fellow students; representing the students' opinions to the faculty and staff; taking care of public property; helping maintain the school's discipline; arranging students to clean classroom." The school was trying to train the students in developing their ability of handling different type of things, as well as their ability for independent working and self-governing.

The fourth section of the principles on students' management dealt with scheduling matters. Schedule meant daily and rest schedule. First Normal had strict work and rest schedules. It also had explicit regulations for requesting absence. According to the historical record of First Normal, there were no students who broke the rules for requesting an absence during the first decade of the Republic. For instance, the average of absence from school of the 120 students enrolled at the Preparatory Department in the school year of 1917 was only six class hours.
The fifth section of the principles on students' management was called "public rules." It applied to the discipline the students should follow in public places, such as offices, classrooms, labs, playgrounds, the library, reading room, exhibition room, telephone room, tearoom, dining hall, study hall, and bathroom. There were specific regulations for the students to observe at each public place. Those regulations also made it clear that if someone broke a certain rule what kind of punishment he would receive; usually one or two points were taken off from his certain subject. In general, the main purpose of those regulations was to emphasize school spirit and school discipline, to carry forward the good style of study of the school, and to keep the order at the school.

The last section of these principles dealt with rewards and punishments. There were six kinds of rewards: adding grades, exhibiting and passing around excellent academic work, praise in written or oral form, financial reward, exhibition, and certification of merit. Regarding punishments, there were seven types: taking off points, oral criticism, a warning note, writing a self-criticism, public criticism in print, failing to go up to the next grade, and

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57 *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi*, p. 49.

165
ordering someone to leave school. The conditions for rewards and punishments were very strict and were written very explicitly. In the first decade of the Republic, there were no class advisers (ban zhuren) and political personnel at the First Normal School. The major method First Normal used to control the students and to maintain school order was to rely on the detailed discipline principles of the school and the strict system of rewards and punishments. From that, we can see how complete and explicit the discipline principles of the school were and what a role they played in supervising the students and in running the school.

Actually, the discipline principles of the school only showed one side of the First Normal School in administering their students. First Normal also paid great attention to the training of their students’ ability to volunteer and self-govern. I will discuss the students’ volunteer activities and the educational associations in a separate chapter. This chapter has studied the development of the First Normal from the Republican period to the May Fourth Movement, 1912-1919. It discusses the political culture in Hunan during this period. It also discusses the educational reforms taken First Normal and the school’s refined and reconfigured policy, practice, philosophy, course contents,
and school regulations in response to the changing situation in China during this period, which provided a favorable circumstance for the First Normal students' intellectual transformation.
CHAPTER 4

THE NEW CULTURE COMMUNITY: THE TEACHERS' GENERATION

As a foremost reformist province in modern Chinese intellectual history, Hunan has fostered many leading reform-minded scholar-officials during the past two centuries. Wei Yuan (1794-1857), a native Hunanese, was the first to urge the Chinese to adopt the West's advanced technology. His famous slogan, "To learn the superior techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians" became the motivating spirit of the entire Self-Strengthening Movement in the nineteenth century. Following Wei Yuan came the famous leading figures of the Self-Strengthening Movement, Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang, who were also from Hunan. Zeng and Zuo put Wei Yuan's slogan directly into practice.

The failure of the Self-Strengthening Movement motivated the Hundred Days Reform Movement of 1898, and
Hunan was the most active province in that effort. The Movement seemed to awaken the youth of Hunan. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Hunan was among the provinces that sent the largest number of students to study in Japan. Among these overseas students, many went to study at Japanese normal schools. After graduation, they returned to Hunan and became active in the province's education reforms. Distinguished secondary schools like Chuyi, Mingde, Xiuye, and Zhounan in Changsha were established by these returned students. Many students from these schools were very active in the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, thereby linking educators of these schools to these movements.

Hunan First Normal School emerged as the most distinguished academic institution in the province during the period 1911-1920. It also became known as one of the two most prestigious normal schools in the country. The other was the Zhejiang First Normal School in Hangzhou. A large number of students from Hunan First Normal School were very active in the New Culture and the May Fourth Movements. And most of the students' intellectual and political transformations occurred during the 1910s when they were studying at First Normal. Mao Zedong once said during an
interview with Edgar Snow in 1936: "I was a student in the First Normal for five years, ... during this period my political ideas began to take shape. Here also I acquired my first experiences in social action." Mao's words reflected the common experience of many radical students' at First Normal. For instance, He Shuheng, one of the oldest students of the school in 1914 wrote several letters home and asked the women of his home to unbind their feet. Because his advocacy sounded too radical to his family members in the conservative village, none of the women of his family actually did unbind their feet. In 1913, however, he went home for summer vacation, asked his third daughter to collect all foot-binding bandages and all three-inch golden-lily shoes from home, and destroyed them in public. After that, all the female members of his family freed their bound feet, an event which became quite newsworthy in the local area. Although the students' radicalization was not without

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2 He Shuheng was 37 years old in 1913 when he was admitted by the Hunan Fourth Normal School which was combined with First Normal in 1914. He was 17 years older than Mao Zedong.

3 Three-inch golden-lily was a literal name for woman's bound-foot.

4 Qing Yang, He Shuheng (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1997), p. 22-23.
connections to the changing world with which they interacted, the more immediate origin of their intellectual and political transformation should be credited to the school itself. The students' radicalization was inseparable from the impact of very effective, progressive teachers. In this chapter, I will discuss the profound impact the teachers at the First Normal made on their students' lives and their intellectual transformation during the second decade of the twentieth century.

The Teachers' Generation

The function of the school was to educate students, and the quality of a school was inseparable from the educators of the school and the policies of the school. During the second decade of the twentieth century, First Normal graduated a large number of progressive and radical students, of whom many became important figures in the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, as well as in early Chinese Communist activities. Although the historical, political, and intellectual milieus with which these students interacted contributed a great deal to their radicalization, the teachers' influence on them was also an indispensable factor in this process.
According to the First Normal's school history edited in 1918, the school had fifty-two employees in total at that time, including faculty and staff members. Among the fifty-two, thirty were graduates of, or once taught at, Hunan Higher Normal University (Hunan gaodeng shifan), and only a few of the teachers graduated from Hunan Youdeng Normal University (Hunan youdeng shifan). Generally speaking, those who had graduated from the Higher Normal University were comparatively radical, while those from Youdeng Normal University were relatively conservative. The teachers' radical and progressive influence on their students' intellectual and political life was immense. Among those teachers, a few of them like Kong Zhaoshou, Yang Changji, and Xu Teli, not only enjoyed a high reputation in Hunan, but also were very influential in the New Culture Movement in the whole country.

Principal Kong Zhaoshou

Kong Zhaoshou, also known as Jingcun, was a native of Liuyang, Hunan. A graduate of Hunan Higher Normal University, Kong also went to study at the Tokyo Institute of Political Science and Law and graduated with a bachelor's degree in law in 1916. He was twice the principal of First Normal in 1913 and again in 1916-1918.
Principal Kong was one of the most influential educational reformers of the early Republican period. During his first headmastership of First Normal in 1913, Kong was an ardent supporter of the reformist educational principles issued in 1912 by the Ministry of Education, led by Cai Yuanpei. He enthusiastically implemented these principles at First Normal. He proposed that a comprehensive set of school regulations be set up and that the school be run by these regulations. First Normal’s regulations regarding students’ conduct, academic study, and physical examinations were set up under the leadership of Kong Zhaoshou. He also advocated student volunteer and self-government activities. For instance, the students’ “Skill Society” (jineng hui) was established under his leadership in September 1913.

The goals of the “Skill Society” were to promote virtue, study, and education (all of the students were perforce committed to becoming county elementary school teachers), to advance learning and promote industriousness, mold the body, and create a sense of fraternity among students. In December 1915, the name of the organization was changed to the “Student Friendship Society” (xueyou hui).\(^5\) Four times

\(^5\) *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, 1903-1949*, p. 59.
during 1915-17 Mao Zedong was elected its secretary. In 1918, during his last semester studying at First Normal, Mao was elected manager of the society and head of its section on educational research.® The society had fourteen departments and sponsored various activities corresponding to the needs of the student and teacher members. There was a debating department, various groups for the discussion of special questions concerning educational subjects and current affairs; and the society invited famous people to give lectures. There was also an athletic department and groups which swam together off Shuilu Island, also called Orange Island. In the war between the Southern warlords and Northern warlords of the 1920s, the society led the students in policing the campus to guard against thieves and assaults. Widely viewed as an educational reformer, Kong had attracted generous support from the provincial elites, faculty, and students as well as opposition and even staunch animosity from antagonists.

During Kong's principalship of 1913, Tang Xiangming was appointed governor of Hunan by Yuan Shikai, leader of the national government at the time. Tang was called "Butcher

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® Li Rui, Sanshisui yiqian de Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong before Thirty Years Old) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 197-200.
Tang" by the Hunanese. As a recognized reform-minded educator and a liberal Republican, Kong definitely opposed Yuan Shikai and his conservative advocates in education, who wanted to restore Confucianism as the essential element in the curriculum and singled out Confucius as the sole focus of veneration. Therefore, in January 1914, Governor Tang gave the order to arrest Kong Zhaoshou. One battalion of soldiers was sent to surround First Normal. However, Kong received the information ahead of time. He disguised himself as a water-seller and escaped by a side door of the school. After that, he quickly left China for Japan.⁷

After Yuan Shikai’s death in the summer of 1916, Tan Yankai assumed Governor of Hunan for the second time and appointed Kong Zhaoshou principal of First Normal once again. At that time, Kong had just returned to China from Japan. Incorporating what he had learned from Japan, Kong energetically promoted a full-scale education reform at First Normal and led the school quickly to enter the mainstream of the New Culture Movement.

Soon after he reassumed the principalship, Kong quickly got together a group of learned and progressive men as faculty. He rehired those who had displayed a “sense of

justice” and were unhappy with “Butcher Tang’s” rule. Fang Weixia and Wang Jifan became Directors of Studies. He also hired Yang Changji as the school’s ethics teacher, and Xu Teli as the education teacher. Kong further engaged an American as the English teacher and a German as the music teacher. He hired a total of forty-five teachers altogether. Most of these teachers were graduates from higher normal universities and specialists in normal education. Six of them were students who had returned to China from Great Britain and Japan.

After he completed the hiring of his faculty members, Kong quickly began to work on school regulations, both revising old ones and formulating new ones. He rearranged the curriculum and changed various teaching methods. For instance, the school’s meeting system concerning both academic and administrative affairs, the specific obligations and responsibilities of the faculty and staff members, the specific requirements for each course and each professor, and the regulations concerning students’ conduct, academic work, and physical examinations, all of which were discussed in the previous chapter, were set up and became formal written regulations under the leadership of Kong Zhaoshou. Kong’s educational philosophy included an emphasis
on moral, military, and utilitarian education, which he believed to be the only way to save China and to make the country strong and wealthy. His educational philosophy accorded with the Republic's reform-minded "Decree on Principles for Education" issued in 1912, which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Kong strongly advocated patriotism. At his suggestion, the focus of First Normal's school admonitions was changed from "sincerity" (cheng) to "knowing the national humiliation" (zhichi), which was a reaction to the historical circumstances surrounding China at the time. Kong, like many other Chinese intellectuals of this period, was outraged by the fact that Japan had demanded the "Twenty One Demands" from China in 1915.

On May 7, 1917, First Normal held a commemorative meeting in memory of the "national humiliation day." Principal Kong gave a long speech at the meeting focusing on fostering patriotism and the spirit of upward mobility. Afterwards Li Weihan and three other students edited their respective notes and assembled them for publication. They

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8 On May 9, 1915, Yuan Shikai accepted Japan's "Twenty-One Demands," which infuriated the whole nation and provoked an anti-Japanese movement in China. After that, the date of May 9 was named as the "National Humiliation Day." Some places took May 7 as the "National Humiliation Day." May 7, 1915 was the date of Japan's ultimatum to China.
then came out as a thirteen-thousand-word speech-article, which addressed ten themes. These included the important geographical position of China, Japan's ambition of dominating China, Yuan Shikai as a traitor, the "Twenty One Demands," boycotts of Japanese goods, a comparative analysis of China and Japan in politics, military power, education, and finance, and national salvation. He summoned up these themes in his speech and argued that in order to save the nation from extinction, every Chinese should be aware of the national humiliation. If everyone would take up the cause of expunging the national humiliation as a matter of personal responsibility, China could be saved, and the various insults avenged.⁹

Kong believed that education was the ultimate means of solving all these problems and also of saving the nation. "If everyone knew the national humiliation, and disciplined himself, especially cultivated his personal morality," he maintained, "society would become good; if society were good, people with talent would come forth in large numbers; if the nation had a large number of people with extraordinary

⁹ The quotation was extracted from Kong's speech on the "National Humiliation Day" in 1917 by the editing committee of the Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, 1903-1949. Li Weihan and other three students edited their notes of Kong's speech which became the written one. *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, 1903-1949*, p. 74.
ability, the country would certainly become strong and powerful." Thus, he called on his students to exert themselves while never forgetting China's national humiliation.

In order to achieve national salvation and to make China strong and powerful, Kong firmly believed that the educational philosophy of moral, military, and utilitarian education best suited China. Since the content of moral, military, and utilitarian education was discussed in the previous chapter, we need not consider it further here. As we know, moral education was deemed essential, while utilitarian and military education had a lower priority. However, Kong actually took military education very seriously, too.

In October 1916, soon after he reassumed the headmastership of First Normal, he submitted a proposal to Governor Tan Yankai concerning the establishment of a student volunteer army. He argued that establishing a student volunteer army would be a response to the Ministry of Education's decree, "Emphasis on Military Spirit" (zhuzhong shangwu jingshen ling). It also would conform to the current trend of the world, since in this modern world,

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10 Ibid., p. 74.
all great powers emphasized military education. He advocated changing or abandoning some of the old customs like "Good iron is not used to make nails; good men do not become soldiers." In his proposal to Governor Tan, he wrote: "If we emphasized military education, our citizens were to cultivate a strong and healthy body and had the ability to defend their country when it was bullied, this would change the international image of the Chinese as the "East Asian sick men." He maintained that military education could prepare young students to be useful once they were needed to fight for their country. Therefore, he asked Governor Tan to supply weapons in numbers sufficient for use by a company.

After Governor Tan's approval of Kong's proposal, a student volunteer army was established at First Normal. According to the monthly "important events" recorded in First Normal's history, edited in 1918, the student volunteer army did an excellent job of policing the campus in war-time. It was recorded that in November 1917, war broke out in southern Hunan and people were in a panic. Students from the volunteer army were in turn to patrol the

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11 The quotation was extracted from Kong's 1916 proposal to Governor Tan concerning the establishment of a student voluntary army by the editing committee of the Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi, 1903-1949, p. 74-76.
campus to guard against assault. In March 1918, when panic and confusion occurred in the city of Changsha, students from the volunteer army calmly guarded their school and bravely policed the city in cooperation with other schools in Changsha. In April 1918, when war broke out in Eastern Hunan, the residents of Changsha were scared to go to bed at night. The students from the volunteer army, however, were very calm and organized themselves to police both the campus and the city, as well as assist the city residents. They also set up a team to provide special relief for women and children.

In his capacity as the principal of First Normal and as an activist in education reform, Kong Zhaoshou was a prominent voice in educational affairs not only within Hunan province but also nationally. In November and December 1917, Kong Zhaoshou, by pre-selection, attended the national educational conference held in Hangzhou. At the conference, he presented a ten-thousand-word "Proposal," suggesting that Chinese secondary and higher education reform their current curriculums. He pointed out that the current curriculums, which were borrowed from Japan, were inapplicable to modern Chinese schools. He called for a thorough reform in

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curriculum and teaching methods, and the creation of a profession of new-style educators. For instance, he maintained that the typical normal school’s curriculum was overloaded with more than twenty subjects. He suggested that these schools either drop some courses, or divide themselves into two colleges separating the science majors from the humanities majors. Since he was heavily influenced by John Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy of education, he firmly believed and ardently advocated that education was the best way to achieve national salvation.

All and all, Kong Zhaoshou was a prominent educational reformer. His political views, educational philosophy, and method of running schools were both reform-minded and progressive. He was aware of the responsibilities of new-style educators in producing young and qualified citizens. He also recognized the central place of these educators in bringing forth a new kind of political order. He thus called on new-style educators to contribute their influence to their educational philosophy. As a principal, Kong’s educational views had inevitable influence on his students, and through them on the radicalization of the students at First Normal.
Because of poor health, Kong resigned his principalship in the summer of 1918, and soon thereafter died in Changsha.

The Ethics Teacher Yang Changji

Yang Changji (1871-1920), also known as Huaizhong, was a native of Bancang, Dongxiang, Changsha, which was located about fifty kilometers northeast of the city of Changsha. He was a well-known Neo-Confucian writer specializing in the School of Li (Principle) of the Song and Ming dynasties. However, he was equally well known as a man of Western learning. He was an ethics teacher at First Normal before the May Fourth Movement, and was one of the most influential and most respected teachers at the school. He was also the teacher of Mao Zedong and the father of Mao's first wife.

In the late seventeenth century, Yang's ancestors moved to Bancang from Jinjing, Changsha where they had been farmers for several generations. Since they had broken away from the control of the zongfa (kinship) system, "gotten in touch with people from other lineage groups, had acquired new points of view, cut off connections to their own clan, and cast off old, decayed conceptions,"\(^{13}\) as Yang himself later described it, they began to pay attention to their

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\(^{13}\) Yang Changji, *Dahuazhai riji* (Diaries from the Dahua studio) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 56.
younger descendants' education. Yang Changji's great-great-grandfather and his great-grandfather were both "taixue sheng" (students of the imperial academy); his grandfather was a "yixiang sheng" (student of the county academy) who died ten years before Yang Changji was born. Yang Changji's father had the title of "ligong sheng" (a scholar recommended to the emperor), but never held government office. He was a private tutor in his own region his entire life.

Yang Changji's mother came from an eminent literary family, named Xiang. His maternal great-great-grandfather held the highest "jinshi" degree and was an official of the Qing imperial "Xuezijian" (equivalent to Ministry of Education). His maternal great grandfather held the "juren" degree and served as educational commissioner in a couple of districts. His maternal grandfather was also a Confucian scholar but died young. The Xiang family was well known for its knowledge of Zhu Xi's "School of Li" (School of Principle).

Because of the family tradition and influence, Yang Changji was deeply steeped in Neo-Confucianism. He began to

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study the Confucian classics at the age of seven, with his father. Under his guidance, Yang mastered the canonical Confucian Four Books\textsuperscript{15} and Five Classics\textsuperscript{16} within a few years. He also read extensively in ancient Chinese philosophy, Chinese history, and ethics. When he was a little older, he began to study the works of such eminent Confucians as Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073 A. D.), the Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao (1032-85 A.D.) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107 A. D.), Zhu Xi (1130-1200 A. D.), Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1192 A.D.), and Wang Yangming (1472-1529 A.D.).

During the years of his schooling, a revival of the Confucian school of Li of the Song and Ming dynasties took place all over the country, a movement which was clearly a reaction to the changing historical situation. The famous Confucian writer Zeng Guofan was a leading force behind the revival. Since the Taiping Rebellion had just been suppressed by Zeng Guofan’s Xiang army in 1864, the Qing court was still in lingering fear, wondering how and why the Rebellion could have happened. Zeng Guofan held that the

\textsuperscript{15} The Four Books referred to the \textit{Lunyu} (Analects), the \textit{Menzi} (Book of Mencius), the \textit{Daxue} (Great Learning), and the \textit{Zhongyong} (Doctrine of the Mean).

\textsuperscript{16} The Five Classics refereed to the \textit{Yijing} (Book of Change), the \textit{Shijing} (Book of Poetry), the \textit{Shujing} (Book of History), the \textit{Liji} (Book of Rites), and the \textit{Chunqiu} (The Spring and Autumn Annals).
emergence of the Taiping Rebellion from south China supported the logic that internal rebellion had been accompanied by foreign encroachment. He believed that the Taipings had appropriated "the doctrine of the heavenly ruler" from "foreign barbarians" and had used the "so-called teachings of Jesus," who was said to be the brother of the Taiping leader, Hong Xiuquan, to destroy the principles of orthodox Confucianism. Therefore, after the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, Zeng called for an urgent revival of Confucian orthodoxy, which for him was the School of Li of the Song and Ming dynasties. Although Zeng devoted his whole life to the study of the Confucian School of Li, he never discarded the Han Learning. Furthermore, he advocated incorporating valuable things from the One Hundred Schools. His views won him many followers among the scholar gentry, and he gradually became very influential in his generation in all of China.

In the late Qing, scholars, especially those from Hunan, greatly admired Zeng, who came to be regarded as the zhongxing mingchen (famous courtier in the resurgence of the nation), and yidai ruzhong (the master of Confucianism for a

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Yang Changji's father shared this enthusiasm for Zeng's writings. With his father's encouragement, Yang seriously studied many of Zeng's works and later praised him highly to the students at First Normal. He was especially panegyrical about the way Zeng pursued his studies. In his diary he wrote: "In the past, Zeng made his own study plans. He made himself read ten pages of history every day and continued this practice during his lifetime. This study method should be followed by everyone." He often cited Zeng Guofan as an example for his students to follow as well as to motivate himself.

Although Yang Changji "lost [his] mother at the age of eight, and his father at fourteen," he was very self-driven and studied very hard. In 1889, he passed the civil service examination at the county level and earned the title of "yixiangsheng" (another name for Shengyuan and equals to the first xiucai degree in the Qing dynasty). He failed the

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20 According to Yang Changji’s Dahuazhai riji, his mother died in 1879 when he was eight years old; his father died in 1884 when he was thirteen. In his diary he said he "lost his father at the age of fourteen" which was counted according to the traditional Chinese way of counting age -- as soon as the baby was born, he or she was one year old. After the baby had his or her first birthday, he or she was two years old.
examination for the "juren" degree in the following year. Since his father had already passed away, he got married and had a daughter; and the family’s financial situation became increasingly difficult. He had to take responsibility for supporting his family. He therefore took up his father’s career as a private tutor and began to teach at home.

Besides teaching, he continued to pursue his own studies. In order to take the examinations for the "juren" degree, which were held every three years, Yang twice studied at the two most prestigious Confucian academies in the province. In 1893, he studied at the Changsha Chengnan Academy for a while. In 1898, he studied at the Yuelu Academy for another period of time. He failed the examinations for the "juren" degree for the second time in 1893, a very depressing experience for him. Yet his depression dissipated with the breakout of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894.

China’s failure in the Sino-Japanese War greatly shocked and traumatized the Chinese in general. The result of the war was that China was forced to sign the humiliating

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Treaty of Shimonoseki\textsuperscript{22}, which enraged the whole nation. Intellectuals were especially disturbed. Like many intellectuals of his time, Yang was very much concerned about the historical and political changes which China was undergoing. He quickly cast off the dejection induced by his personal setbacks in the civil service examinations and began to worry about the fate and the future of the country and search for answers that could help to save China.

After the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, Kang Youwei sent a letter to the Guangxu Emperor, which was signed jointly by over 1,300 juren degree holders who were taking the palace examinations in Beijing at that time. In that letter, Kang Youwei asked the Emperor to abrogate the Treaty even though it would cost China its restored peace; he further advocated a political reform movement and proposed various measures for national salvation. He particularly emphasized the importance of political reform, which he believed was fundamental to the task of creating a strong, powerful China.\textsuperscript{23} Kang’s letter was quickly and widely spread all over the country. After Yang Changji read it, he

\textsuperscript{22} See footnote 24 for the content of the treaty.

\textsuperscript{23} This event was known as the famous "gongche shangshu."
became very excited and came to believe that China could be saved. He also decided that the only way to save China would be to launch a political reform movement. Subsequently Yang participated with immense zeal in the political reform movement led by Kang.

Reforms went well in Hunan because it had the reform-minded Chen Baozhen as its governor and the reform-minded Huang Zunxian as its judicial commissioner. It also benefited from the efforts of the famous reformers, Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang, who were natives of Hunan and very active in the province. These men organized new types of study associations, published new types of newspapers and journals, and established new types of schools. In 1898, the reformist newspapers, Xiang bao and Xiangxue bao were launched by Hunanese reformers Xiong Xiling, Tan Sitong, and Tang Caichang, with support from Governor Chen. The reformers also established the Nan xuehui and the Shiwu xuetang\(^{24}\) in that same year.

Yang Changji joined the South China Study Society and became a regular correspondent of the society. One particular article he wrote for the Society, "Lu Hunan zunzhi sheli

\(^{24}\) For detailed discussion on the Xiang bao (Hunan News), the Xiangxue bao (Hunan Reform News), the South China Study Society (Nan xuehui), and the Current Affair School, see chapter two.
shangwuju yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhixue” (Hunan should vigorously develop its industry and agriculture before establishing a bureau of commerce), was highly praised and published in the Xiang bao. Yang also regularly attended the Society’s lectures and was eager to learn about the Xinxue (New Learning) and Xinzheng (New Policy). He often consulted Tan Sitong about things he did not understand in the reformer’s lectures. When he first read Tan’s philosophical tract Renxue (On Benevolence), Yang was also very impressed and wrote: “If a person does not know this (Renxue), he has frittered away his life.” He thought very highly of Tan’s philosophical and political views, and was deeply influenced by him. In his diary of March 1915, he wrote:

I have studied philosophy for over ten years. It has been very difficult. But when I read Renxue by Tan of Liuyang, I suddenly felt enlightened. In his preface, Tan wrote that there were so many restraints on people. People should first muster the courage to rip apart and burst the fetters of gains and interests; then, the ropes that the Confucian doctrine created around them; next, the restraints of Heaven; and finally the constraints of Buddhism. He asked people to move forward (in life) with great mental effort and an indomitable spirit. He has captured my mind. I feel a thousand times

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25 For detailed discussion on this article, see Wang Xingguo, Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang (Life and Thought of Yang Changji), p. 33-38.

stronger than before. ... Now I realize that my former worldview was so parochial.\textsuperscript{27}

These passages clearly show that Yang Changji was completely convinced by Tan’s philosophical ideas.

Like his contemporary intellectuals, Yang especially admired Tan’s heroic devotional spirit; indeed, Tan’s legendary martyrdom created a special aura around him in the memory of modern Chinese intellectuals. Yang said:

\begin{quote}
When disaster falls upon a family, if one man sacrifices his life and the whole family can be saved, a man of filial piety will do it. When catastrophe arrives in the world, if one man or one family gives up his life or their lives, and the people of the rest of the world can be saved, a man of benevolence (Ren ren) will do it.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Yang believed that Tan Sitong was a “man of benevolence” who died for the sake of the people under heaven. He often said:

“The spirit of a martyrdom of Tan from Liuyang fills the universe and will last forever.”\textsuperscript{29}

After the failure of the Hundred Days Reform Movement of 1898, Yang was totally disappointed in Empress Cixi’ court and completely lost interest in the civil service examinations, especially after hearing that another famous Hunanese reformer, Tang Caichang, whom he knew well and greatly respected, had been killed in August 1900. Meanwhile,

\textsuperscript{27} Yang Changji, \textit{Dahuazhai riji}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{28} Yang Changji, \textit{Luyu leichao}, p. 35.

192
one of Yang's close friends, Yang Yulin (1872-1911), became very radical. Yang Yulin began to advocate revolutionary ideas and establish ties to anti-Manchu activities. In 1902, Yang Yulin went to Japan to study. With the encouragement of Yang Yulin, Yang Changji also left for Japan, in February 1903, at the age of thirty-two.

Yang Yulin, also known as Shouren, was one year younger than Yang Changji. The two Yangs were relatives. According to the Yang family history, Yang Yulin's father was Yang Changji's cousin. However, they became friends when they studied at Changsha Chengnan Academy in 1893. Yang Yulin's specialty was classical Buddhism, but he was also very knowledgeable about the major writings of other schools of philosophy. After several years in Japan, Yang Yulin went to England to study in the spring of 1908. At his recommendation, Yang Changji also went to England to study, in the spring of 1909. After a series of failures of the revolutionary uprisings led by Sun Yatsen, many revolutionaries were killed. Yang Yulin was deeply depressed because many of them were his close friends and comrades. He committed suicide by drowning himself in Liverpool, England in May 1911.

Ibid., 37.
When he first arrived in Japan in February 1903, Yang Changji studied at Honbun College, founded by the famous Japanese educator Kana Shijoro. In the beginning, he studied in the teachers' training department, but later transferred to the regular department to study education, psychology, ethics, and pedagogy. In 1906, he graduated from Honbun College and went on to study at Tokyo Higher Normal College majoring in education.\(^{30}\) In the spring of 1909, at the strong recommendation of good friends Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao, the Education Commissioner for the Qing government in Europe, Kuai Guangdian, transferred Yang Changji to Europe for further study. Yang Changji arrived in the spring of 1909 to study in the department of philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He majored in philosophy and ethics. After three years of study, he graduated from Edinburgh with a bachelor's of arts degree in the summer of 1912.\(^{31}\) After his graduation from Edinburgh University, Yang studied in Germany for nine months as a visiting scholar and came to regard himself as a neo-Kantian

\(^{30}\) Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, p. 49-60.

\(^{31}\) Li Peicheng, *Yang Changji jiaoyu sixiang jianlun*, p. 12; Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, p. 66.
idealistic. He returned to China from Berlin in the spring of
1913.\textsuperscript{32}

After Yang's return to China, Tan Yankai, Governor of
Hunan, invited him to be the provincial commissioner of
education, but Yang politely refused.\textsuperscript{33} He did not like the
dictatorial rule of Yuan Shikai, who had grabbed the fruits
of the revolutionaries' labor. He also believed that the
government of Tan Yankai in Hunan was dominated by men of
wealth and position, and to be commissioner of education
would be a potential hot seat for someone like himself, who
felt that the Chinese political and social institutions and
ethics must change. Yang, therefore, chose to teach for his
career,\textsuperscript{34} first at Hunan Fourth Normal School, which was

\textsuperscript{32} Regarding the year of Yang's return to China, there are two views,
1911 and 1913. In the "Announcement" (January 1920) regarding Yang
Changji's death, Cai Yuanpei and Fan Yuanlian mentioned Yang's return to
China in 1911. Cao Dianqiu also mentioned Yang's return to China in 1911
in "Biography of Mr. Yang Changji," which was written in 1958, and
unpublished. This short biography of Yang has been collected in Yang
Changji wenji, p. 383-387. However, Yang Changji wrote, "I came back to
China this spring" in his article "Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi
suogan" (My thought on education after my return to China), in Hunan
jiaoyu zazhi (Hunan educational journal) (November 1913, vol. 17. For
more proof of Yang's return in 1913, see Wang Xingguo, Yang Changji de
shengping ji sixiang, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{33} Li Xiaodan, "Benxiaow gu jiaoshou Yang Huaizhong xiansheng shiji" (The
brief biography of the late professor Yang Huaizhong," originally
published in Beijing daxue rikan (Beijing University Daily), January 28,
1920. Now the article has been collected in Yang Changji wenji, p. 375.

\textsuperscript{34} Li Xiaodan, "Benxiaow gu jiaoshou Yang Huaizhong xiansheng shiji," in
Beijing daxue rikan, January 28, 1920.
combined into the First Normal School in 1914, then at First Normal in Changsha from 1914 to 1918.

Moral education

Yang Changji, an ethics teacher, was one of the most influential and most respected teachers at First Normal. Besides ethics, he taught logic, philosophy, and education. He was deeply rooted in the Chinese classics and had made the philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties his specialty. He was "a very learned person and he was endowed with a strong personality with which he enforced upon himself a very strict moral mode," Xiao Yu (Siao-Yu) recalled. "His conduct was at all times beyond reproach. He was so familiar with the doctrine of Confucius that his friends and his students regarded him as if he were a reincarnation of the great sage."[^35] Thus, he was given the nickname "Confucius" by his students because of his impeccable conduct.[^36] At the same time, he was also deeply influenced by the Western philosophers Kant, Spencer and Rousseau.

"He was not a brilliant speaker," Xiao Shan (Emi Siao) recalled, "but neither did he have tiresome mannerisms, and


his audience was always most respectfully attentive."

However, Yang's first lectures did not make a very good impression on some of his students. As Xiao Yu recalled:

When classes began, ... He spoke awkwardly and read the whole of his lecture, without repetition and with no opportunity for explanation or discussion. The hour passed and everyone was deeply disappointed. Within the week, other classes also commented on the poor impression made by Mr. Yang in his classes. Heads of the classes held a meeting and as a result urged the Director to ask Mr. Yang to change his method of teaching and to explain his text. A fortnight later at another meeting, it was proposed that the Director be asked to dismiss Mr. Yang.  

As the president of these delegations, Xiao Yu suggested that the students wait until the end of the semester to see what practical result they could accomplish. He also urged the students to read Yang's printed texts, which were the products of his own study and experience and were very different from those that were mere composites of others' books. "Within two months, everyone who attended Mr. Yang's lectures admired and respected him. Although he did not talk much in class, each short statement meant a great deal." Xiao Yu remembered,

Within a year, the entire school accepted him and he became the 'Confucius of First Normal.' Other schools in Changsha invited him and he conducted classes [in

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37 Ibid., p. 39.

38 Xiao Yu (Xiao Yu), Mao Tse-tung qingnian shidai, p. 39.
Although he urged his students to study all aspects of Western thought and institutions, Yang Changji never let his students forget their own national heritage. In an article published in Changsha, Yang made a statement that clearly showed the spirit of his teaching:

Each country has its own national spirit, just as each person has his own personality. The culture of one country cannot be transplanted in its entirety to another country. A country is an organic whole, just as the human body is an organic whole. It is not like a machine, which can be taken apart and put together again. If you take it apart, it will die.\(^40\)

Thus, while giving his students some exposure to Western ethical theory, he also gave them a solid grounding in the writings of the principal Chinese philosophers of the Ming and Qing periods. Although severely criticizing certain aspects of Confucianism and rejecting many conventional Chinese behavioral patterns, Yang did place emphasis on many traditional Chinese virtues, especially self-discipline, patriotism, and resistance to alien rule. Yang was a great

\(^39\) Ibid. 40.

\(^40\) Yang Changji, ed., Wang Xingguo, Yang Changji wenji (The Collected Works of Yang Changji) (Changsha: Hunan Educational Press, 1983), p. 199. This article, "Quanxuepian" (An exhortation to study) was originally published on Gongyan, Vol. 1, No. 1 in November 1914. Gongyan was a journal published in Changsha at that time.
admirer of Wang Fuzhi. By reading Yang's published works Dahua zhai riji (Dairies from Dahua Studio) and Yang Changji wenji (Collected works of Yang Changji), Peng Dacheng claimed that although Yang was a man of deep learning and read widely in both Chinese and Western philosophy, he devoted himself to and understood best Tongjian and Wang Fuzhi's Du Tongjian Lun. These works accompanied him for his whole life.

When Liu Renxi (1840-1917) — Tan Sitong's teacher — founded the Chuanshan xueshe (Chuanshan Association) in June 1914 in Changsha, Yang directed his students to this group of scholars who were seeking inspiration for a rebirth of their country within Chinese tradition itself. More precisely, the members of the Chuanshan Association were seeking insight regarding the regeneration of China in the

41 Cao Dianqiu wrote in his Biography of Yang Changji: "After the experience of the One Hundred Days Reform Movement of 1898, Yang retreated to the mountains as a hermit and rarely went to cities. He totally gave up the idea of taking the civil service examinations but was only interested in reading Tongjian and Wang Fuzhi's Du Tongjian Lun. He used the past as a mirror for criticizing current corrupt practices; he studied statecraft and prepared for its future use." Cao Dianqiu, "Biography of Mr. Yang Changji," in Yang Changji wenji, p. 383-387.

42 Peng Dacheng, Huxiang wenhao yu Mao Zedong, p. 61.

43 Chuanshan xueshe was named after Wang Chuanshan (courtesy name: Wang Fuzhi, 1619-1692) and was the association for the study of Wang Fuzhi. From Wang's style Wang Chuanshan, Chuanshan being the name of a mountain where he retired after the Manchu conquest.
writings of the great Hunanese Confucian scholar of the early seventeenth century, Wang Fuzhi (Wang Chuanshan). Wang Fuzhi was one of the most extreme among several remarkable figures who at the time of the Manchu conquest had refused to serve China's new foreign rulers. After he established the Association, Liu became its main lecturer. Yang often encouraged his students to attend these lectures. Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, and Xiao Shan often went there to listen to Liu's lectures.

"The Association was named after [Wang] Chuanshan, so it certainly should teach the philosophy of Chuanshan. The greatest contribution that Chuanshan had made was his advocacy of a nationalism, which regarded enslavement of the Han Chinese by alien rulers as an extreme humiliation and a cause of uttermost anguish," Yang wrote in his diary, "We should know that Chuanshan had attained this high degree of moral integrity. We should know this." Yang also wrote:

The nationalism Chuanshan advocated was centered on the Han Chinese, which would seem parochial in present-day China since China was [and is] now a federation of nationalities. However, the aggression of foreign nations like Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany,

the United States, and Japan was worse than the alien rulers China had experienced in ancient times. We must therefore remember the importance of nationalism, even though China was a unity of nationalities.\textsuperscript{45}

These words show Yang's high regard for Wang Chuanshan's idea of patriotism and his deep concern with the foreign powers' invasion of China.

On another occasion Yang also wrote:

Once I was taking a European history class at the Tokyo Higher Normal University, and the Japanese professor said that the Chinese were like the Romans. What they cared most about was their culture. Even though their country might be taken over by alien rulers, as long as the aliens accepted Chinese culture, the Chinese would accept the alien rulers. I thus realized that the Japanese were ill-disposed toward China. They had the ambition of taking over China after the Manchus lost power. We Chinese should always remember this.\textsuperscript{46}

When Yang was teaching, he never confined his lectures to the textbooks but often incorporated what he wrote in his \textit{Diaries from the Dahua Studio}. His views on foreign aggression, nationalism, and patriotism had a great influence on his students. For instance, in 1915, when the news that Yuan Shikai had signed the humiliating "Twenty One Demands" with Japan arrived in Changsha, the students of First Normal were greatly enraged and immediately launched a series of anti-Japanese attacks, which were supported by

\textsuperscript{45} Yang Changji, \textit{Dahuazhai riji}, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{46} Yang Changji, \textit{Dahuazhai riji}, p. 47.
Yang Changji and other progressive teachers from the school. Yang’s influence on his students was so profound that an American writer, Harrison Solisbury maintained “after Li Rui studied Mao Zedong’s notes taken during this period [while he was studying at First Normal], he found it was very difficult to tell what was Mao’s thought and what was Professor Yang’s. It seemed that their thoughts had merged into one.”

Despite some ten years’ study abroad in Japan, England, and Germany, Yang had never ceased to profess the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. His interest in philosophy had a great influence on his students. While he was teaching at First Normal, Yang worked with another teacher, Li Jinxi, to organize a “Philosophy Study Group,” which had students Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, Chen Chang, and Xiao San as its members. The Study Group met regularly, introducing reading materials to each other, exchanging what they had learned from their study, and discussing some philosophical questions in which they were interested.

“Yang was an idealist,” Mao Zedong recalled, “and a man of high character. He believed in his ethics very

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47 Harrison Solisbury, Changzhen xinji (New Documentary about the Long March) (Beijing: xinhuashe cankaoziliao bianjishi, 1990), p. 67; Peng Da-cheng, Huxiang wenhao yu maozedong, p. 82.
strongly." Yang was especially interested in the study of "the mind energy." He believed that the energy for making a nation rich and powerful was hidden within the mind of each member of society, and that this energy could be released only by stimulating individual initiative. He said:

To have a fundamental reform, we must first save the fallen minds of our people. However, the citizens of our nation generally lacked morality, so, even if there were good laws, there would be no good results. Therefore, nowadays, only if the minority with virtue fights against the majority who are corrupted, or conventional and who follow demoralized customs and habits could conditions be changed. Thus, we have very many important things to do in addition to politics. If we want to save our country from perishing, we must begin with the education of the citizens. This is the only path to national salvation to which I can attest.

His emphasis on subjective initiative, on human minds, and on the function of education greatly influenced his students. For instance, before Mao Zedong and Cai Hesen, the founding figures of Chinese Communist Party, came into contact with more radical Western ideas in 1919, they had fully shared Yang's experimental, gradualist approach to solutions, and had sought only to reform Chinese society in accordance with some liberal approaches -- educating people, especially cultivating their minds for national salvation.

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48 Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, p.129.

49 Yang Changji wenji, p. 45.
Mao said: "The truth of the universe lies in each human being’s mind. ... Today, since we use the fundamental Way of advocacy, how could human minds not be moved?" Cai said: "If human minds and mental intelligence were interconnected and communicated with each other, humanity would not be exhausted. If a man were full of humanity, his thought would be connected to the universe. We should try hard to cultivate people’s minds and educate people to become reasonable men; this shows the utmost importance of education." No one would be surprised to learn that Mao once said about Yang:

Under his influence, I read a book on ethics translated by Cai Yuanpei and was inspired to write an essay which I entitled 'The Energy of the Mind.' I was then an idealist and my essay was highly praised by Professor Yang Changji, from his idealist viewpoint. He gave me a mark of 100 for it.\(^52\)

**New/Western Learning**

Yang Changji also had a solid grounding in Western philosophical theory. In 1916, his article "Zhhexuezheng gezhong lilun zhi lueshu" (Exposition of philosophical

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\(^{50}\) Wang Xingguo, "Yang Changji and the xinmin xuehui" in *Hunan dangshi luncong*, p. 25.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 25.

\(^{52}\) Snow, *Red Star Over China*, p. 129.
theories) was published in Minsheng. In this article, Yang gave a very comprehensive introduction of Western philosophical theories and philosophical schools of thought. He also translated a book entitled the Xiyang lunlixue shi (History of Western Ethnics), which also introduced to Western philosophical theories and philosophical schools of thought. His translation had not been published while he was teaching at First Normal, so Mao borrowed the manuscript from Yang and hand-copied it into seven notebooks. This manuscript was widely circulated among the students of First Normal and had a profound influence on them.

When he was teaching ethics at First Normal, Yang used German philosopher Friedrich Paulsen's (1846-1908) Lunlixue yuanli (The principles of ethics) as a textbook. In this

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53 This article was first published in Vol. 1, No. 1, 2, and 3, of the journal of Minsheng in Changsha, in November 1916. After Yang's death in 1920, Li Shiqin republished this article in Vol. 2, No. 2, 3, and 4 of the journal of Mingduo in Shanghai in 1920. Now this article was collected in Yang Changji wenji edited by Wang Xingguo, p. 247-273.


55 Lunlixue yuanli (The principles of ethics) was part of Paulsen's major work Lunlixue tixi (System Der Ethik). In 1900, the Japanese scholar, Kanie Hidemaru, translated the prodrome and the second volume into Japanese and published it under the title of Lunlixue yuanli (The principles of ethics). He kept the original name, Xulun (prodrome), for the prodrome and named the second volume Benlun (Principal argument). In 1909, Cai Yuanpei translated it from Japanese into Chinese and it was published by Shanghai Commercial Press. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, Zhonggong Hunan shengwei Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao bianjizu, Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1990), p. 276. n. 1.
book, Paulsen talked about philosophical dualism, a concept that attracted a lot of interest among students. For instance, Mao read this book very carefully, wrote down over ten thousand words of marginal notes and comments, and brought forward the theme "conservation of spirit, and conservation of matter." This book, with Mao's annotations and comments, was borrowed by one of his classmates, Yang Shaohua, who returned it to Mao in 1950 after the founding of the People's Republic of China.\(^56\)

Yang was very interested in the Western ethical theory of self-realization. He said: "Most modern ethical philosophers advocated the theory of self-realization. The self here meant the big self, which was united with the universe as an organic whole. Therefore, those who worked for the global public interest attained the ideal of self-realization."\(^57\) He also said: "To keep improving oneself and

\(^56\) According to Zhou Shizhao's recollection, Yang Shaohua asked him to return the book to Mao when he went to Beijing in 1950. When he handed the book to Mao, Mao said: "What I wrote in this book was not all correct. It was not of materialism, but of dualism. What we learned at that time was idealist philosophy. So, once we came into contact with something of materialism, I felt it was fresh and with reason, and the more I read it the more I became interested in it. It gave me new inspiration and helped me critique the book I had read and analyzing the questions I once raised." Zhou Shizhao, *Mao zhuxi qingnian shiqi de jige gushi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shaonian ertong chubanshe, 1977), p. 14; also see *Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao 1912.6 -- 1920.11*, p. 276.

\(^57\) Quoted by Wang Xingguo, "Yang Changji and the xinmin xuehui" in *Hunan dangshi luncong*, p. 49.
make oneself capable was the ideal of self-realization. And to take self-realization as one's highest goal in action was self-realization."®® His views of self-realization were widely accepted by his students. For instance, in "Annotations and Commentaries on Lunlixue yuanli", Mao wrote: "The aim of human beings is to achieve self-realization. Self-realization is to fully explore our mental and physical abilities and develop them to the highest degree."®®

Although he greatly admired Western philosophers like Aristotle, Kant, F. H. Bradley, T. H. Green, Fichte, and Hegel, who were also supporters of the theory of self-realization, Yang criticized the weakness of their theories. He believed that according to these philosophers, the goal of action was to perfect oneself and society through both pleasure and pain. For instance, although Green's idealist philosophy confirmed man's existence, it could not explain it by the laws of nature. This philosophy did have the merit of steering a middle course between hedonism and asceticism. Yang believed that a satisfactory moral philosophy could be achieved by combining Green's ideal of self-realization with

®® Ibid., p. 268.
®® Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao 1912.6 -- 1920.11, p. 116-275.
a greater emphasis on man’s responsibility to society.  

“Man,” Yang said, “could influence the development of the world, and to develop the world he developed himself.”

These aims of individual self-realization and responsibility to society were the two main themes in Yang’s life and thought and greatly affected his students.

Yang also opposed asceticism on the grounds that desire and reason could not be regarded simply as opposites. He advocated a unity of desire and reason. He thought that desire might be a source of both evil or good. Moreover, pleasure and desire were incentives to action. Without them, men would cease to act and therefore cease to exist. He believed that moral conduct consisted in disciplining desire by reason in order to attain a goal. At the same time, one might regard desire and pleasure only as facts of experience and not as moral principles, for desire and pleasure were fluctuating and unstable. The basis of society was not self-interest but altruism, which assured the unity of the race.

For all these reasons, Yang rejected both the “quantitative”

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61 Wang Xingguo, ed., *Yang Changji wenji*, p. 84.
hedonism of Jeremy Bentham and the "qualitative" hedonism of John Stuart Mill.

The principle of the greatest good of the greatest number, he maintained, though it appeared universal, was in fact merely a multiplication of egoism. In any case, the whole idea of a calculus of pleasure was meaningless, for one could not add pleasures and pains and get zero as a result as one could add positive and negative numbers. Yang, therefore, advocated an individualism which emphasized public responsibility to society. He said: "Education should cultivate the spirit of sacrificing one's own interest for right or for humanity, but not train people to be diffident or to produce unthinking individualists who had no sense of public responsibility to society." His views were fully shared by his students. Mao in his "Annotations and commentaries on Lunlixue yuanli," highly praised Yang's "individualism with public responsibility to society," which he called "spiritual individualism."

As a man of deep learning in both traditional Chinese and Western learning, Yang sought to buttress ideas derived

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largely from Western thought with reference to Chinese authorities. He compiled a small volume of extracts from the Lunyu (Analects), which he used to teach his students. Nevertheless, he vigorously rejected certain patterns of behavior which characterized Chinese society. He strongly opposed studying simply to become an official. When he selected a number of passages from the Lunyu, a traditional teacher’s task which he supplemented iconoclastically with passages from Darwin, he produced a first section called "lizhi" (establishing resolution). He wrote: "If one established a determined resolution, one could realize the noble ideal, cultivate virtuous habits, and foster an upright personality." He particularly emphasized the term "lizhi" and urged his students to practice this. Mao talked about lizhi in his "Annotations and Commentaries on Lunlixue yuanli." In a letter to his teacher Li Jinxi in August 1917, Mao wrote: "If a man did not learn the truth for ten years, he would lack resolution for ten years. If he failed to learn the truth for a lifetime, he would lack resolution for a lifetime." Cai Hesen, Zhang Kundi, and Xiao Shan also recalled how, under the influence of Yang, they got together

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64 Ibid. 69.

65 Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao 1912.6 -- 1920.11, p.87.
to discuss the Lizhi. While urging his students to acquire firm resolution, Yang also told them his belief that intellectuals must be in touch with the masses; he worked to establish a handicraft course at First Normal to help students support their studies and, incidentally, break down the barrier between worker and intellectual.66

Yang was also one of the early proponents of Chen Duxiu's New Youth (Xin Qingnian) magazine, a radical, Westernized, and iconoclastic journal which emerged as the most important vehicle of the New Culture Movement before 1919. He was not only an enthusiastic reader and partisan of New Youth, but also urged his students to read it. He took out several subscriptions of New Youth for circulation among his students. "Even at the Beijing University, which was to emerge as the leader of the May Fourth Movement, very few had heard of the magazine before Chen was made dean of the College of Arts in 1917, but the magazine was known and read in Changsha well before that."67 Yang published an essay on


67 McDonald, The Urban Origins of Rural Revolution, p. 92.
morals in numbers 4 and 5 of volume II, in December 1916 and January 1917. 

Because of Yang's introduction and recommendation of New Youth, his students, especially the progressive ones, became very interested in reading the magazine. Zhou Shizhao recalled that for a long time, "besides going to classes and reading newspapers, we read only New Youth; for conversation, we talked only about New Youth. And for thinking, we thought only about the issues raised by New Youth." 

Although Yang was not a very good speaker, Xiao Shan recalled, "His enthusiasm for learning drew around him a circle of thoughtful studious young men, among whom were Mao Zedong, Cai Hesen, and Chen Chang." Yang's home thus became a meeting place for after-class discussions. Xiao Shan recalled that the students made a habit of calling on Yang at his home on Sundays to discuss various problems with them, while Yang never tired of helping them or offering

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68 Mao also published his first article "A Study of Physical Culture" in the April 1917 issue of the magazine. In this article, Mao expressed his nationalist outlook and point of view on military matters.


70 Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth, p. 39.
advice. Xiao Yu also recalled: "Every Sunday morning my friends, Xiong Guangchu, Chen Chang, and I visited Mr. Yang's home to discuss our studies together. We read each other's notebooks, talked over our problems, and returned to school after lunch." Xiao Yu said every Sunday the three of them had lunch at Yang's house, joined by his wife and his daughter Kahiui, who became Mao's first wife. "Every week for two whole years we ate our meal rapidly and in silence, not one of us ever uttering a single word. ... Mr. Yang himself never spoke a word and we all respected his silence and ate as rapidly as was possible. ... Mr. Yang paid a great deal of attention to matters of hygiene but apparently he did not realize that it is better for one's health to talk and laugh normally during meals, that a happy atmosphere aids digestion."

It was through Yang that First Normal students soon found themselves in touch with the mainstream of intellectual life in China. His personality and example attracted a circle of young men around him, who had the desire to become just, moral, and virtuous. Under his

71 Ibid., p. 40.
72 Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 40.
73 Ibid., p. 41-43.
encouragement, a group of students formed a society – Xinmin xuehui (New Citizens Association) “that was to have a widespread influence on the affairs and destiny of China.”

Yang was the actual spiritual mentor of the members of the New Citizens Association. When Mao discussed the founding of the association in “Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao” number 1, after analyzing the historical environment that contributed to the founding of the association, he also wrote:

Another reason [that contributed to the founding of the association] was that most of the members were students of Mr. Yang Huanzhong. The students were influenced by Yang’s teaching, and became committed to the betterment or improvement of each individual, strengthening his moral and spiritual fiber and improving his education as their philosophy. [This was the environment in which] the Xinmin Association was founded. 

Out of the twenty-one founding members – including Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, Xiao Yu, Chen Chang, Zhang Kundi, He Shuheng, and Luo Xuezan – twenty were students of Yang Changji from First Normal. Luo Zhanglung was the only member from outside First Normal.

Yang also strongly criticized traditional Chinese society and culture. He launched an unreserved, frontal

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74 Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 130.

75 Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 2.
attack on the Confucian doctrine of the three bonds (ruler-subject relationship, father-son relationship, and husband-wife relationship). He maintained: "The doctrine of the three bonds led to the tyrannical and cruel practice of punishing the lowly with the utmost severity while forgiving the exalted." He thought that the doctrine of the three bonds was in practice as cruel as the religious autocracy of medieval Europe.

He thought the Chinese family system was the primary institution on which the imperial ruling house relied for its existence; it was also the spiritual backbone of the clan authority, the authority of the husband, and the patriarchy. In an article which appeared in the *Jiayin zazhi* (Tiger Magazine) in 1915, Yang praised the Western family system for the personal autonomy allowed in the marital relationship, its free choice of partners, and the equal rights enjoyed by women.

Yang furiously denounced arranged marriages on both individual and social grounds and expressed great sympathy for women, whose status was the lowest in Chinese society. "Marriage is a lifelong, important matter; without considering the opinions and feelings of the woman

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concerned, forcing her to marry someone, is the same as selling her. Women have to bear this, and there are no laws to protect them. This is indeed a terrible tragedy. It is a savage custom of China. The legislators and executives should make laws to change this." He further pointed out that Chinese women had no freedom in marriage, because they were not financially independent. British widows were financially independent, so they had the rights of free marriage without being obstructed by their fathers' clan as well as by their husbands' clan. Yang thought this accorded with humanitarianism. The Chinese custom of insisting that a widow preserve her chastity after the death of her husband, Yang thought, was an inhumane practice and extremely uncivilized.

Yang also opposed concubinage as immoral and destructive of basic family relationships. He thought concubines were slaves of a kind because their personalities were incomplete. If a society had the concubinage system, some people's human rights would be seriously compromised. He thought it was unfair that women were only allowed to have one husband while men were allowed to have as many concubines as they were able to support. He vigorously

77 Yang Changji, Dahuazhai riji, p. 130.
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denounced the concubinage custom and firmly supported the monogamy.

Such were the beliefs that Yang imparted to his students at First Normal; these greatly affected them in their intellectual transformation and radicalization. Yang Changji was invited to join the faculty of Beijing University in 1918 by President Cai Yuanpei. He taught ethics there until his death two years later.

The Education Teacher, Xu Teli

Xu Teli (1877-1968), also known as Xu Maoxun, was a native of Changsha, Hunan. He came from a poor peasant family. His mother died when he was four years old. His father and his ten-year-old elder brother had to work in the fields and became the main support of the family.\(^7^8\) He attended a private tutorial school in his native village between 1886 and 1892 but stopped at the age of fifteen because of poverty. After he studied about six months at a private tutorial school, one tutor taught him Zhu Bolu’s\(^7^9\) “Zhijia geyan,” which was written in simple words and was very easy to understand. Then he studied the will of Yang


\(^7^9\) Zhu Bolu was a learned hermit who lived in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.
Shushan, written to his son before he was brought to the execution ground. Xu shed many tears while reading this emotional essay. After he studied these two essays, his tutor began to teach him Confucius’ Analects (Lunyu). Xu recalled: “It was the two essays, not the Analects that made me interested in reading. I feel that education should start with essays concerned with daily life as well as with feelings.” At the age of fifteen, Xu began studying with a learned monk. For a year, he studied the eight-legged essays, some Chan (Zen) Buddhist texts, and some collected poetry by Buddhist monks. Both the Buddhist texts and poems he learned were in colloquial language and easy to follow. Xu thought these two teachers influenced him greatly in his intellectual transformation, enhanced his interest in study, and should be remembered forever.

At the age of sixteen, Xu tried to continue his grandfather’s occupation as doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. However, he gave it up after two years of

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80 Yang Shushan lived in Emperor Shizong’s reign of the Ming dynasty. He was killed because he disclosed ten crimes of Yan Song, the powerful treacherous court official.

81 Zhou Shi-zhao, Wo men de shibiao, p. 8.

82 Ibid., p. 8-9.

83 Fan Zhe, Zhongguo gujin jiaoyujia (Chinese Educators from Antiquity till Today) (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chupanshe, 1982), p. 223.
reading Chinese medical books because he found them too hard. At the age of eighteen, he became a private tutor and continued in that occupation for ten years.

In 1905, Xu took the regional examinations held in Yuezhou to test the results of his studies. He placed nineteenth among the over three thousand examinees. He thus enjoyed a reputation in the province, and schools contended to invite him to join their faculty. In the same year, in order to improve himself, he entered the Ningxiang Short-term Normal School in Changsha, graduating after four months of study. During his study there, he encountered many new subjects and concluded that Western technology was superior to China's. He also believed that the only way China could catch up with Europe was to enhance education. It was also at this time that he learned and accepted the revolutionary ideas of Sun Yatsen, as the principal of the school, Zhou Zhenlin, was a member of Sun's Tongmeng hui (Revolutionary Alliance) and often introduced Sun's revolutionary views to his students.

After graduation, Xu established a primary school in Changsha and studied algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and

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analytic geometry during his leisure hours. In 1906, he taught at the Zhounan Girls Middle School in Changsha and used the school as an arena for propagating revolution. He organized student strikes in opposition to the Manchu government. Once when lecturing to the students on foreign aggression against China, he broke into a loud lamentation and cut off one of the ends of his fingers, using the blood to write eight Chinese characters, "quzhu dalu, huifu Zhonghua" meaning "drive out the Manchus and restore China."^\textsuperscript{85}

In 1910, already a highly respected and well-known teacher, Xu went to study at the program for elementary school teachers founded by the Jiangsu Provincial Board of Education in Shanghai and was soon sent to Japan on an inspection tour of educational facilities. After returning to China, he continued to work in the Zhounan Girls Middle School, both as its principal and as a teacher. He was an ardent supporter of Sun Yat-sen and actively took part in the 1911 revolution. He was then selected as the Section Chief of the Department of Education at the Hunan Provincial Government. When the Hunan Provisional Assembly convened, he was elected its speaker in 1911. In 1912, he

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 224.
established the Changsha Normal School which provided short-term normal class. The following year, he founded an elementary school at his home village.

In 1913, he was invited to join the faculty of the Hunan First Normal School and taught education, pedagogy and moral cultivation at the school until 1919. He was a humble man. He was also iconoclastic not only in his words but in his acts; he drew a lot of attention to himself by walking rather than riding a rickshaw between his teaching jobs at various Changsha schools. At that time, there were not many secondary educational institutions in Changsha, and the teachers of these schools had high social status. Most of them came to school in rickshaws and a few were even affluent. Xu was then the principal of the Changsha Normal School, which was located at the north gate of Changsha, and he also taught at First Normal, which was located at the south gate of the city. The distance between the two schools was ten Chinese li (around four miles). He always walked between the two schools, even on rainy days. His actions not only had a great influence on his students but also affected other teachers who used to ride rickshaws. For instance, Huang Shutao, a drawing teacher at First Normal, had a large family to support. He used to ride a
fancy rickshaw to school, though his family’s finances were very tight. After observing Xu’s example, he told Xu one day: “You don’t ride rickshaws, yet the students still respect you. I will learn from you.” After that, he never rode a rickshaw to school again.

Xu specialized in pedagogy. All the teaching materials he used for his classes he edited himself. In 1914, he published an article entitled “The Study of the Pedagogy of Chinese” in the Gongyan journal, and founded the Hongwei Publishing House together with other First Normal teachers, Yang Changji, Li Jinxi, and Fang Weixia to publish elementary and middle schools textbooks. The two volumes of Pedagogy for Elementary School Courses in China were published by the Hongwei.

Xu was a very experienced teacher. He always lectured with a stentorian voice and displayed an infectious appeal. In his lectures, he paid special attention to the connection between social life and the students’ actual thinking. His classes were highly praised by his students. They felt that his lectures were easy to understand and

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87 Xu’s article, “The Study of the Pedagogy of Chinese” was published in the *Gongyan* journal, volume 1, number 3, in 1914.
very practical. Xu liked to use exemplary persons both from the past and in the present as models to urge his students to follow. He also used his own experience to guide his students. Once, in a moral cultivation class, when he was talking about thrift, he told his students that living a thrifty life could not only save money but also promote an strong spirit, train an adamant will, and mould a noble character. He said: "I'm used to the thrifty life. I feel only frugality can make me feel happy." He continued:

I'm very pleased with myself about one thing. That is I have never been the victim of a thief. I don't have leather suitcases, a fancy wardrobe, or any valuable furniture and goods in my house. Usually, my money is casually stored in old books in baskets. Thieves would never figure out that the money they wanted was located in a pile of old books, so I've never lost money. When I walk in the street, thieves see me wear such shabby clothes, they walk away from me quickly because they are afraid of being robbed by me.

Students regarded his class highly not only because his lectures were lively but also because he would answer their questions very lucidly. His student Xiong Jinding recalled: "Mr. Xu's lectures never stuck to conventions, and were never cut and dried. He always avoided the stale and

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88 Sun Hailin, "Yihu xunchang de guanhuai he aihu: Xu Teli zhai Hunan yishi" in Xu Teli yanjiu (The study of Xu Teli), 1996 vol. 4, p.29.

89 Xu's student, Zhou Shizhao, wrote about what Xu said in Women de shipiao, p. 30.
brought forth the fresh in his lectures. And he always explained profound things in a simple way. Therefore, his lectures were very enjoyable and vivid.\textsuperscript{90}

Xu was not only strict in pursuing his own studies but also advocated pursuing a good study approach. At that time, the First Normal students competed after school to see who could read the largest amount of material. However, they had the habit of reading fast but failed to fully understand what they were reading. Xu put forward a solution to this problem: "Do not read without taking up the pen."\textsuperscript{91} He told them to not worry about reading less, the main thing was to understand what they had read. He also told his students that while reading they should assess the value of the book through thinking, mark down the key words of the book, and take down the main points as well as make their own comments. In this way, although their reading speed would slow down, if they read one sentence that sentence would count, and if they read one book that book would count. This reading method could help them remember what they had read, fully understand it, and

\textsuperscript{90} Sun Hailin, "Yihu xunchang de guanhuai he aihu: Xu Teli zai Hunan yishi," p. 29.

\textsuperscript{91} Zhou Shizhao, Women de shibiao, p. 54.
also reach the goal of studying for the purpose of application.\(^{92}\)

Xu’s advocacy greatly influenced his students and their bad habit of reading fast without fully understanding. Mao was one of the students who effectively put Xu’s views into practice. During the five and half years he studied at First Normal, Mao wrote “Jiangtang lu”\(^ {93}\) (Class notes), “Dushu lu” (Notes taken from reading), “Suigan lu” (Informal essays), and “Riji” (Diaries). He wrote down thirteen thousand words of annotations and comments on the Lunlixue yuanli. He also copied several books. Those writings filled a big basket.\(^ {94}\)

Xu was very patriotic and had a strong sense of justice, characteristics that greatly influenced his students. As early as 1911, he organized student strikes in opposition to the railway policy of the Manchu government. That year, the Qing government decided to take over the major railways, which had been privately owned, as national

\(^{92}\) Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi—1903-1949, p. 86.

\(^{93}\) “Jiangtanglu” was the class notes Mao took at First Normal in November to December 1913. The notes of ethics class was taken from Yang Changji’s lectures, while notes of Chinese classics was taken from Yuan Zhongqian’s class who urged Mao to study Han Yu’s works and to learn the classical style of writing.

\(^{94}\) Sun Hailin, “Yihu xunchang de guanhuai he aihu: Xu Teli zhai Hunan yishi,” p. 29.
property and use them as assets for huge under-the-table foreign loans. When this news arrived in Hunan, Xu was teaching at the Zhounan Girls School. He was indignant and immediately contacted other schools in Changsha to call for a student strike. A few days later, all the schools in Changsha held a strike in response to his call. This was the earliest student strike in the history of Changsha.  

In 1915, when Yuan Shikai was intent on making himself emperor, his followers organized a Peace Planning Society in every province to support Yuan’s imperial ambitions. An ethics teacher of First Normal named Liao Mingjin, (Hutang), was a member of the Chuansan Association. At the lectures at the Association, Liao, like all the other members, often talked about the incompatibility between the monarchical system, public opinion, and the situation of China, and called on people to stand up against Yuan’s imperial ambitions. However, in his classes at First Normal, Liao proclaimed that the monarchical system accorded with the interests of the people as well as the nation. Xu and other teachers like Yang Changji, Fang Weixia, Wang Jifan, and Yuan Zhongqian were disgusted by Liao’s hypocrisy and set

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95 Zhang Xing, "Xu Teli weida de wuchanjeji jiaoyujia," p. 51.
themselves against him. Xu even wrote a letter to Liao in the name of the students. He wrote:

At the Chuansan Association, you opposed the monarchical system, but at First Normal you approved of it. Sir, you are one person, how can you have two faces? ... [Since we are your students and] under your authority, we don’t have anything with which to repay you now; when opportunities come in the future, we will not forget your instruction [and will repay you then.]\(^{96}\)

After he received this letter, Liao realized that his actions enraged the community, so he never publicly supported the monarchical system again.

In June 1915, the Hunan Provincial Assembly declared that, starting from the fall semester of 1915, normal school students should pay ten yuan for their tuition fee and other incidental expenses. Ten yuan was not a small amount to most of the First Normal students, who did not come from well to do families, so they complained to Principal Zhang Gan. Mao even organized a strike among the students to drive Principal Zhang from the school. Zhang, of course, was very angry and ordered Mao and another sixteen students leaders expelled from the school. However, Xu, Yang Changji, Wang Jifan, and Fang Weixia energetically

interceded for Mao and the other students. Thus, the principal rescinded the order.  

In 1918, Zhang Jingyao, a native of Anhui province, and a former bandit and Baoding military school graduate, was appointed military governor of Hunan. During his governorship, he took Hunan’s economy to the edge of collapse, bringing depression in its wake. He did nothing to alleviate the situation and indeed actively aggravated it. He used all possible ways to get money for himself. For instance, he even used the death of his mother as an excuse to wrench more from the overburdened merchants. Besides selling opium, imposing higher taxes, and forcing arbitrary fines on the Hunanese gentry, he opened the Yuxiang Bank in Changsha which printed a huge amount of large face value paper currency and circulated it throughout the province, then refused to redeem the currency for other forms of money. Then he ordered those who had the paper currency to buy the lottery tickets he issued. In this way, he embezzled almost all the money equal to the amount of the

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paper currency he had circulated.\textsuperscript{98} He also confiscated the limited educational revenues from tuition, which meant that the teachers did not get paid for five or six months, while the students in the public schools had no food.

Zhang Jingyao totally depended upon his military power to retain office. He made his three brothers, Jingshun, Jingyu, Jingtang, officers in his army; their troops engaged in widespread extortion and the robbery of private homes. The troops also raped women wherever they went, while their officers demanded daughters of gentry families as concubines. There was a saying about the four brothers among the Hunanese, "Yao Shun Yu Tang, hu bao chai lang," (Yao, Shun, Yu, [and] Tang [were the] tiger, leopard, jackal, [and] wolf).\textsuperscript{99} The Hunanese understandably hated the Zhang brothers.

Xu vigorously participated in the Hunan student movement to oust Zhang Jingyao. He pointed out: "Until Toxic Zhang (Zhang du) is driven out [of the province],

\textsuperscript{98} Zhang Jinyao issued 2,000,000 lottery tickets. Each ticket was sold at five silver dollars. \textit{Hunan jin 150 nian shishi rizhi, 1840-1990}, p. 73; also see Zhou Shizhao, \textit{Wo men de shibiao}, p. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{99} Li Rui, \textit{Mao Zedong tongzhi de chuqi geming huodong}, p.114.
Hunan has no hope." He called on both the students and the citizens of Hunan to join the movement. Zhang ordered Xu arrested in the summer of 1919 when the latter was in the process of arranging traveling expenses for France. So Xu quickly left Hunan and went to Shanghai to wait for the boat to France. He left for France to study under the work-study plan promoted by Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong in September 1919.

Xu studied at the University of Paris for three years and the University of Lyons for one year. During his student days in France, he also served as an apprentice in a metal plant and acted as a cook for workers. He then went to work in factories in Germany and Belgium for one year. In 1924, he returned to China from France and established the Changsha Girls Normal School, also known as Daotian Normal School, and served as its principal as well as a teacher. He said:

I'm a man who is not interested in political activities. I really enjoy being wrapped up in reading. Because of foreign pressure and internal political corruption, I drifted into the patriotic movement, and felt that if the masses did not participate in the movement it was because of their ignorance. I thus believed that

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100 Sun Hailin, "Yihu xunchang de guanhuai he aihu: Xu Teli zhai Hunan yishi," p. 30.

101 Ibid., p. 30.
education was the first and foremost means of national salvation.  

Therefore, during the White Terror of 1927, the most severe time for the Chinese Communists, Xu joined the Chinese Communist Party. Xu was very respected by the Communists. In January 1937, on his 60th birthday, a special celebration party was held for him, and Mao Zedong called Xu one of the two most beloved and respected teachers he had at First Normal.  

Mao also wrote Xu a letter to congratulate him on his birthday. In the letter, he wrote: “You were my teacher twenty years ago; you are still my teacher now; and you will continue to be my teacher in the future.”  

Xu worked in the educational field his whole life and died in Beijing on November 28, 1968, at the age of 91.

**Director of Studies, Fang Weixia**

Fang Weixia (1879-1935), (Zhuya), was a native of Pingjiang, Hunan. He was a leading figure in the early Chinese Communist Party.

Fang graduated from First Normal’s short-term department in September 1906 and soon enrolled at Hunan

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102 *Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949*, p. 87.
Youji Normal College. He studied at the Normal College for three years and graduated there in 1909. Then he went to Japan to study for two years. After he returned to China from Japan in 1911, he worked at First Normal till 1919, first teaching science and agriculture and then becoming director of studies at the school. From 1916 to 1919, he played a very important role at First Normal. His status and function at the school was next to that of Principal Kong Zhaoshou in importance.

While he was working at First Normal, Fang became an ardent supporter of Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary views and was firmly against the dictatorship of Yuan Shikai. In 1915, when Yuan Shikai tried to assume the emperorship, Fang joined the First Normal teachers, Xu Teli, Yang Changji, and Wang Jifan, in opposing Yuan's attempt. He stoutly opposed Yuan's Hunan followers like Ye Dehui, who organized the Peace Planning Society and supported Yuan's imperial ambitions, but also firmly supported the reform-minded Tan Yankai. That was why he was appointed to be chief of the Education Department of the Hunan provincial government by Tan Yankai in 1920 when Tan was once again Governor of Hunan.

\[104\] Ibid., p. 82.
In 1915 First Normal students held a strike to drive away Principal Zhang Gan because they resented the Provincial Assembly's decision to impose a ten yuan special fee on each normal school student. Seventeen students leaders, including Mao Zedong, were ordered expelled by the school for protesting. However, Fang, together with other teachers like Xu Teli, Yang Changji, Wang Jifan, and Yuan Zhongqian interceded vigorously for the students, thus Mao avoided being expelled.

While he was teaching science at First Normal, Fang tried to enhance students' interests in this subject by having them do fieldwork. He often brought his students to the Yuelu Mountain and the hills behind the campus to collect specimens of all kinds of plants, minerals, and rocks and gave them lectures in the field. While he was the director of studies, he represented Principal Kong as head of the Student Friendship Society (Xueyou hui) and supervised its activities.

When Kong Zhaoshou reassumed the principalship in 1916, Fang became the director of studies. The two men not only shared political views and educational philosophy but were also good friends and cooperated very well in their work.
While he was the director of studies, Fang stipulated the specific curriculum for each subject in all five grades.

Fang was a prominent voice in educational affairs and enjoyed a high reputation in Hunan. While he was working at First Normal, he was elected a member of the Provincial Assembly and chief of the Education Department of the Hunan provincial government. Because of his radical and reform-minded views, he often attracted opposition and ridicule from provincial conservatives. However, he also received support and respect from his students as well as from his colleagues. In his capacity as the director of studies of First Normal, Provincial Assemblyman, and chief of the Education Department of Hunan, Fang, together with Principal Kong, embarked on a full-scale education reform at First Normal, which had a long-lasting effect on the administration, curriculum, policy-making, and the students and teachers of the school.

In 1920, when Mao Zedong opened a bookstore in Changsha, Fang used his capacity as Provincial Assemblyman to support and publicize this bookstore. Besides providing financial aid, Fang also organized the Pingjiang Branch of the bookstore, an action that contributed to the spread of Marxism in Hunan.
In 1924, Fang joined the Chinese Communist Party and began to work as a political adviser in Tan Yankai’s Xiang (Hunan) Army and thus contributed to fostering Communist Party membership in the army. During the Northern Expedition, he worked as a Party representative in the national revolutionary army. After the split between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party, he participated in the Nanchang Uprising\textsuperscript{105} of 1927. Then he was sent to study at Sun Yat-sen University in the Soviet Union. He returned to China from the USSR in 1931 and worked as the director of the political department in a Red Army school in Fujian province. After the Red Army began the Long March,\textsuperscript{106} he stayed in the Hunan-Jiangxi border region and led guerrilla warfare. He was arrested by the Nationalists

\textsuperscript{105} The Nanchang Uprising, also known as the August 1 Nanchang Uprising, was an armed uprising led by the Chinese Communist Party in Nanchang, Jiangxi province on August 1, 1927. Its leaders were Zhu De, Zhou Enlai, He Long, and Ye Ting. The insurrectionary army arrived at Jinggang Mountain in Jiangxi province in April 1928 and joined forces with another insurrectionary army of the Autumn Harvest Uprising. The Autumn Harvest Uprising (Qiushou qiyi) was an armed uprising led by Mao Zedong on September 9, 1927 in the Hunan-Jiangxi border region. The two insurrectionary armies organized into the Chinese 4\textsuperscript{th} Worker-Peasant Red Army, which marked the Communist Party’s independent building of its own army.

\textsuperscript{106} The Long March (1934-1935) was a major strategic movement of the Chinese Red Army. It started from Jiangxi province and reached northern Shanxi province, which became the Communist revolutionary base. It traversed eleven provinces and covered 25,000 li, or 12,500 kilometers.
(Guomindang) in southern Hunan in 1935 and was killed the same year.

The Math Teacher and Supervisor Wang Jifan

Wang Jifan (1884-1972), a native of Xiangxiang, Hunan, came from a well-to-do family. His father, Wang Wensheng, was for a while a low ranking official of the Qing government in Northeast China. His mother was the sixth child of the Wen family of Xiangxiang and the elder sister of Mao Zedong’s mother. Wang Jifan was nine years older than Mao. He was the second son of his parents, but was the number nine among his cousins, so Mao always called him “ninth elder brother.”

From his earliest years, Wang was considered hard working and very intelligent. He was admitted by the Changsha Youji Normal College at the beginning of the twentieth century. While he was studying in Changsha, he was very interested in the study of the New Learning and was heavily influenced by the reformers. He believed that reform and self-strengthening offered the only way to change China’s situation of accumulated weakness and poverty.

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After graduation, Wang began to teach at First Normal. Because of his enlightened and reforming views as well as his scholarly accomplishment, Wang was greatly welcomed and respected by his students, and had a great impact on them. Mao Zedong especially respected him and received much help from him both mentally and financially since, apart from the teacher-student relationship, they were also cousins.

When he was little, Mao lived with his maternal grandparents because his parents were afraid he would die young as had two earlier children. At his maternal grandparents’ home, Mao began to know and to admire Wang, who seemed very knowledgeable to him. Mao consulted Wang about all the things he did not understand. Wang always gave Mao a satisfactory answer. During the years when he was studying at elementary and middle schools, Mao never stopped seeking help and advice from Wang.

During the five years when Mao was a student of First Normal, Wang provided good care and help to Mao both mentally and financially. And whenever Mao was in trouble, Wang would try his best to intercede for him and help him turn the corner. For instance, because of the strike to drive away Principal Zhang in 1915, Mao would have been expelled from the school had Wang, Yang Changji, Xu Teli,
and Fang Weixia not interceded for him. Mao told Edgar Snow in 1936 that his political ideas began to take shape while he was studying at First Normal. In his conversation with his old school friend, Zhou Shizhao, Mao also recalled: "I have never formally studied at a university; I have never studied abroad either; it was at the First Normal that the foundation of all my learning and all my intellectual knowledge was laid."\textsuperscript{108}

Besides Mao, Wang also provided help and advice to other students. He cared not only about his students' academic studies but also about their mental growth. He encouraged his students to be interested in current affairs and in social studies. He fully supported the Students Friendship Association, the Xinmin Association, and the Changsha bookstore, the latter two of which were organized by students. He also supported the movement to "Oust Zhang Jingyao of Hunan," the Hunan independence movement, and the work-study plan in France. As the History of Hunan First Normal recorded: "During this period [1910s], there were other teachers like Yuan Zhongqian and Wang Jinfan, who

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 54.
taught at First Normal and exerted a profound influence on the students."\textsuperscript{109}

Wang worked in Changsha till 1937, first at First Normal, then as principal of Changsha Changjun Lianli Middle School from 1928 to 1936. In the spring of 1937, he went up to Henan province and worked as the secretary-general of the Education Department of the provincial government. He only stayed in that position for three months and then returned to Hunan to be the principal of the Guanglan Middle School.

After 1949, Wang worked for a while as vice president of the Hunan Administration Institution. Then he worked at the Hunan Provincial Archive. He was also a representative at the First, Second, and Third National People's Congress. He died on July 11, 1972 in Beijing, at the age of 88. A ceremonial memorial meeting was held. The words on the ribbon from Mao's wreath were: "Jiuge qiangu" (Eternal repose to my ninth elder brother.)\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{History Teacher, Li Jinxi}

Li Jinxi (1890-1978) (Shaoxi) was a native of Xiangtan, Hunan and an eminent linguist in modern Chinese linguistics.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi}, p., 93.

\textsuperscript{110} Xiu Juan, ed., \textit{Mao Zedong yu qinjuan}, p., 58.
He earned his Xiucai degree at the age of fifteen. Soon after, he was admitted by the Hunan Youji Normal University where he studied in the Department of History and Geography. He graduated from the school at the age of twenty-two in the midst of the Republican Revolution of 1911. He founded and became the chief editor of Changsha Ribao (Changsha Daily) and Hunan Gongbao (Hunan News.) In these newspapers, he published many articles which introduced the Republican Revolution, commented on current affairs, and publicized the New Learning. While he was running these newspapers, Li had contacts with a few progressive youths who had helped him copy out his manuscripts. While they were transcribing, these young people also gave their comments on Li's manuscripts. Li once recalled that there were three young men helping him transcribe manuscripts, all quite different from each other. The first would copy out the exact manuscripts without questioning. The second one would raise questions about them, and sometimes embellished the sentences for Li. The third would refuse to transcribe the draft article if he did not agree with the author's point of view. The second one became a famous

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111 Yan Ru, "Chundu de xuezhe" (Li Jinxi - The studious scholar), ed. by Ma Xingfu, Shifan qunying guangyao zhonghua (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991), vol. II, p. 92.
playwright. That was Tian Han (1898-1968). The third one became a great leader. That was Mao Zedong. The first one was not well known, so Li declined to mention his name.

In 1914 and 1915, Li taught history at First Normal. In September 1915, he was invited to Beijing by the Ministry of Education to be the chief reader-editor of elementary and middle schools textbooks for liberal arts subjects. In 1919, he began to teach at Beijing Normal University. He worked there for fifty-nine years until his death in 1978.

Although Li did not teach long at First Normal, his influence on his students was profound. Only a few years older than most of the students (e.g., three years older than Mao Zedong), he was already an energetic and diligent scholar. He was also reform-minded. He had a very good relationship with his students, who not only respected him but also accepted him as a good friend to consult on both personal and national matters. In 1914 and 1915, Li, Yang Changji, and four other First Normal teachers all lived in the same area called Lishi yuyuan in Changsha. In 1914, Li and Yang Changji organized a “Study Group of Philosophy.” The student members of the Group were Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, Chen Chang, Xiao Yu, Xiao San, and Zhang Kundi. The members of the Study Group met regularly on Sundays at the homes of
the teachers at Lishi yuyuan. At the meeting, the students often consulted with Li and Yang about their studies, introduced reading materials to each other, exchanged their views, and discussed current affairs.\(^{112}\) Li Jinxi kept a precise record of the students' visits to Yuyuan in his diaries from April 1915 to August 1915, which showed that he was respected and attracted by his students. Here are a few notations from his diary:

April 4, 1915, Sunday. In the morning, Runzhi [Mao Zedong] came. I read his diaries and told him the reading method. ...

April 11, 1915, Sunday. In the morning, ... First Normal students Xiao Zisheng [Xiao Yu], Runzhi, and Kunfu [Xiong Guangchu] came. We talked about the reading method.

May 30, 1915, Sunday. In the morning, ... Kunfu and Runzhi came. Then we met Jifan [Wang Jifan] and talked about how to reform society.

July 11, 1915, Sunday. In the morning, ... Zhangfu and Runzhi came and asked about how to study the basics of Xiaoxue (philology and phonology). I told them to read the Duanzhu shuowen.

\(^{112}\) Wang Xingguo, Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang, p. 92; Hunan deyi shifan Xiaoshi, p. 103.
July 13, 1915, Tuesday. I came back at night and then explained the method of reading history books to Zhangfu and Runzhi.\footnote{In the summer vacation of 1915, Mao Zedong, Chen Zhangfu, and Xiong Guangchu did not go home, but stayed at the Hongwen Publishing House located at Lishi Yuyuan and worked on after class readings under the advices of Li Jinxi and Yang Changji.}

July 20, 1915, Tuesday. In the morning, ... I sat in the entrance hall, reading part of the "Shanxing" from the Qunxue yiyian. I felt refreshed and comfortable, so Runzhi moved to read in this room, too.

August 15, 1915, Sunday. In the morning, ... Runzhi and Zhangfu came. We went to Kunfu's place, in order to discuss reading methods.

August 29, 1915, Sunday. ... In the morning, ... Jifan came. ... Zisheng and Runzhi came. We talked about [our] studies for a long time.\footnote{Hunan deyi shifan Xiaoshi, p. 103-105.}

Working together with his friends and colleagues, Yang Changji, Xu Teli, and Fang Weixia, Li Jinxi also organized the Hongwen Publishing House between 1914 and 1915, which mainly edited and published elementary and middle schools
textbooks for the Republic. Li was chief editor of the Publishing House.\textsuperscript{115}

Li's connections to his First Normal students continued after the May Fourth Movement. From the letters Mao Zedong wrote to him from November 1915 to June 1920, we can see that Mao did not simply regard him as a teacher, but also as a close friend whom he could trust and "could consult with about academic studies as well as about the affairs of state."\textsuperscript{116} For instance, in a letter of November 9, 1915, Mao complained about the curriculum of the school, then wrote:

I plan to leave such a school, look for a better plan, and make a lofty resolution. I long for [you] my elder brother to come back, so I can discuss this with you. I don't have many mentor friends, but I'm lucky to have you. I regret not to have known you earlier. I wish I could come to you and ask for advice everyday.\textsuperscript{117}

When rumors circulated that Li was working for Yuan Shikai in Beijing, Mao wrote to Li anxiously and in frank words asked him not to be deceived by Yuan and go astray. He asked Li "to come back quickly! Don't be reluctant to

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p. 93.

\textsuperscript{116} Yan Ru, "Chundu de xuezhe" (Li Jinxi - The studious scholar), ed. by Ma Xingfu, Shifan qunying guangyao zhonghua, vol. II, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{117} Mao Zedong, Mao Zedong zaogi wengao, p. 31.
leave!" From the letters and Li's diaries, we can see that the relationship between Li and his students was close. His influence on them, thus, must have been profound. After the founding of the People's Republic, Li still kept in contact with Mao Zedong and Zhou Shizhao. He even mailed his will (Yuli Yizhu) to Zhou Shizhao in the later period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).\footnote{Yan Ru, "Chundu de xuezhe" (Li Jinxi - The studious scholar), ed. by Ma Xingfu, \textit{Shifan qunying guanyao zhonghua}, vol. II, p. 102.} Li outlived both Zhou and Mao.

Li Jinxi devoted his whole life to the study of linguistics and made a great contribution to the study of Chinese grammar and syntax, as well as to the reform of Chinese characters and the compilation of dictionaries. After 1949, Li was selected as a representative to the First, Second, and Third National People's Congresses and a member of the First, Second, and Third Chinese People's Political Consultative Conferences. He was also named a member of the prestigious Chinese Academy of Sciences in the Social Science Division. Besides taking these social and academic positions, Li also worked at Beijing Normal

\footnote{Zhou Yanyu, \textit{Mao Zedong yu Zhou Shizhao}, p. 24.}
University. He died in Beijing on March 27, 1978 at the age of eighty-eight.

Other Teachers

There were other teachers like Yuan Zhongqian and Yi Baisha (1886-1921) who were influential and left their mark on the students at First Normal. Yuan Zhongqian, also known as Jiliu, was a teacher of Chinese at the school. He was nicknamed Yuan the Big Beard. He earned the Juren degree\(^{120}\) and was deeply rooted in Chinese Classics. He required his students to take seriously their study of the classics. He urged them to study the moral characters of the ancients and follow the examples of the ancients in pursuing their studies. In his classes, he often named some historians, litterateurs, poets, painters, and calligraphers in Chinese history as examples and used their accomplishments and their resolution in pursuing their studies to inspire his students to be determined to study hard and to resolve that "If [one’s] literary talent cannot exceed that of his contemporaries, it cannot be called talent. If [one’s] learning cannot exceed that of the ancients, it cannot be

called learning." He despised non-classical writings like Liang Qichao's. He ridiculed Mao's style, based as it was on that of Liang Qichao and taught Mao to take Han Yu, the famous Tang dynasty essayist, as his model. Mao worked hard on this. For instance, in his Jiangtang lu, the notes Mao had taken were mainly from Yang Changji's ethics class and Yuan's Chinese classical literature class. Mao, thus recalled in 1936, "Thanks to Yuan the Big Beard, therefore, I can today still turn out a passable classical essay if required." Yuan also encouraged his students to attend lectures at the Chuanshan Association and study the writings of the early seventeenth century scholar, Wang Fuzhi. At his urging, many First Normal students like Mao Zedong, Cai Hesen, and Xiao San often attended their meetings, and absorbed their point of view.

Yi Baisha (original name: Kun) was a native of Changsha, Hunan. A graduate of Shanghai Dewen School, Yi assumed the deanship of Huainingxian Middle School of Anhui and Anhui Provincial University, respectively. After the Wuchang Uprising of 1911, he organized a students' army in Anhui province to protect the public security of the capital city.

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121 Ibid., p. 68.
122 Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 129.
After the failure of the Second Revolution\textsuperscript{123} of 1913, Yi fled to Japan. In Japan, he and Zhang Shizhao founded the Jiayin magazine. He published many articles like "Guang Shangtong" (Advocate Grand Unity) attacking Yuan Shikai's dictatorship.

After the appearance of the radical iconoclastic magazine \textit{Xin Qingnian} (New Youth) in 1915, Yi began to publish articles advocating democracy and science. For instance, he published "Shumo" (Commentary on the school of Mozi), "Kongzi pingyi" (On Confucius), and "Zhuzi wu guilun" (Masters' remarks on the non-existence of ghosts) in New Youth. His article "Kongzi pingyi" was one of the first formal denunciations of Confucius in the May Fourth period. He thought that the big secret of the Chinese worship of Confucius for the past two thousand years was that the imperial rulers had used Confucius as a tool to

\textsuperscript{123} The Second Revolution, led by Sun Yat-sen, was a military uprising of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) against Yuan Shikai in the summer of 1913. Its direct cause was the assassination of Song Jiaoren who was temporarily Chairman of the Nationalist Party which had won the election of the First National Congress. Song was about to travel Beijing to form the Cabinet when he was assassinated by Yuan Shikai. After the assassination, Sun Yat-sen immediately returned to Shanghai from Japan and called for a military uprising to overthrow Yuan. Later, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan, Guangdong, and Fujian provinces as well as Shanghai and Chongqing declared independence from Yuan's government and joined the anti-Yuan force. However, Yuan had fully prepared for the "civil war" and brutally and efficiently crushed this so-called Second Revolution in September 1913.
control people's thinking and take away people's freedom. In order to bring down absolutism in ideology and academia, Yi believed that truth became explicit after debating; learning was improved after competing.\textsuperscript{124}

Yi taught Chinese and history at First Normal in 1917 and 1918, the period during which most of his articles in the New Youth magazine were published. Yi also gave public lectures to the student body of First Normal. For instance, the First Normal's Historical Records recorded that on March 26, 1918, Mr. Yi Baisha was invited to give a public speech.\textsuperscript{125} Since First Normal had such a well-known figure as its teacher, his influence on the students can well be imagined. Furthermore, Yi Baisha was especially interested in the school of Mozi.\textsuperscript{126} He praised Mozi highly during his lifetime, a practice which likely exerted a profound influence on students like Cai Hesen, who in his youth adored Mozi.

\textsuperscript{124} Wang Xingguo, unpublished manuscript about the May Fourth Period, p. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{125} This event was quoted by Wang Xingguo in his manuscript, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{126} The school of Mozi was a school of thought in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, 770-221 B. C. The founder of the school was Mozi who was born around or soon after the death of Confucius. His teachings are found in a work as the Mozi, which contains essays and dialogues. He emphasized the "universal love," pacifism, awareness of the otherworldly, and interest in problems of logic. His interest in logic had given rise to the school of Logicians.
During the second decade of the twentieth century, First Normal gathered a group of progressive and learned men as its faculty. They devoted themselves to intellectual inquiry as the basis of national renewal and believed that education was the best approach for national salvation for it could "penetrate to the root of society’s problems and provide the basis of a solution." They tried to infuse in the school a sense of pride and of its lofty standing by fashioning the students into a community of the like-minded who were to reform the country. They urged students to try their best to live up to the ideals of the school’s motto. In academics, they gave the students a solid training in the Chinese classics; thus, First Normal students inhabited a world of old-style literati culture rich in poetic imagery and historical allusions, which placed high value on a free-flowing life of aesthetic pursuit and metaphysical reflection. Meanwhile, they also guided the students to study all aspects of Western thought and institutions and the intensive application of western science and technology. While urging the students to read

the radical and iconoclastic magazine *New Youth*, they also directed the students toward another group, *Chuanshan Association*, for the study of a great Neo-Confucian scholar of the early seventeenth century, Wang Fuzhi. Their influence on the students' intellectual transformation was profound. A large number of radical students graduated from First Normal during this period, of whom many became important figures in the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, as well as in early Chinese Communist activities. The historical, political, and intellectual milieus with which these students interacted also contributed a great deal to their radicalization.
CHAPTER 5

PROVINCIAL SCHOOLING: THE STUDENTS' GENERATION

Introduction

As Hunan’s most distinguished academic institution in the early Republican years, First Normal School attracted the best students in the province. Its enrollment base was not limited to the surrounding area of Changsha, where the school was located. It admitted students from twenty counties out of seventy-five in the province in 1912 and 1913, reaching as far as Baoqing and Yuezhou districts. For instance, Nanxian was about 250 Kilometers from Changsha. The school enlarged its enrollment base to twenty-five counties in 1914 and later extended beyond that to include a certain number of students from all parts of the province.¹

However, there was a distinctive geographical mark of the First Normal student body: most of them came from
comparatively peripheral agrarian counties like Yongfeng, Xiangxiang and Ningxiang. These counties were often far from the urban city like Changsha, had poor transportation, and also relatively sparse populations.

Besides this geographical characteristic, the student body of First Normal also had a distinctive social background. Unlike the sons of the provincial commercial and gentry elites who sought a more liberal environment and better opportunities, the students at the First Normal School were mainly from relatively poor families. They favored First Normal because of its free education, as well as its free room and board, but they should pass the strick entrance examinations of the school. However, in return for a free education, the First Normal students committed to become elementary school teachers in the province. The richer students, in contrast, were preparing themselves for an advanced education in colleges and universities in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. They thus favored general

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2 It was written into the rules that after graduation, the graduates from Division One of the Undergraduate Department of the Teachers' Training (*shifan benke*) at First Normal had to teach for seven years in the county elementary schools of the province; the graduates from Division Two of the Undergraduate Department, had to teach for two years in an elementary school in Hunan. If for some exceptional reasons a graduate could not teach in the elementary schools in the province, he had to have the approval of a service waiver from the provincial authorities. Ibid., p. 20.
secondary institutions in Changsha like the Provincial First Middle School.

The prearranged career pattern of First Normal, service as what county elementary school teachers, was the major reason the provincial elites turned away from the school. It became obvious in the 1910s that elementary school teaching in Hunan was a career with few possibilities either for upward mobility within the province or for outward mobility into other parts of the nation or the world. It also provided few opportunities for the normal school students to continue their intellectual growth once they had completed their schooling and begun to teach in elementary schools. For students of poorer family backgrounds lacking independent means, elementary school teaching was a respectable career of stifled prospects; and because of their tight budgets, First Normal School seemed to offer an exceptionally attractive educational opportunity. The provincial elites, on the other hand, discarded elementary school teaching as a career option, since they were financially able to send their sons to a general secondary institution other than the normal school. General secondary schools in Changsha usually required full payment of tuition
and fees from their students in addition to the costs of living. Thus expensive general secondary schools attracted richer students as they seemed to offer better opportunities in the future. Unlike the prescribed career pattern of county elementary school teaching for First Normal students, a Shanghai or Beijing college graduate had several options, including advanced studies abroad in Europe, America, or Japan. It was as much by default as by choice that First Normal School came to have a special attraction for students from poorer families.

Apart from the geographical and social backgrounds of First Normal students, these students often had solid training in traditional Chinese learning before they came to First Normal from their home villages. Like their fellow villagers, they were often conservative, comparatively isolated, and had a strong commitment to Confucian tradition. Yet, when these youths from the agrarian, backward, and conservative counties arrived in the capital city of Changsha, which was also the major commercial city of the province, they were greatly astonished by a totally new world both in space and time and were exposed to new ideas, new thoughts, new concepts, and new knowledge which were very different from those at home. They thus came to form a
significant potential radical force which directed fierce attacks on all forms of tradition. Schooling at Changsha opened their minds to a modernizing world and a different way of life, and this was eventually to have profound political consequences for a generation of First Normal students in the 1910s.

In April 1918, a group of patriotic youth formed a more closely knit organization - Xinmin xuehui (New Citizens’ Study Society), which had been dedicated primarily to "scholarly research, personality building, and moral development." Twenty of the twenty-one founding members of the Xinmin xuehui were from Hunan First Normal School. Xiao Zisheng served as its first director-secretary. The group constituted the most steadfast pillars in the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. They also became very active in the work-study program in France. In 1919 there were around sixty members, and almost a third of the members went to France. Both the French branch and the Hunan branch were wracked by the same question - what was the best means for national salvation. Its members reached seventy-two by

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3 Xinmin xuehui huixu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens’ Study Society) (1920), in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, No. 1, p. 3. Also see "Xinmin xuehui huixu baogao" (1920) in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huiban (Documents Collection of the New Citizen Association) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980), No. 1, p. 119.
1920, and "nearly all of them later on became distinguished activists in the Communist movement in China," who had great influence on subsequent events in Hunan and all of China.

Among them, Mao Zedong was the best known and historically the most important. Mao was a native of Xiangtan, Hunan. He studied five and half years at First Normal (1913-1918). He did excellently at Chinese classics, classical essay writing, and other social science subjects, but did not do well in drawing, and natural science classes at First Normal. Since essay writing was considered the most important subject at that time, and Mao's essays were good, so, Mao was considered one of the school's outstanding students.

During the five and half years at First Normal, Yang Changji made the strongest impression on Mao. Under Yang's influence, Mao became an idealist and one of Mao's essays entitled "Xinzhili" (The Energy of the Mind) was highly praised by Yang from Yang's idealist viewpoint. Under the encouragement of Yang, Mao attended the meetings of the "Chuanshan xueshe," studying, discussing, absorbing, and selecting the most useful parts of traditional Chinese

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1 Emi Siao (Xiao San), Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth, p. 57.
learning. Also directed by Yang, Mao became a serious reader of the most radical and Westernized journal, New Youth; after 1915. Mao contributed an article "Tiyu zhi yanjiu" (A Study of Physical Culture) to number 2 of volume III of the journal, published on April 1, 1917. In this article, he expressed a nationalist and military outlook. At First Normal, Mao acquired the foundation of his worldly knowledge and it was here that his political ideas began to take shape. Also, here Mao acquired his first experiences in social action.

Since a number of studies have already been done on Mao, such as Li Rui's Mao Zedong tongzhi di chuqi geming huodong (Early Revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong), Ma Yu-qing's Mao Zedong de chengzhang daolu (The Way Mao Zedong Grew), Stuart Schram's Mao Tse-tung, and Benjamin I.

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5 For more information on this article see Li Rui, Sanshisui yiqian de Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong before Thirty Years Old) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 162-163; also see The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School, Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi--1903-1949 (The History of Hunan First Normal School--1903-1949), p. 111-113.

6 Li Rui, Mao Zedong tongzhi di chuqi geming huodong (Early Revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1957).


Schwartz's *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, Mao's activities will only be considered here in passing. Instead, I will discuss Cai Hesen. He was one of the first Chinese Marxists, and the first Chinese to advocate the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). He was one of the founders of the CCP and the most important theorist of the early CCP. However, seventy years has passed since Cai’s death in 1931, there is not enough study done on Cai Hesen in the academic field both in China and in the West. I hope this study will in a small way help ending the neglect of Cai Hesen. I will also discuss some other First Normal students, such as He Shuheng, Li Weihan, Zhang Kundi, Luo Xuezan, Chen Chang, in the appendix. These people were less famous than Mao and not many studies had done on them, but they were very important in the early Chinese Communism.

**Cai Hesen**

Cai Hesen (1895-1931) was a founder and an important leader of the *Xinmin xuehui* (New Citizen’s Study Society).

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In order to search for a solution to China’s crisis, Cai and his friends at First Normal established the Xinmin xuehui in 1918. Cai was also a founder, an important leader, and a chief theorist of the early Chinese Communist Party. His concern for the interests of his nation led him to find the best means for national salvation and he believed that he had found it in the example of the Russian Revolution. His belief in Russian Communism influenced a generation of Chinese radical youths to embrace Communism and regard the Russian Communism as their model. However, the importance of Cai in the early Chinese Communism has not received enough attention in academic circles either in China or in the West. The credit of the founder of the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary theorist and strategist usually goes to Mao Zedong. I hope this chapter will make a small contribution in this field in keeping with the Chinese saying, "to offer a few commonplace remarks by way of introduction so that others may come up with valuable opinions."

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), Vol. 4 has put the date incorrectly as in 1890.
Family Background

Cai Hesen, also known as Cailin Bin, was a native of Xiangxiang, Yongfeng county (modern-day Shuangfeng county), Hunan. Although Cai Hesen was known as a Hunanese, he was actually born in Shanghai on March 30, 1895, and spent the first four years of his life in that city. His family was very famous for many generations for the production of "Yongfeng lajiang" (Yongfeng Thick Chili Sauce). Cai's grandfather had taken the imperial examinations at the first, Xiucai level in his early years but had failed. Yet he served as a secretary to the famous Qing statesman Zeng Guofan for a while. At that time, the Cai family was pretty well-to-do. Cai's father, however, failed to manage the family business effectively, and the family thus had fallen on hard times. In 1890, he gave the business to others to handle and left for Shanghai with his wife and four children before Cai Hesen was born. He became a minor official in the

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11 According to Xiangxiang Cailinshi zupu, the surname of the ninth generation ancestor of Cai Hesen was Lin, and he lived in Putian, Fujian province. In the tenth year of Kangxi Emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1672), the ninth generation ancestor of Cai was adopted by his uncle from his mother's side whose surname was Cai. Then the ninth generation ancestor moved to Xiangxiang, Yongfeng County, (today's Shuangfeng County) Hunan and changed his surname to Cai-Lin, a compound surname. Luo Shaozhi and others, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1982), vol. 6, p. 1. 261
Jiangnan Arsenal in Shanghai by using his father-in-law's relationship with Zeng Guofan.\(^\text{12}\)

Cai Hesen received great influence from his mother, Ge Jianhao (1865-1943), a modern-minded woman for her day. Ge Jianhao was born into a well-to-do family in Xiangxiang, Hunan, in 1865. Her father served in Zeng Guofan's Xiang Army (Hunan Army) and died in a battle in Hubei province in 1868, at the age of twenty-seven. Ge and her elder brother were brought up by their mother. From the age of ten until sixteen when she was married to Cai Hesen's father, Ge studied at a private tutorial school to accompany her brother, and became politically aware. In 1899, Ge left her husband in Shanghai and moved back to her mother's home in Hunan with her youngest son Cai Hesen who was then four years old. Her husband followed her in the same year. In the following year she bore her sixth and last child, Cai Chang.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\) According to Geshi sixiu zupu (The fourth edition of the Ge family pedigree) and Dajie Zengshi wuxiu zupu (The fifth edition of the Zeng family pedigree), the sixth daughter of Zeng Guofan was married to the fourth brother of Cai Hesen's maternal grandfather. Quoted by Luo Shaozhi, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1982), vol. 6, p. 1.

\(^{13}\) The six children included three males and three females. Before 1908, the oldest son died of diphtheria and the second daughter died from a fall. The second son, a Communist, was killed by Guomindang in 1927. Cai Chang, also known as Xianxi, would later become one of the most important female leaders in the Chinese Communist Party. She and Deng
In the spring of 1914, at the age of forty-nine, Ge entered a girls teachers’ school in Changsha. She graduated from the school in 1915. Then she went back to Yongfeng and opened up her own school, the Second Girls’ School, in the county. She was both the principal and teacher in the school. Besides academic studies, she encouraged her students to participate in such activities as singing, dancing, high jump, and long jump. She also encouraged her students to unbind their feet and cut their hair short. At that time, many women took the Second Girl’s School as “Women’s Home,” and said: “Once you enroll in the Second Girls’ School, you will be living in a world of

Yingchao (Mrs. Zhou Enlai) were perhaps the best educated of the older Communist women. Cai Chang was also one of the thirty veteran Communist women who completed the Long March. Luo Shaozhi, “Caimu Ge Jianhao” (Mother Cai, Ge Jianhao) in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuang (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1982), vol. 6, p. 48-54.

14 In the spring of 1914, under the encouragement of her son Cai Hesen, Ge Jianhao, together with her son, her eldest daughter, and her granddaughter, went to school in Changsha. Cai Hesen went to Hunan First Normal School to study; daughter Cai Qingxi went to a Girl’s school; and granddaughter Liu Ang, at the age of three, went to a kindergarten. It became a household word that three generations went to school together in the capital city of the province. When Ge first applied to the girls teachers’ school, she was not allowed to apply because of her age. She sued the school. In court, she delivered a convincing argument, so the judge ordered the school to break the rule and admit her, which became a nine day’s wonder in Changsha. Wang Qingshui, “Ge Jianhao” in Congshu bianweihui, ed., Shifan qunying guangyao zhonghua (Honorable Heroes from Normal Schools in China) (Xian: Shanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1992), vol. 1, p. 44.

freedom."\(^1^6\) Ge's radical methods of running the school infuriated the conservative elites. Thus, her school was forced to close due to a cessation of funding from the provincial government.

As a modern woman who always gave education a priority, Ge Jianhao rebelled against her husband on several matters. She refused to bind her daughters' feet and she insisted that Cai Chang would go school instead of accepting her husband's will to sell their daughter as a concubine.\(^1^7\) Ge supported her son Cai Hesen's decision not to become a shop apprentice, a career he detested, by selling her personal possessions so that he could study. Although the household was very much stressed by poverty, Ge never failed to play host to the progressive youth whenever they came to her house. The *Xinmin xuehui* was born in her home and the founding members like Xiao San and Luo Zhanglong always recalled what tasty meals Mother Cai had prepared for them on particular days.

In 1919, enthusiasm for the Work-Study Plan in France was sparked among many Hunanese youth. Thus in December, Ge Jianhao, at the age of forty-five, accompanied her children,

\(^1^6\) Ibid., p. 50.

\(^1^7\) Ibid. 49.
Cai Hesen, Cai Chang, and would-be daughter-in-law, Xiang Jingyu (1895-1928), to France to study. Many contemporary publications praised her by name as an enlightened example of the older generation. On May 14, 1920, an article published in Hunan’s Dagong bao said: "In recent times, there was a great tendency toward outward development in academic fields in our province. Many people have gone to France and South Asia to study. ... Among them, I respect two the most. One was Xu Maoxun (Xu Teli), the other was Cai

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18 Xiang Jingyu (1895-1928), also known as Zhenyu, a member of the Tu minority of Xupu, Hunan, became Cai Hesen’s wife in 1920. She was the first head of the Women’s Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the first female member of the CCP Central Committee. Xiang came from a well-to-do family. Her parents bore twelve children and four died as babies. Four of Xiang’s brothers graduated from universities in Japan. Xiang began to study at a private tutorial school at about six. In 1903, she went to a new-type school opened by her elder brother. In 1907, she went to study with her elder brother in Xupu where she began to receive some new ideas. Two years later, she enrolled in Changde Girls’ Fast Program Normal School. In 1913, she was admitted by the Provincial Girls’ First Normal School which was regarded as the “Cradle of Female Revolutionaries.” In the fall of 1914, when the reform-minded principal of the Girls’ First Normal, Zhu Jianfan, was forced by provincial conservatives to leave the position, Xiang quit the school and transferred to Zhounan Girl’s School in protest. Xiang was a brilliant student and an active member of the Xinmin xuehui. She also helped organize women who wanted to join the Work-Study Plan in France. She left for France in December 1919, together with Cai Hesen, Cai Chang, and Ge Jianhao and went to work and study at Montargis, south of Paris. In 1920, she became a staunch Marxist. After Cai Hesen was expelled from France, Xiang followed her husband back to China in December 1921. She soon joined the CCP and held important positions. She and Cai Hesen had two children who stayed with Ge Jianhao. In 1925, she went to study at Sun Yat-sen University in the Soviet Union. During the same period her marriage with Cai developed problems, and they permanently separated in 1926. At the end of 1926, she returned to China from the Soviet Union. In 1927, she organized factory labor first in Guangzhou, then in Wuhan, where she was arrested in March 1928. After over two months of cruel torture, she was executed by Guomindang on May
Hesen’s mother. Both of them were nearly fifty years old and went as far away as France to work and to study, which was really admirable. ... As young people, what should we do? We don’t want to be laughed at by those two elders.”19

Ge stayed four years in France and studied French diligently. As a result, she could thereafter speak and read French fluently. She returned to China in the autumn of 1923. After that she moved several times because of the danger to her of her children’s political activities. She finally settled in Yongfeng, Hunan in 1928 and never saw her sons again. The death of her sons (Cai Hesen in 1931, the second son in 1927) was concealed from her. Her husband died in 1932, and she died in 1943 at the age of seventy-eight.

Cai Hesen’s family was not a traditional one where the father was the ruler. Apparently, Cai Hesen’s father did not play a major positive role in the children’s lives and did not have a close personal relationship with his children. Meanwhile, the mother was the major influence. She inspired Cai Hesen to look beyond his own situation to the needs of the society surrounding him. She supported her children’s


participation in the Work-Study movement by joining it herself. She supported her children in choosing their marriage partners freely. She also gave her full support to her children's political activities. On her deathbed, she asked her oldest daughter to write to her other children: "Mother could not see the final victory of their cause, but the revolution was bound to be a success."\(^\text{20}\)

Because of family financial difficulties, Cai Hesen did not go to school regularly as a small child. In 1908, at the age of thirteen, he became an apprentice in his cousin's Cai Guangxiang shop where he spent three years.\(^\text{21}\) Although he had asthma and was not very strong physically, Cai still had to do all kinds of heavy physical labor. As an apprentice, he was often cursed and beaten, too. Understandably, he disliked the work intensely and left as soon as the three-year apprenticeship term was over. His decision to leave received full support from his mother who sold many of her personal possessions for his tuition fee. In 1911, at the age of sixteen, Cai entered the third grade of Yongfeng

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 56.

Guomin Elementary School. ^22^ Ridiculed by some pupils as an older student, Cai did not pay much attention to the ridicule, but industriously applied himself. Because of his academic excellence, he skipped to the Shuofeng Higher Elementary School one semester later. ^23^ During his school days in Shuofeng, he was a hard-working and outstanding student; his essays were highly praised by his teachers. During this period, he also picked up some idea of activities of the Tongmenghui. He especially admired Sun Yat-sen and set Sun as his model to follow. To follow the call of the Nanjing Provisional Government, he was the first at his school to cut off his pigtail. He also encouraged his mother to cut off hers and his sisters to unbind their feet. The radical actions of the Cai family attracted attention and had a far-reaching influence in the conservative local area. ^24^

**Schooldays in Changsha**

In early 1913, Cai was admitted to the Hunan Railroad School and moved to Changsha. He only studied there for one semester. In autumn of the same year, he was accepted into

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^22^ Ibid., p. 183.


268
the Hunan First Normal School, where he became acquainted with Mao Zedong, and studied under the direction of Yang Changji, Xu Te-li, and Fang Weixia. This was the first opportunity for Cai Hesen to be exposed to new ideas.

Cai was very much interested in the study of literature, philosophy, and history, and pursued these subjects with great enthusiasm. Besides studying in the classroom, Cai and his friends, like Mao Zedong, made a habit of visiting Yang Changji on Sundays at his house to consult with him on various questions. Cai and his friends often visited the "Chuanshan xueshe" under the encouragement of Yang Changji. The "Chuanshan xueshe" offered lectures every Sunday in Changsha on various aspects of the teachings of Wang Chuanshan (Wang Fuzhi). The members of the "Chuanshan xueshe" were seeking inspiration for the present in the traditional Chinese learning, especially in the writings of Wang Chuanshan. Cai, Mao, and their friends absorbed the point of view of the members of the "Chuanshan xueshe."

Cai was also very much concerned with social problems. He and his friends often talked about how to reform society and how to reform China, and tried to seek routes for national salvation. They realized that in order to save

24 Ibid., p. 3.
their country, they must have not only scholarly and moral development, but also have vigorous health and firmness of will. Cai, Mao, and many other students imitated Yang Changji's practices of deep breathing (similar to yoga) and cold baths year round, including winter.

Yang Changji on the other hand, thought very highly of Cai and Mao. Not long before his death in 1920, Yang sent a letter to his old friend, Zhang Shizhao, in which he said:

I sincerely inform you that two students of mine [Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong] are real comers in China who have the prospect of very successful careers. If you are not working on national salvation, that's fine. [But] if you are, you must pay great attention to these two students of mine.  

As Li Lisan later in 1949 recalled: "long before the May Fourth Movement, Mao [Zedong] and Cai [Hesen] already had great fame among the progressive Hunanese youth who regarded the two as their examples to follow." 

At First Normal, Cai's favorite teacher, Yang Changji, always encouraged his students to study the useful parts of

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25 Zhang Shizhao, "Yang Huaizhong bie zhuhan" (The supplementary biography of Yang Changji) (original article was not published, the current print, ed. by Wang Xingguo, was collected in Yang Changji wenji (Changsha: Hunan Educational Press, 1983), p. 388-389.

26 Li Ming (Li Lisan), "Jinian Cai Hesen tongzhi" (In memory of Comrade Cai Hesen) in Hua Yingshen, ed., Zhongguo gongchandang lieahi zhuan (The biography of the Chinese Communist martyrs) (Hong Kong: Xinminzhu, 1949), p. 56.
China's traditional knowledge, and objected to the wholesale rejection of Chinese institutions and culture. Yang also urged his students to study Western thought and institutions in all their aspects as he believed they were essential for the revitalization of Chinese society. Cai must have been fully convinced by his teacher's experimental, gradualist approach to solutions. Before he came into contact with more radical Western ideas in 1919, Cai had sought only to reform Chinese society in accordance with certain Western principles and institutions.27

Soon after the Xinmin xuehui was founded in the spring of 1918, Cai and Mao Zedong planned to establish a “New Village”, an ideal world in which the new families, new schools, and new society were united as one. The blueprint for their “New Village” was similar to the Welsh social reformer, Robert Owen’s (1771-1858) idea of utopian socialism in which he advocated the abolition of classes. However, Cai and Mao added Mozi’s ideas of “equality” and “universal love.” Because of the civil wars in 1918, their “New Village” was not actually created. However, during this period, Cai’s ideal society came to be a “small country with

a small population" in which everybody was equal and loved others. Cai’s thought, thus, was heavily influenced by Owen’s utopian socialism, but was combined with Mohism.

Xie Binghuai in his “Cai Hesen shi minzhu zhuyizhe ma? (Was Cai Hesen a democrat?) maintains that Cai was an utopian socialist of petty bourgeois with Mohism as his core idea. So, it should not be a surprise that Cai Hesen, known as a militant Marxist-Leninist, had actually passed through a stage in his political career which was far from extremist; in fact this kind of liberalism was very appealing to the educated youth of China at this time. Actually it was the most important source of intellectual inspiration in China before Marxism caught the attention of Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Mao Zedong had also been a liberal of sorts.

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In autumn 1915, Cai transferred to Hunan Higher Normal School and graduated there in June 1917. Cai studied very hard at school and especially liked reading. Sometimes he became so absorbed in reading a book that he forgot the time for his class. His sister Cai Chang once recalled: "My brother [Cai Hesen] was very bright and eager to learn. He could shut himself in his room for non-stop reading for a couple of days, without eating anything." Because of his absences from classes, Cai would have been expelled from the school at the end of the school year, had Yang Changji, who was also teaching at the Higher Normal School then, not vigorously interceded for him.

During his school days, Cai had seriously studied the works of Mozi, an interest possibly influenced by another teacher, Yi Baisha, from First Normal. Cai especially adored Mozi and thought he was a great philosopher. From Mozi's teaching, Cai felt that Mozi was much more concerned about common people's life and sufferings than any other philosophers were. He thought highly of Mozi's teaching of "universal love," and interpreted Mozi's saying, "xing

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30 This paragraph was quoted by Luo Shaozhi, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuang, vol. 6, p. 4.
31 Ibid., p. 4.
tianxia zhi li, chu tianxia zhi hai" (literal translation: To promote what is beneficial universally, and to abolish what is harmful universally) as "Let all people under Heaven have enough food to eat, warm clothes to wear, and live peacefully and happily." He interpreted another phrase from Mozi: "zhiji dati zhi gongli, buji xiaoti zhi lihai" (Consider only what is in the general interest, regardless of personal advantages and disadvantages) as "In order to have all the people under Heaven benefit, one should not hesitate to sacrifice one’s all, including forfeiting one’s honour and bringing disgrace to oneself." Cai, thus, advocated using Mozi’s ideal of "universal love" and "equality" to replace orthodox Confucianism and establish an ideal society in which every body was equal to each other.

Cai, therefore, was very interested in Tan Sitong’s philosophical work, Renxue (On Benevolence), which Tan wrote in 1896. He could recite many splendid paragraphs from the Renxue. He fully supported Tan’s proposition of "ripping apart and bursting all the ropes" of the Confucian doctrine around the people. He even further developed Tan’s

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32 This phrase was quoted by Xie Binghuai, “Cai Hesen shi minzhu zhuyizhe ma? - xinmin xuehui chengli qianhou Cai Hesen sixiang qianxi,” p.176.

33 Ibid., p. 176.
proposition into "ripping apart and bursting all kinds of ropes around the people in the world." Like his teacher, Yang Changji, who was a great admirer of Tan Sitong, Cai greatly admired Tan. Like Tan, Cai also advocated severe attacks on Confucianism. Cai thought highly of Tan for his constant search after the truth and the effort Tan had put into national salvation.

After Chen Duxiu's iconoclastic magazine, *New Youth*, began publication in 1915, Cai immediately became an ardent reader of the magazine. He read every issue of the magazine and seriously studied its most important articles. During his school days in Changsha, Cai Hesen had made close friends with several other politically minded youth such as Mao Zedong, Xiao Yu, Xiao San, He Shuheng, Zhang Kundi, Chen Chang, and Luo Xuezan, at the First Normal School. They often studied together, discussed affairs of state and issues of the day, and took trips around the province. They were patriotic and highly motivated, and were drawn together by a common interest, to serve their country. Cai continued

34 Ibid., p. 176.

35 After reading the radical magazine, *New Youth*, Cai Hesen became more concerned about national salvation. In 1915, wrote the *jinhainian lai de guoqi shigang* (The historical compendium of national humiliation in the past one hundred years), an essay which provoked strong repercussions among First Normal students and teachers.
to correspond with his friends after he left the school in 1915. His home often became the place for his friends to meet.

After graduation from Higher Normal in 1917, Cai began to look for a teaching position. Since all teaching positions were announced in the spring, rather than in the fall, Cai could not find a teaching position immediately after his graduation in June. At that point, he moved, together with his mother, two remaining sisters (Cai Qingxi and Cai Chang) and niece (Liu Ang) to Changsha. His younger sister, Cai Chang, who taught at Zhounan Girl’s School, was the main financial support for the whole family.36

The poor household was under severe stress during this period. Xiao Yu, a good friend of Cai, said that Cai lived with him at Chu Yi elementary school during this period because Cai did not have a job. Xiao Yu recalled:

Ho-shen [Hesen] was handicapped by a lack of initiative and drive, and he was averse to asking any help or favors of others. As a result, he remained without a job after graduating from Higher Normal, and he lived with his mother and sister who had rented a house at the foot of Mount Yao-lu [Yuelu]. They were desperately poor and often had no rice to cook on the fire.37

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36 Cai Chang earned eight yuan per month. Cai’s older sister Cai Qingxi sometimes also provided subsidies for the family. Ibid., p. 5.

37 Xiao Yu, Mao Zedong and I were Beggars, p. 46.
Xiao Yu remembered that one day [1917] Mao Zedong hurriedly came to see him in the school and told him that:

"[T]he [Cai] family has no rice and Hesen is so worried at home thinking that he is a burden to his mother and sister that he has taken a basket full of books and left for the Ai Wan T'ing under Mount Yuelu." Ai Wan T'ing is the Pavilion of the Evening Breeze, a small pointed-roofed shelter supported by four columns and open to the air. ... After Mao had gone, I asked for a short leave from duty and immediately set out across the river toward the Yuelu. As I approached the pavilion, I saw Hesen seated on the stones, with his back against one of the columns. He held his book in one hand and was reading so earnestly that he did not hear me come up.38

Xiao Yu invited Cai to live with him at Chu Yi Elementary School so they could study and chat together.

Although life was extremely hard for him during this period, Cai Hesen never stopped studying and pursuing knowledge. In August 1917, after he had read the important sections of Ershi si shi (The Twenty-Four Histories) (Dynastic histories from remote antiquity till the Ming Dynasty) and Zizhi tongjian (Annal of History) (Dynastic histories from the Zhou Dynasty to the Song Dynasty, which was compiled by Sima Guang in Northern Song), Cai felt sad that China did not have a complete history book. In a conversation with Zhang Kundi, he said that history books

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38 Ibid., p. 46-47.
like Ershi si shi and Zizhi tongjian had only recorded the histories of emperors, ministers, and high-ranking officials. He thought that "[history] should mainly record the lives of ordinary people and the society in which ordinary people were living." Thus, he decided he was going to write a history book himself which would mainly reflect the lives of the ordinary people. He was going to start from the study of county and provincial annals.

Unlike the two current views towards reading, those advocating the New Culture movement usually abandoned the traditional learning while those supporting the traditional learning usually refused to read new books, Cai claimed: "Regarding the Chinese culture and system, we don’t need to adopt it completely, and referring to the Western culture and institutions, they should be used by us selectively, and we should not accept everything from the West. We should keep the good parts of our ancient institutions and change the bad parts under consideration of the situation of the nation. The same thing can be said of the Western


40 Zhang Kundi, Diary of Zhang Kundi (August 23, 1917).

41 Zhang Kundi, Diary of Zhang Kundi (August 23, 1917).
institutions. That which we can use to serve our purpose, we should adopt, otherwise, we should ignore it. ... This is what we should remember while we are reading, no matter whether the books are new or old."^^

Besides reading, Cai Hesen also realized the importance of getting to know the common people and their social realities. He, together with Mao Zedong and Zhang Kundi, often made walking trips in the countryside during their vacations. In the spring of 1918, First Normal was closed when it was occupied by Zhang Jiyao's army. Therefore, Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong took a trip via Xiangyin, Yueyang, Pingjiang, and Liuyang around the Dongting Lake region of northern Hunan.^^ "They started from the foot of the Yuelu Mountain outside Changsha and picked their way through the Yunwan Temple, ... [they] inquired into the customs and manners of the various villages along their way, investigated the life of the peasants, rent conditions and relations between landlords and tenants, the want and destitution of the poor peasants."^^

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^^ Diary of Zhang Kundi (August 23, 1917).


^^ Emi Siao (Xiao San), Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth, p. 44.
Xinmin xuehui

After a period of study and discussion, they realized that in order to have the country reformed and themselves improved, a more closely knit organization which could unite progressive was a necessity. They therefore made a decision to form a student organization for a clear purpose of "strengthening China through strengthening Chinese youth." On April 14, 1918, the Xinmin xuehui was founded in Cai Hesen’s home. Initially, the society’s name was given as Xin xuehui (The New Study Society) by Mao Zedong and Zou Dingcheng who drafted the regulations of the society. Xiao Zisheng suggested it as Xinmin hui (The New Citizens’ Society). After discussion, it was named as Xinmin Xuehui (The New Citizens’ Study Society), combining both Mao’s and Xiao’s opinions. It also came from the writings of Liang


The Xinmin xuehui (New Citizens’ Study Society) was formed on April 14, 1918, according to Xiao San’s dairy (March to April 1918) in Zhongguo gemen bowuguan, ed., *Xinmin xuehui ziliao* (Archives of the New Citizens’ Study Society) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 166-167, Xiao San’s memoir “Mao Zedong tongzhi zai wusi shiqi” in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao* (1979?), p. 367, Zhou Shizhao’s memoir “Xiangjiang de nukong” in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao* (1979?), p. 394, and Luo Shaozhui’s article “Cai Hesen” in Hu Hua, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhan*, vol. 6, p. 7. However, it was recorded that the Xinmin xuehui was formed on April 17, 1918, “Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao” (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens’ Study Society) (1920) in *Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian*, No. 1, p. 121.
Qichao advocating "The way of the new citizen." In the beginning, Xinmin xuehui had been dedicated primarily to "scholarly research, personality building, and moral development." Twenty out of the twenty-one founding members-- including Mao Zedong, Xiao Zisheng, Chen Chang, Zhang Kundi, Luo Xuezan, and Cai Hesen himself-- were students at the First Normal School. He Shuheng, the oldest member, was a graduate of First Normal who was teaching at the Chuyi primary school in Changsha. Luo Zhanglong was

47 "Xinmin" is both an adjective-noun (new citizen) and verb-noun (renew the people). The society's name therefore is reflexive: the new citizen (members) will renew the whole un-renewed people, which reflected the members' unconscious Confucian thinking of labeling themselves as the "xianzhi xianjue" (having foresight), as well as through linguistic flexibility implicitly answering Karl Marx' third thesis on Feuerbach.

48 According to "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society) (1920), and the written memories of Li Weihan, Zhou Shizhao, and Xiao San, there were twenty-one founding members of the Xinmin xuehui, but only about thirteen (some recalled twelve, some recalled fourteen) were able to attend the founding meeting in April 1918.

49 Howard L. Boorman gave an incorrect list of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui in Biographical Dictionary of Republican China. According to "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society) (1920), and the written memories of Li Weihan, Zhou Shizhao, and Xiao San, there were twenty-one founding members of the Xinmin xuehui, but only about thirteen (some recalled twelve, some recalled fourteen) were able to attend the founding meeting in April 1918.

50 Luo Zhanglong was a student of Changsha First Lianhe Middle School from 1912 to 1917. In 1918, he was admitted to Beijing University and graduated there in 1924. In 1915, Mao wrote a short advertisement, "Zhengyou qishi" (Seeking for Friends), inviting young men interested in
the only one out of the twenty-one who was not from First Normal.

These young men were relatively independent, well read, and frustrated by the poverty of their individual resources. They had an urgent need to improve their lives. A pooling of resources and ideas was an ideal way to solve these problems. Their scholarly and moral development, personal advancement, and seeking of friends were the fundamental reasons for establishing the Xinmin Xuehui. Another was that the New Culture movement was spreading rapidly in China and beginning to penetrate the consciousness of many aware intellectuals. The old ways of thinking, old ethics, and old culture seemed almost to be disappearing in the eyes of these young people. They felt it was wrong to continue to live a quiet and isolated life. Instead, they should seek to live an but united life. Moreover, most of the founding patriotic work to contact him. He used a pseudonym, ershiba huasheng, the "twenty-eight strokes" of Mao's full name in written as the author and sent this advertisement to all schools in Changsha. To this advertisement, he received three and one half replies. One of the three was Luo Zhanglong. From then on, Mao and Luo became friends and Luo often joined the discussions of First Normal students. That is how Luo became one of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui. Luo later also joined the CCP and held important positions in the CCP, and afterwards departed it.

51 "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society) (1920), in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian (Documents Collection of the New Citizen Association), No. 1, p. 120.

52 Ibid., p. 120. 282
members were students of Yang Changji. They were familiar with Yang’s teaching that they should become just, moral, virtuous men, and useful to society.

The society met weekly or biweekly to study together, discuss plans, and talk about current issues. After the May Fourth Incident in 1919, their members of the society exceeded seventy; so if one wanted to join the society, the person had to be introduced by five members, investigated by an advisory committee, approved by half the members, with an announcement made to the entire membership. The moral requirements for members mixed traditional values and behavioral norms of the new epoch. All members had to lead a pure life, be utterly sincere, have a spirit of struggle, and serve the truth. There were specific regulations for the members of the society. Among these were prohibitions against untruthfulness, laziness, spendthrift ways, gambling,

53 Twenty out of the twenty-one founding members were Yang Changji’s students at the First Normal School.

54 “Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao” (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens’ Study Society) (1920), in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian (Documents Collection of the New Citizen Association), No. 1, p. 120.


and visiting brothels. The significant thing about the society," Xiao San recalled, "was that it united for the first time all the progressive young men in Changsha into one organization." In fact, a substantial number of women joined the society later on. Li Weihan recalled that almost half of the forty new members who joined the society during the May Fourth Movement were women.

Although the society was primarily dedicated to scholarly research, personal reformation, and moral development, it quickly evolved into a forum of political debate for progressive youth. Xiao Zisheng, the first general secretary of the society, recalled:

In the beginning, it was merely a society of carefully selected students of good moral character who had ideas and ideals similar to ours [Mao Zedong and Xiao himself]. The aims would be stated simply as the betterment or improvement of each individual, strengthening his moral and spiritual fiber and improving his education, as well as bringing about needed reforms in the country, but without expressing any political opinions nor affiliating with any party. Later, however, Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong] and other members of the Association developed political ambitions and they accepted the Communist doctrine. At the present time [1961], a great many of the top rulers

57 "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens’ Study Society), in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian (Documents Collection of the New Citizen Association), No. 1, p. 119-121.

58 Emi Siao (Xiao San), Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth, p. 57.

in Peking are former members of the old Hsin Min Study Association; Our Study Association must be regarded, therefore, as the embryo of Chinese Communism since, when the Communist doctrine began to awaken active interest, the nucleus of the movement was already in existence in our group.

Work-Study Program in France and Cai’s Radicalization into Communism

After the Xinmin xuehui was founded, the members talked most about how to develop outwardly. So, when they received a letter from Yang Changji, who was teaching at Beijing University at the time that a Work-Study Program in France was in preparation, that Program immediately caught the attention of the members of the Xinmin xuehui. Actually, by early 1912, Cai Yuanpei, Li Shizeng, Wu Zhuhui, and Wu Siao-Yu (Xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-Tung and I Were Beggars, p. 60-61.

Li Shizeng (1881-1973), a native of Gaoyang, Hebei Province, was a founder of the Work-Study Movement. He was the son of a famous Qing official, so it was not difficult for him to be assigned as an attaché in Paris. He studied biology in France. As a believer of anarchism, he was politically involved as an editor of an Anarchist journal Xin shiji. He also founded a beancurd products factory and a publishing enterprise. Together with his friends, Cai Yuanpei, Wu Zhuhui, and Wu Yuzhang, they formed the program to help the Chinese students to work and study abroad. He was also the leader of the Sino-French Educational Association, which successfully brought over 1,600 students to France. Li returned to China in 1919 and tried to obtain aid and worked on the agreement with the French to open the Sino-French Institute at Lyons University. In early 1920s, Li became more conservative. Later on, he became a high rank official of the Nationalist government. After 1949, Li lived in Uruguay and Taiwan.

Wu Zhuhui (1865-1953) was a native of Wujin, Jiangsu province. A dynamic figure in modern Chinese history, Wu joined the "Aiguo xueshe" (The Patriotic Study Society) founded by Cai Yuanpei and Zhang Taiyan in late Qing. Later, he joined the "Tongmeng hui" in France and traveled to many countries in Europe and to Japan. He studied in Scotland and lived in England for several years. He edited the Xin shiji with Li Shizeng.
Yuzhang, had established the Work-Study Program in France, though it attracted little notice at first. After Cai Yuanpei became the chancellor of Beijing University in 1916, he gradually spread the idea that labor was an honorable and important pursuit for intellectuals who wanted to save their country. The Work-Study Program in France developed into a movement when it gained ground in Hunan after the "Xinmin xuehui" was founded.

Students from the First Normal School were very much interested in this Work-Study Program in France because most of them were from poorer families who had no other ways to go abroad. These young people who wanted to go to France

__and was one of the founders of the Work-Study Program in France. He served as the president of Tangshan University, the chief editor of "Zhonghua xinbao" in Shanghai, and the president of Lyons Sino-French Institute respectively. He became more conservative in the early 1920s. He was one of the most famous intellectual officials of the Nationalist government. After 1949, Wu lived in Taiwan.__

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63 Wu Yuzhang (1878-1966) was a native of Rongxian, Sichuan province. In his early years, he joined Sun Yat-sen's "Tongmeng hui" and the republican Revolution of the 1911 and was very active in the activities of "Tongmeng hui" and early Nationalist Party. He was an important educator and promoter of the Work-Study Movement. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1925. He served as the president of Yanan Luxun Art College, the secretary of Sichuan provincial Party committee, the president of North China University, the president of the Chinese People's University, vice president of Chinese historical Association, and the prestige commissioner/member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences respectively. He was also elected as the member of the standing committee of the Chinese People's Congress. His later activities entered on the reform of the Chinese language, and he was an important sponsor of simplified characters.

were also influenced by the emergence of the New Culture Movement; one of its emphases was gaining knowledge and experiencing new ideas through work and study. They believed that these experiences would be directly beneficial to China, since the situation at home was so dire as to have fallen under the rule of warlords. They looked for solutions through their preparations to go to France to work and study, and hoped to come home with some knowledge that could save the nation from its assumed fate.⁶⁵

He Changgong, a student leader from Hunan, and later a Red Army leader, recalled how he and others from Hunan tried to work and study in France:

At that time, the government of Hunan was extremely corrupt and completely out of order. No one in the government was concerned with education anymore. A lot of young people thought that there was no clear road to the future. Mao Zedong and Cai Hesen were the main thrust for organizing the "New Citizens' Study Society" in Changsha. This society played an important role in the Hunan student's attempt to go to France. ... the main aim of the society was to reform of traditional customs and the people's views. Apparently, they organized young people to research new ideas to reform and improve the social structure that was so prevalent in China. They also sought the path that would save the country and the Chinese race from what appeared to be impending doom, organized by nations wishing to colonize and exploit China and its people. In order to view the domestic situation and foreign ideas more

⁶⁵ Xiao San, "Mao Zedong tongzhi zhai wusi shiqi" in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, No. 1, p. 369.
clearly, the society also helped to organize young people wanting to go to France.  

Leaders of the "Xinmin xuehui" were the most active people in Hunan in promoting the Work-Study Program in France. The "Xinmin xuehui" came to a decision that "[Cai] Hesen and [Xiao] Zisheng were specially assigned to take charge of Hunan's Work-Study Program in France."  

Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, and Xiao Zisheng were names known by most Hunanese youth who wanted to work and study in France. The members of the "Xinmin xuehui" energetically organized students from Hunan to go to France. In the end, over 430 Hunanese among the total of one thousand eighty people from the whole nation went to France. And one-third of the members of the "Xinmin xuehui," actually eighteen people, left for France.  

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67 "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society) (1920), No. 1, p. 122.  

68 The total member of the Xinmin xuehui should be about 54 in 1919. Both Li Weihan and Song Feifu stated that eighteen people, that were one-third of the members of the Xinmin xuehui, left for France. Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui" in Huiyi yu yanjiu, 12; Song Feifu, Xinmin xuehui, p. 13-14.
Cai Hesen’s efforts were especially important. In June 1918, he was sent to Beijing as an advance guard by the “Xinmin xuehui” to find out more about the Work-Study Movement. When he first arrived he lived at Yang Changji’s home. Yang introduced Cai Hesen to Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng who were the leaders of the “Sino-French Education Association.” Cai Hesen stated to them the Hunan youths request to participate in the Work-Study Program in France and asked them to arrange for the Hunanese youth to travel to France. Cai Yuanpei also explained to Cai Hesen his own plan of recruiting capable people and encouraged Cai Hesen to get more youth to come to Beijing in order to start building a “large and long-lasting foundation [for reform].” Cai Hesen was very impressed with Cai Yuanpei. In a letter to Xiao Zisheng, Cai Hesen wrote: “Mr. Jiemin [Cai Yuanpei] is, as it is said, especially trustworthy [youzu xinshi].” After meeting with Cai Yuanpei, Cai Hesen also visited Li Dazhao in Beijing. He had read several

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69 Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Chen Shaoxiu, Xiao Zizhang (Xiao San), Xiao Zisheng, and Mao Zedong, August 27, 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 10.

70 Cai Hesen Letter to Xiao Xudong (Xiao Zisheng), July 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 4.
articles by Li about Marxism. Afterwards, he joined the "Youth China Study Association," which Li had founded.

Because the Work-Study Program was in its preparation stage, many problems needed to be solved. The uppermost was funding. Each person needed several hundred dollars in travel expenses and needed also to attend the preparatory school for French language before traveling to France. Cai worked energetically on getting sponsors to assist in fund raising for the Hunanese students' journey to France. He approached Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng. Yang Changji also helped considerably with fund raising.\(^1\)

The problem of funds was quickly solved, but only twenty-five students from Hunan could go to France on this program. In order to secure an opportunity for more Hunanese youth to work and study in France, Cai Hesen wrote a letter to friends of the "Xinmin xuehui: "This matter [the Hunan Work-Study Movement] assumes that if we get more people to go "fishing," we will have enough "fish" to eat."\(^2\) He told his correspondents,

\(^1\) Zhou Shizhao, "Xiangjiang de nukong" in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 395-396; also Li weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui" in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 458-460.

\(^2\) Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Chen Shaoxiu, Xiao Zizhang (Xiao San), Xiao Zisheng, and Mao Zedong, August 27, 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 10.
Wei absolutely cannot use the 'quota' to restrain the desires of the youth and destroy their hopes. [We] should think of some intercessory method, and get as many people as possible [to come to Beijing] to form a large organization [and then go to France]. [This strategy] will be accord with their cherished desires and avoid causing regrets."^

In August 1918, Mao Zedong, Xiao Zisheng, and twenty-two other "Xinmin xuehui" members went to Beijing to prepare for the Work-Study Program in France for the Hunanese students. During his stay in Beijing, Cai not only worked very hard on the work-study preparations, but became ever more enthusiastic about acquiring fresh new ideas and knowledge. Following the success of the October Revolution in Russia, Cai began seriously to explore the doctrines of Marx and Lenin and eagerly devoured "the latest theories."^

In a letter to Mao Zedong before Mao arrived in Beijing, Cai wrote: "Our ultimate goal is to rip apart and sever all the restraints that the [old] world created around us, to create a free personality, a free position, and free enterprises, and doubly to enlarge the undertakings of Lenin."^

Cai believed there was a "red thread" linking Mozi to Tan Sitong

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[^] Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Mao Zedong, July 24, 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 15-16.

[^]: Ibid., p. 6.
and then to Lenin. The red thread involved “saving the people,” and “working for the people.” “What Mo Zhai [Mo Zi] advocated [in ancient times], Lenin from Russia in recent time was quite capable of putting into practice. I, therefore, am willing to follow them.”

Cai was not a Marxist at this stage, but was still groping. He mixed the teachings of the ancient thinker Mo Zi with the doctrines of the modern-day Lenin. His mature ideology, like those of most other revolutionaries, took some time to develop. However, it should be noted that Cai Hesen was the first among his “Xinmin xuehui” comrades to advocate “following the example of Lenin” before the May Fourth Incident in 1919.

On May Fourth, 1919, the May Fourth Incident occurred in Beijing, which radicalized the Chinese politics. Living in such an intense environment, Cai Hesen, an impressionable and enthusiastic young man at the age of twenty-four, felt very excited. He paid close attention to the development of the situation in Beijing, and vigorously organized youth from Hunan to participate in the movement. One day in late

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76 Cai Hesen letter to Mao Zedong, August 21, 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 17.

June, when he learned that the Chinese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference agreed to sign the Versailles Peace Treaty, Cai Hesen immediately organized a protest against it. One of the protesters, Tang Duo, recalled, "On that day the protest lasted a whole day and a whole night. We stayed in front of the Xinhua Gate,\textsuperscript{78} including the night."

As the May Fourth Incident developed into a full-fledged movement, Cai's patriotic passion was further incited; this in turn pushed him to speed up preparations for the Work-Study Program in France. In late June 1919, he returned to Changsha from Beijing. He brought the latest news of the capital to Changsha, enthusiastically publicized the political situation of the May Fourth Movement in Beijing, and urged the Hunanese youth to participate in this movement. He also encouraged Hunanese youth, particularly women to participate in the Work-Study Program in France. In order to "let the Hunanese women evolve [politically] at the\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{78} The office of the president of the Northern Warlord government was located in Xinhua Gate during this time.

\textsuperscript{79} Tang Duo, "Huiyi wode liangshi yiyou -- Cai Hesen" (In memory of my good teacher and helpful friend -- Cai Hesen) in Huiyi Cai Hesen tongzhi (In memory of comrade Cai Hesen) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 100.
same time," Cai asked his sister, Cai Chang and her school friend, Xiang Jingyu, who would become his wife later on, to help organize Hunanese women to go to France to work and study. Cai Chang and Xiang Jingyu soon organized the "Zhounan nüzi liufa qingongjianxue xuehui" (the Association of Zhounan Woman’s Work-Study Program in France) in Changsha. The mid-fifties, Ge Jianhao, Cai’s mother also participated in the Work-Study Program in France. The Chinese press praised Ge highly for her open-mindedness and spirit. The number of Hunanese who would subsequently go to France increased steadily. Eventually, Hunan sent the largest number of people to France among all the provinces of China.

On December 25, 1919, Cai Hesen left for France, accompanied by his sister, Cai Chang, his mother, Ge Jianhao, his future wife, Xiang Jingyu, and thirty or so other people from Hunan. Mao Zedong came from Hunan to see them off, but did not wait for them to depart. On the docks of Shanghai, Mao bade the first group of Hunanese students farewell and left for Beijing for his second visit in order to organize the movement to oust Zhang Jingyao.

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80 Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Chen Shaohui, Xiao Zizhang (Xiao San), Xiao Zisheng, and Mao Zedong, August 27, 1918, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1, p. 10.

294
The long journey to France for the worker-students was especially uncomfortable physically. They often traveled in fourth class, in overcrowded, inadequate accommodations, with little lighting or fresh air. Cai Chang, Cai Hesen’s sister recalled: “Most of the more than thirty worker-students boarded in fourth class, which was said to have been used to carry domestic animals. It was at the bottom of the ship. Hesen lived there, too. Only six of us females who were physically weak boarded in the third class.”^81 Li Weihan also recalled:

We traveled in the so-called fourth-class cabin, which actually was steerage at the bottom of the ship. We tossed about almost forty days on the sea, and many people felt dizzy, threw up, and lost their appetite. We were especially bothered by the numerous bedbugs and we couldn’t get a sound sleep at night. [At night] some people had to use socks to cover their hands, tie the bottom ends of their trousers, use towels to cover their faces and necks, and only leave naris and eyes uncovered, all in order to have a undisturbed sleep.”^82

Although the trip to France was physically trying, Cai Hesen never lost his high spirit. He had the ability to inspire his friends when their spirits were low. He was a

^81 Cai Chang, “Huiyi Xinmin xuehui huiyuan de huodong” in Xinmin xuehui ziliao (Documents Collection and Memories of the New Citizen Association), p. 570.

steadfast friend and they could sense the gentleness underneath. As Xiao Zisheng recalled: "He was strong-willed and, though one rarely saw him smile, he was very kind to his friends." Also, on the voyage to France, Cai Hesen fell in love with Xiang Jinyu. They progressed both in their quest for a free relationship and in their commitment to their political ideals. Liu Ang, Cai’s niece who had been living with Cai until he left for Beijing in 1918 and had written to the couple during this period recalled:

On the long journey [to France], Comrade Jingyu and Comrade Hesen often discussed theories and political problems. They discussed ideals to their heart’s content. Their ambitions were the same, and there was mutual adoration. In the China of that period, a free romance was looked upon as an offense against public decency. But Comrade Jingyu did not concern herself with this and made their romance public. They wrote a poem, “The Progressive Alliance” (Xiangshang tongmeng), to express that they wanted mutually to progress forward on the road to revolution. In June 1920, Comrade Jingyu and Comrade Hesen were married in Montargis, France. I can see in their wedding picture that they are sitting together, shoulder to shoulder, both holding open a copy of Das Kapital, which was one of Comrade Jingyu’s favorite Marxist works. This picture means that their union was established on a mutual belief in Marxism.

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83 Xiao Yu (Xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 45.

Cai Hesen and the group who had come in the same ship arrived in Marseilles, France on January 30, 1920. In early February, they were sent to the Montargis Middle School, by the Sino-French Educational Association. In Montargis, they spent their time studying French while they were waiting for suitable jobs to be found for them. Cai had a recurrence of asthma when they arrived in Montargis. One month later, recovered and entered the Montargis Middle School for Men.  

At first, Cai planned "to stay in France for about five years. The first year [he would] not participate in activities, but focused on the study of French and tried to gain a full understanding of each country's socialist party and labor body, as well as of the international communist party." He soon found that "the school work was too easy for him, which could not satisfy his strong thirst for knowledge, so he decided not to go school anymore. Instead, he kept reading two pages of newspapers each day, with the help of a dictionary."  


87 Ibid., p. 81.
Cai studied very diligently, cramming himself with a massive immersion in reading and translating French radical tracts. Three months later, Cai “could gradually read the newspapers, [so, I] knew a couple of news [stories] of each country’s socialist movement every day.” After six months, he had read around one hundred booklets about socialism. He translated The Communist Manifesto (by Marx and Engels, 1848), “Socialism from Fantasy to Scientific Development” (n.f.), “Nation and Revolution” (by Lenin), “The Proletarian Revolution and the Traitor Kautsky” (by Lenin), and “‘Left-wing’ Infantilism in the Communist Movement” (by Lenin), from French into Chinese. He also collected around a hundred important booklets about the Russian October Revolution. He prepared to edit a series of books and systematically introduce Marxism and the Russian October Revolution to Chinese.

Cai’s experience in France was fateful for his ideological transformation. In France, with other Hunanese students, Cai formed a branch of the “Xinmin xuehui,” which

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88 Ibid.

89 Song Feifu, Xinmin xuehui (New Citizens’ Study Society), p. 22.
remained in close touch with developments at home.\textsuperscript{90} The French group led by Cai was soon drawn to Marxism. In France, for the first time Cai was able to observe at close range the actual working of the Western principles and institutions which he previously knew about only from book learning. What he saw made him feel disappointed and thus brought him to a break with his intellectual predisposition as he saw with his own eyes the degradation of the French workers by a bourgeois, capitalist government.\textsuperscript{91} He thus felt very disappointed in seeking solutions to China’s problems in the West. He also examined the anarchist movement in France and found it inadequate.

As mentioned earlier, Cai had come to admire Western political systems and institutions from his study with Yang Changji at the Hunan First Normal School. Anarchism was one of the chief Western doctrines that enjoyed immense popularity among Chinese intellectuals after the turn of the twentieth century. Cai, like many other young men and women of his generation, was drawn to anarchism immediately.

\textsuperscript{90} Mao Zedong took over the leadership of those “Xinmin xuehui” members who remained in Hunan.

In the beginning, Cai felt that anarchism and Leninism were, at bottom, alike. "The ultimate ideal of the anarchist party I believe is the same as that of Lenin," Cai wrote to his friend Mao Zedong from France, "but to arrive at anarchism I think we must adopt the methods presently used in the Soviet Union ..." 

Cai, like many other work-study students who had acquired these beliefs and traveled with them to France, was also a believer in anarchism when he arrived in France. However, in Cai Hesen's case, it was the weakness he perceived in anarchism that led him to embrace Marxism. So, it was after much serious thinking and deliberation that Cai chose to become a Marxist.

As he studied the labor movement in France, Cai found that the French syndicalists, followers of the anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon, could not even protect themselves against government suppression. Moreover, Cai felt the

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92 Ibid., p. 78.


94 Conred Erandt believed that it was the failure of the anarchist leaders to provide the work-study students in France with the means of survival that caused them to become disaffected with anarchism and consequently to embrace Marxism. Conred Erandt Erandt's statement might or might not be true of the work-study students in France who had converted from anarchism to Marxism.

narrow economic focus of syndicalism "not only is not beneficial to the workers, but on the contrary, strengthens the organization of production in the capitalist state, and thus the workers will find it even harder to liberate themselves."®® Therefore, Cai was convinced that anarchism was not appropriate for China. In a letter to Mao Zedong from France, Cai wrote:

Without authority, [we] can neither collectivize nor nationalize the industries. In other words, [we] cannot change the economic system. Without authority, [we] can neither protect the revolution nor prevent counter-revolution. ... Therefore, I think the current world as yet cannot practice anarchism.®®

After six months of massive immersion in reading and translating French radical tracts, Cai had had a synthetical study of all schools of socialism and the recent developments of Russia. In a letter to Mao Zedong Cai wrote,

Recently I have done a comprehensive study of all the "isms." I feel that socialism is the real remedy for the reformation of the world, and China is no exception. The methods indispensable to socialism are class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat.®®

Actually, this is the earliest glimpse of Cai’s attitude towards Marxism.

®® Ibid., p. 65.


®® Ibid., p. 86.

301
After earnest study of all sorts of ideologies and of the Russian Revolution, Cai found his previous intellectual beliefs deficient and consciously veered towards Marxism. By the summer of 1920 he identified himself as a Marxist. At the same time, he also began to convert others to Marxism. In a letter to Chen Duxiu which was later published in the August 1, 1921 issue of *New Youth* under the title "Marxist Theory and the Chinese Proletariat," Cai stated that he was now "an extreme Marxist, and advocates extremism-dialectical materialism, class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat." Cai became so captivated by this new ideology that he devoted the rest of his stay in France and the rest of his life to his political education and activities as a Marxist.

Increasingly Cai also became known as a theorist of the Chinese Communist Party. Even before the founding of the CCP, there was a common saying among the Hunanese students: "Hesen is the theorist; Runzhi [Mao Zedong] is the practitioner." While in France, he not only provided sophisticated analysis for the worker-students there but

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100 Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," (1979?) in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao*, p. 493.
wrote several important articles for home consumption, letters to politically active friends in China, and contributed articles to Chinese journals, which contained analysis of the European working situation and the application of Marxism to the Chinese situation. For instance, he published several important articles in the journals of Shaonian shijie (Youth World) and Xin qingnian (New Youth).\(^1\) In his letter to Mao Zedong on August 13, 1920, Cai detailed his understanding of Marxist and Leninist doctrines and urged that a Communist Party similar to that of the Soviet Union be set up in China. He also became increasingly known for his speeches at the Xinmin xuehui and the Gongxue shijie she\(^2\) (The Work-Study Students Society) meetings.

Cai’s political commitment to Marxism and faith in Soviet Communism, which he believed was well suited to China, were clearly stated at the Montargis Meeting in July 1920. On July 6 – 10, 1920, thirteen members of the "Xinmin

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\(^1\) These articles and letters are contained in Cai Hesen wenji. The letters can also be seen in Xinmin xuehui ziliao and Xinmin xuehui wenxian huihian.

\(^2\) The "Gongxue shijie she," originally called the "Qingong jianxue lijin she," was formed by Li Weihan, Luo Xuezan, Zhang Kundi, and Li Fuchun in February 1920 in France. More discussion about this organization will be in later part of this chapter.
xuehui"\textsuperscript{103} attended the meeting in Montargis. Cai’s proposal to set the Xinmin Society’s goal as “reforming China and the world” was unanimously passed at the meeting. However, there appeared disagreement on the issue of how a socialist revolution could best be brought about in China. One group was represented by Cai who advocated “setting up a Communist Party [in China] and exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose principles and scheme are similar to that of Russia.”\textsuperscript{104} Cai believed that only a violent revolution led by a Communist Party, like that in Russia, would solve China’s national problems.

The other group was represented by Xiao Zisheng who did “not think the Russian type revolution - the Marxist type - suitable for China.”\textsuperscript{105} Xiao wanted a moderate reform approach to national salvation. He suggested “a moderate revolution - a revolution using education as its tool”\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} The thirteen members who attended the Montargis Meeting were: Cai Hesen, Xiang Jingyu, Chen Shaoxiu, Xiao Zizhang (Xiao San), Zhang Kundi, Luo Xuezan, Cai Chang, Li Weihan, Xiong Guangchu, Xiong Jiguang, Xiong Shubin, Ouyang Ze, and Xiao Zisheng who was working with the French-Chinese Educational Association. For more information, see Li Weihan, “Huiyi Xinmin xuehui” in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 477.

\textsuperscript{104} Xiao Xudong (Xiao Zisheng) letter to Mao Zedong, August, 1920, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 3, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 93.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 93.
would be most suitable for China. Both sides vigorously expressed their ideas and opinions. An intense debate about whether or not China should adopt Russian Communism as its political system followed. Although Cai’s eloquence converted some anarchist members to Marxism, eventually eight of the thirteen members at Montargis joined the European Branches of the Chinese Communist Organizations, yet, the fundamental problem remained unsolved.

Finally, it was decided that [the French branch] should write to Mao Zedong, giving him full details of the two opinions, so he could circulate it, have members in China discuss them, and give their responses to the French branch. In his letter to Mao, [Cai] Hesen detailed his understanding of Marxism and the importance of forming a Communist Party.  

Xiao Zisheng also wrote a long letter to Mao Zedong, giving him the details of the five-day meeting. Afterward Mao Zedong published both Cai’s and Xiao’s letters in the Xinmin xuehui Journal, Volume 3. This shows that Cai was the first to accept Marxism among the work-study students in France and the first to advocate forming a Communist Party in China.

After the Montargis Meeting in July 1920, Cai began to reform the "Gongxue shijie she" (The Work-Study Students Society) and converted its members, most of whom were

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107 Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 477.
anarchists, to Marxists. Li Weihan, one of the founders of this society, recalled,

I had the opportunity to concentrate on reading [Cai Hesen's] translation from French of the *Communist Manifesto*, "Socialism from Fantasy to Scientific Development," "Nation and Revolution," "The Proletarian Revolution and the Traitor Kautsky," "'Left-wing' Infantilism in Communist Movement," and many booklets about the Russian October Revolution. Besides, I had several long talks with Hesen, which covered a wide range of topics, including the European revolutionary situation, the experience of the Russian October Revolution, the difference between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, the nature and mission of the Comintern, and how the Third International\(^\text{108}\) (1919-1943) broke from the Second International\(^\text{109}\) (1889-1914). After reading and talking [with Cai], I realized that the only way to achieve our goal of 'reforming China and the world' was to follow the Russian October Revolution.\(^\text{110}\)

With the help of Cai, the "Qingong jianxue lijin she," changed its name into the "Gongxue shijie she" in August 1921. It now had over thirty members, and most had converted to Marxism. The aim of the "Gongxue shijie she" became very similar to that of the "Xinmin xuehui." Afterward, the

\(^{108}\) The Third International referred to the Comintern, which was an organization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and international Communist organizations. It was formed by Lenin in 1919 and was disbanded in 1943.

\(^{109}\) The Second International was an internationally united organization of the Social Democratic Party and the Socialistic Labor Unions, which was formed in 1889. In its early stage, the organization was influenced by Engels and adopted Marxism as its principle. In its later period, the organization was ruled by revisionists. The organization was disbanded in 1914.

\(^{110}\) Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao*, p. 479.
“Gongxue shijie she” gradually evolved into the French branch of the Chinese Communist Party.

Cai’s personal and political growth was enhanced by his marriage in the summer of 1920 to Xiang Jingyu, who was also a member of the “Xinmin xuehui.” Like Xiao Zisheng, Mao Zedong, and Cai Hesen who were the three favorite male students of the revered teacher Yang Changji, Xiang Jingyu was one of the three favorite female students of Yang Changji. Their marriage was praised not only as an example of “freedom to choose one’s spouse,” but also as a progressive political alliance, since Xiang was very attracted to Cai’s ideas, and became a staunch Marxist herself. In a letter to her parents, Xiang wrote: “Hesen is Jiuier’s (Xiang’s nickname) true love. There is no any difference in our aspirations and interests, ... He and I are newborn persons of the 1920s and can be called children of the twentieth century.”

During this period (the summer of 1920), in addition to his campaign of converting others to Marxism, Cai also contributed greatly to the growth of Chinese Communism.

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111 The three most favorite female students of Yang Changji were Xiang Jingyu, Tao Siyong, and Ren Peidao.

112 Xiang Jingyu, Xiang Jingyu wenji (Collected works of Xiang Jingyu) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 64.
Together with Zhou Enlai and Zhao Shiyan, Cai helped prepare the establishment of the early European branch of the CCP and became one of the founders of the French branch of the Chinese Communist Party.\(^{113}\) His special contribution was his theory of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, which was mainly expressed in his letters to Mao Zedong and Chen Duxiu.\(^{114}\) Since he was one of the first Chinese to study Lenin and the most advanced Chinese Marxist-Leninist at the time,\(^{115}\) Cai expressed a more sophisticated understanding of Marxism and Russian Communism than his comrades. He expounded cogently and systematically on the theory, the course, the policy, and the principle of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in his letters. His main points can be summarized up as follows:

\(^{113}\) Luo Shaozhi, “Cai Hesen” in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, vol. 6, p. 15. However, Cai Chang recalled “Zhao Shiyan, Zhou Enlai, Wang Ruofei, Chen Yannian, Liu Bojian, and Nie Rongzhen founded the Socialist Youth League (S. Y.), which was later renamed as the Chinese Youth (party) (C. Y.). Afterward, C. Y. became the European branch of the CCP after it was approved by the Shanghai branch of CCP. C. Y. was established either in the end of 1921 or the spring of 1922. Cai Hesen was sent back to China because of his political activities in October 1921. Therefore, Cai was not one of the founders of the branch.” Cai Chang, “Huiyi Xinmin xuehui huiyuan liufa qijian de huodong” in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 573.

\(^{114}\) Cai’s letters containing his theory and ideas of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party were his two long letters to Mao Zedong on August 13, 1920 and September 16, 1920 and one long letter to Chen Duxiu on February 11, 1921. All three letters are in Cai Hesen wenji, p. 22-38, and 51-56.
First, socialism can save China and reform the world. He wrote to Mao in France that “socialism is the real remedy for the world, China included. ... I feel that the socialist principles and plans are completely suitable for China’s future reform.” By analyzing the materialist conception of history, the development of capitalism, class struggle, and China’s social and economic situation cogently, Cai refuted those who contested the adequacy of Marx’s materialist conception of history in China because they believed that China had no classes and did not have the objective preconditions for carrying out socialism. He argued that a social revolution would inevitably break out in China and China would definitely carry out socialism.

Cai was also very much attracted by Leninist success. Originally, Marxism was a doctrine of salvation for the working class in Western Europe and depended for its fulfillment on the presence of certain political, social, and economic preconditions. These preconditions consisted of a capitalistic economy and its byproduct, the proletariat, whose revolutionary consciousness had been awakened by

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115 Yang Ximan, “Xinmin xuehui yu Zhongguo gongchandang de jianli” in Hunan dangshi luncong, p. 66-67.

collective discontent. Therefore, in the original Marxian sense, China as an underdeveloped country, with neither capitalism nor an unhappy working class, was irrelevant to the problems Marx had considered. However, Lenin revised Marxism and made it adaptable to underdeveloped countries like Russia and China. Lenin developed Marxism by creating the concept of a proletarian party led by intellectual elite, thus making it possible for other elements of society aside from the working class to start the revolution. Lenin also introduced the theory of imperialism which showed that as imperialist expansion was drawing the underdeveloped countries into the worldwide capitalist system and making them into colonies and semi-colonies, these underdeveloped countries had more than a passive role to play in the world revolution. This Leninized Marxism seemed to be confirmed by the success of the Russian Revolution which was led by a Communist Party constituted of bourgeois intellectuals; significantly also, it had occurred in a situation similar to that of China. Cai thus was attracted and convinced by the Leninized Marxism, and believed that China would definitely carry out a socialist revolution, although she lacked capitalism and a well-formed proletariat. In a letter to Chen Duxiu, Cai wrote:
I have the courage to say that nowadays, among the total population of 400,000,000 Chinese, 350,000,000 of them don’t have a means of livelihood. Since the situation has become into this state, we probably cannot avoid the fate of socialist revolution. At this time, the eruption of revolution becomes an inevitable tendency, which is similar to the happening of the thunder in the natural world; all is inevitable. When the revolution comes, it will not consider the success or failure, and advantage or disadvantage, and no reformed philosophers or great scholars can control it either.\(^{117}\)

Cai also wrote earnestly to Mao Zedong:

I predict that a Kerensky government will definitely appear in China within three to five years. That means a Russian February Revolution must erupt [in China]. Its leaders must be the old warlords, political magnates, and plutocrats, who suddenly changed their old identities. The result is that a neither “ass nor horse” German-Austrian type of revolutionary government will come into being [in China]. I predict that some youth will participate, but I don’t want you to participate in this. I encourage you to get ready for the Russian November Revolution [in China]. I'm very confident that my prediction is 90 percent correct. Therefore, you must make early preparations for this at home.\(^{118}\)

Cai’s energetic advocacy of the Russian November Revolution and a socialist revolution in China greatly promoted the spread of Marxism in China and the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party.

\(^{117}\) Cai Hesen’s letter to Chen Duxiu on February 11, 1921, in Cai Hesen wenji, p. 51-56.

\(^{118}\) Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Mao Zedong, August 13, 1920, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 3, p. 87.
Secondly, Cai argued that the proletarian dictatorship is the fundamental path for realizing socialism. In another letter to Mao, Cai wrote: The only way to carry out socialism successfully is to have "class struggle - the dictatorship of the proletariat."\(^{119}\)

The important mission [of socialism] is to break the capitalist system; its method is the dictatorship of the proletariat, using the state's political power to reform the social-economic system. Therefore, class struggle is in fact a political conflict; it will break the old institutions (congress and government) and establish a [new] proletarian institution - the Soviet.\(^{120}\)

He pointed out that if [we] lacked the dictatorship of the proletariat, [we] could neither reform the society nor protect the revolution, because without receiving political power, the proletariat definitely could not achieve economic liberation. He also maintained:

The world revolutionary movement, since the success of the Russian Revolution has already gone through an important turning point, which is that the proletariat has seized political power so as to reform society.\(^{121}\)

Since the Russian Revolution was already a manifest success of the Russian proletariat led by the Bolshevik party, Cai believed that if the Chinese working class were given proper

\(^{119}\) Ibid., p. 86.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 86.

\(^{121}\) Cai Hesen, Cai Hesen wen ji, p. 71.
guidance, it could seize political power, too, because China was part of the world revolutionary movement.

Thirdly, like Lenin, Cai accepted the concept of a revolutionary vanguard and believed that the key to revolutionary victory lay in the formation of a tightly organized political party.\textsuperscript{122} He urged a Chinese Communist Party be set up to take the leadership of the revolution. In a letter to Mao, Cai wrote: "I think a party -- a Communist Party -- should be established first."\textsuperscript{123} He expressed comprehensively the nature and policy of the party, the need for total discipline by the party, and the steps for the establishment of the party. He suggested that firstly this party must be a political party of the proletariat, and must be a "vanguard, and battle headquarters [of the proletariat]."\textsuperscript{124} He was the first formally to name the party "the Chinese Communist Party," the first to advocate the establishment of the Communist Party which was more similar to the Russian Communist Party, and he firmly believed that only after the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party,

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 51.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 87.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 87.
“could the revolutionary movement and labor movement have a nerve center.”

At that time, not many people had discussed the necessity of the establishment of a proletarian party. Li Dazhao, one of the founders of the CCP, had said: “[in order to] have a fundamental reform in China, [we should urgently set up] a political party for the common people of the laboring class” in the spring of 1921. But Cai’s proposal for the establishment of a Chinese Communist Party was five months earlier than the Communist Manifesto formulated by the Shanghai branch of the party. Secondly, Cai thought this party must be directed by Marxist doctrines. Only after the party totally accepted Marxist principles, could it keep the political direction of the proletariat. Thirdly, he believed that the party must adopt thorough revolutionary methods to oppose the reformists who objected to the methods of the Russian October Revolution and promoted non-violence and education as the preferred tools of revolution. He stated that the fundamental goal of a thorough revolution

126 Yang Ximan, “Xinmin xuehui yu Zhongguo gongchandang de jianli” in Hunan dangshi luncong, p. 67.
was to mobilize the workers and peasants to seize the state power, to destroy the old state apparatus, and to carry out the dictatorship of the proletariat.\textsuperscript{128}

Fourthly, Cai insisted that the party must maintain close ties with the masses, and said the party members should go to the factories, countryside, and schools and become the organizers and leaders of all the mass movements.\textsuperscript{129} Lastly, the party must be a highly centralized organization and must have iron disciplines. The supreme authority of the party was the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.\textsuperscript{130}

Cai further insisted that "the policy must includes several other elements. All newspapers, parliament, organizations, and all kinds of movements must be under the leadership and supervision of the Central Committee of the Party, and never be set free."\textsuperscript{131} Cai shared Lenin's idea that it was the party leaders who first had the

\textsuperscript{127} Xia Yuanshen, "Lun Xinmin xuehui xiangwai fazhan yu guonei yanjiu bingzhong de yiyi" in \textit{Hunan dangshi luncong}, p. 133-134.

\textsuperscript{128} Luo Shaozhi, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., \textit{Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan}, vol. 6, p. 17.


\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 107-116.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 114-115.
revolutionary consciousness, then instilled it in the workers so as to prepare them for the task of revolution, which was more than similar to the age long Confucian teaching "xian zhi xianjue" - the awakened elite, usually educated, had the responsibility to waken the uneducated masses.

Another characteristic of Cai as a faithful Marxist was that he was fully dedicated to the internationalist commitment of Marxism. Despite its German origins, Marxism was a doctrine transcending national boundaries, and was supposed to speak for all working men. Therefore, the followers of Marx should be internationalists. However, many of the Chinese Marxists were staunch nationalists, one of the factors which made Chinese Marxism problematic. Unlike his comrades, Cai was free of any nationalist emotion. In a letter to Chen Duxiu who shared the same idea, Cai wrote:

The liberation of the working class is positively not the problem of one place, one nation, or one people, but is a universal social problem. Marxist socialism is international socialism, and we certainly do not want to bear the taint of territory and race. China's class struggle is the international class struggle.\(^\text{132}\)

Cai's ideas finally became so pervasive that he not only persuaded many other members of the "Xinmin xuehui" to

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\(^{132}\) Cai Hesen, Cai Hesen wen ji, p. 78.
change their opinions and to adopt Marxism, but also had a profound impact on his friends in China. Cai's theorizing from France was reported back to Hunan where theoretical debates intensified. The members remaining in China held several meetings, raised and debated the same issues as the members did in France.

Mao Zedong, who remained in continuous contact with the group from Changsha while they were in France, totally agreed and supported Cai's opinions. In a reply to Cai's September 16th letter, Mao wrote: "Your last letter was extremely insightful. I don't have any disagreement with even one word of yours." Mao and He Shuheng also organized the three-day New Year's meeting of the "Xinmin xuehui" in Changsha. The members of the society remaining in China attended the meeting and discussed Cai Hesen's opinions ardently - his sophisticated analysis of materialistic vision of history, the development of capitalism, the class struggle, the importance of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the spirit of internationalism, the theoretical foundations of Marxism, the structure of the Soviet Communist Party, the urgency of establishing a communist

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party in China, the need for propaganda and training, the need for total discipline to the party, the theory of establishing a communist party in China, and the theory of the communist way of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. Robert Scalapino, believed Cai had a great impact on his comrades, and stated:

Mao at his point had unmistakably taken his stand with Marxism, not because of any profound understanding of Marxist or Marxist-Leninist theory (except as derived from Cai’s descriptions) but because he had been convinced by Cai and possibly others that the Russian route was the only successful road to revolution, and that revolution was necessary for China and the world.\textsuperscript{134}

Thus, the French experience was an important period of time for Cai during which he identified himself as a Marxist. During the first period of his stay in France, he spent most of his time studying and translating; then with his marriage to Xiang Jingyu he reinforced his political identification with Marxism. His status as the most sophisticated and most advanced Chinese Marxist during this period led Cai to be the first to advocate establishing a Communist Party and his campaign to convert others to Marxism. As he increasingly involved himself in political agitation activities, his

leadership profile rose during 1921, particularly in the Twenty-eighth Movement of February 1921\(^{135}\) and in the Lyons Incident of 1921.\(^{136}\)

Deported from France on account of the Lyons Incident, Cai returned to China in late 1921\(^{137}\) as a confirmed Marxist-Leninist with a broadened outlook and sophisticated Marxist

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\(^{135}\) Howard L. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* has put the date of the "Twenty-eighth Incident" incorrectly as February 8, 1921. According to Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui bian, *Zhonggong dangshi renwuzhuan* (Biographies of Chinese Communists), and written memories of Li Weihan and Cai Chang, the "Twenty-eighth Incident" broke out on February 28, 1921. It later developed into the Twenty-eighth Movement, which was named because of the date of the demonstration. Led by Cai Hesen, about four hundred students gathered in front of the Chinese consulate on rue Babylon in Paris on 28 February, 1921 to petition the Chinese consulate for "the right to live, the right to study" (shengcun quan, qiuxue quan), asking 400 francs each month for four years. The crowd was dispersed by the police in a violent clash. Although the Twenty-eighth Movement was unsuccessful, it was important because it showed that some of the students were willing to take direct action. Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," in *Huiyi yu yanjiu*, p. 20-22; also see Cai Chang, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui huiyuan de huodong," in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao*, p. 571-572.

\(^{136}\) The Lyons Incident was the most important struggle of the worker-students in France. The newly established Sino-French Institute at Lyons University was originally promised by some Sino-French Educational Association leaders for the worker-students in France. However, they learned that Wu Zhihui was bringing more students from China to become the first students at the institute and refused to accept them. The new institute at Lyons University was the last hope of the worker-students in France since sources for loans and government support had totally dried up. Starving and despairing, a vanguard of 125 students, led by Cai Hesen and Zhao Shiyan, occupied a dormitory at Lyons University on September 21, 1921 to make their demands known. However, the students were arrested and within a month they were deported back to China. Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," in *Huiyi yu yanjiu*, p. 22-23; also see Cai Chang, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui huiyuan de huodong," in *Xinmin xuehui ziliao*, p. 572-573.

\(^{137}\) Li Weihan, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui," in *Huiyi yu yanjiu*, p. 22; also see Luo Shaozhi, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan*, vol. 6, p. 19.
theoretical perspective. Since he had formulated plans, and had actively involved himself in political activities during his stay in France, Cai had gained concrete experience in agitation techniques. Thus, when he returned home, he was able to view the broader outlines of the potential for revolution of China, as well as conceiving of a world struggle.

Soon after his return Cai was elected to the Central Committee of the CCP, serving from the Party's Second Congress in July 1922 to the Sixth Congress in the summer 1928. At the Second Party Congress, Cai was also given the chief-editorship of, Xiangdao (Weekly Guide), one of the Party's most influential journals. Xiangdao was first published in Shanghai on September 13, 1922. Cai continued as the editor until the journal was disbanded in July 1927, except for a period from November 1925 to March 1927 when he was in Moscow attending the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee while afterwards representing the Central Committee of the CCP at the Comintern. Cai published one hundred and thirty articles under the name of "Hesen".

According to Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui bian, Zhonggong dangshi renwuzhuan (Biographies of Chinese Communists), the journal's name was Xiangdao, which was published weekly. Howard L. Boorman, Biographical Dictionary of Republican China has put the journal's name incorrectly as Xiangdao zhoubao.
and many more under the name of "our colleague" and "reporter" in Xiangdao.¹³⁹ These articles which were mainly analyses of the current situation of home and abroad as well as basic questions of the Chinese revolution. This rapid rise within the CCP ranks showed that Cai enjoyed a high revolutionary reputation, partly based on his advanced theoretical sophistication.

During his editorship of Xiangdao, Cai like many other Party leaders in Shanghai, was on the faculty at the Female Commoners School and Shanghai University respectively, which served as training grounds for Communist cadres. During this period, Cai not only did a lot of theoretical and propaganda work for the Party but also directed many practical activities. In 1925, he was one of the chief organizers of trade unions culminating in demonstrations known as the May 30th Movement of 1925. Cai was a major leader in the May 30th Movement, where under his brilliant leadership the Chinese Communist Party was able to transform a series of labor strikes into a national, patriotic campaign to expel "foreign imperialists" from Chinese soil. He was also a major figure in the establishment of the Shanghai General

Labor Union. Soon after he returned home from Moscow, Cai was once again elected to the Central Committee and for the first time to the Politburo at the Fifth CCP Congress in Wuhan in April 1927. At the Fifth CCP Congress, he was also appointed Minister of the Party's Propaganda Department.¹⁴⁰

However, the year 1927 posed the gravest danger for the CCP since its establishment in 1921. Just before the Fifth CCP Congress, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) and the right-wing Guomindang (KMT) launched a "white terror"¹⁴¹ in Shanghai that took the lives of hundreds of communists and pro-communists, as well as many important Communist leaders. Cai's reaction was to back plans to train Communist armed forces by solving the land problems for the peasants first and then fostering the agrarian revolts into Communist-led peasant guerrilla units. This strategy had been opposed by the General Secretary of the CCP, Chen Duxiu. Cai also offered several other important proposals for the Party during this traumatic period. Although not all of them were


¹⁴¹ On April 12, 1927, Jiang Jieshi ordered a wholesale liquidation of the Communists. A bloody campaign of suppression began first in Shanghai, then in Nanjing, Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, and other places. Union and Communist Party headquarters were raided, suspected Communists were shot on sight. CCP cells were destroyed and unions disbanded, which gave a devastating blow to the CCP. That is why April 1927 is called the "white terror."
accepted by the Party, they foreshadowed some of the Party’s actions later on. His plan to train Communist armed forces was a great support to Mao Zedong and Zhu De’s revolutionary work - to take over the state power by using the rural areas to surround the urban cities.

Following the “white terror” of 1927, the CCP underwent an intense internal struggle, during which Chen Duxiu was replaced by Qu Qiubai and new plans were laid, including the far-reaching campaign of peasant insurrections known as the Autumn Harvest Uprisings and the Nanchang Uprising. Cai attended the famous “Emergency Conference” on August 7, 1927 and was appointed secretary of the Party’s North China Regional Bureau, a position taken by Li Dazhao who was executed shortly by the northern warlords. In the summer of 1928, Cai attended the Sixth CCP Congress in Moscow and was re-elected to the Central Committee and the Politburo. At this Congress, Cai opposed Qu Qiubai, especially his “left” putschism. After the Sixth Congress, Li Lisan took control of the Party. Cai went to Moscow again in late 1928 as a member of the Chinese delegation. During his stay in Moscow, Cai continually criticized Li’s “left adventurism.”

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In the summer of 1930 Cai was sent back home by the Comintern to participate in the leadership of the Central Committee. In March 1931, by which time the Party was under the control of Wang Ming (1904-1974) and the so-called "28 Bolshevik" faction, Cai was sent to Hong Kong to direct the Party work in Guangdong. On June 5, 1931, he was arrested, and was soon extradited to Guangzhou. In Guangzhou, he died a martyr's death at the age of thirty-six after refusing to renounce his belief in the midst of torture. He was spreadeagled on a wall, with his hands and feet nailed into the wall and beaten to death, his breast torn by bayonet wounds.  

His death by gruesome torture was directly attributable to his firm discipline in following the Party's orders.

As one of the founders of the CCP, Cai's contributions of theory, strategy, and propaganda were especially important in early CCP history. He was the first person to

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143 Cai Chang, "Huiyi Xinmin xuehui de huodong" in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 574; Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuans, vol. 6, p. 45-46.

144 According to Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui bian, Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuans (Biographies of Chinese Communists), Cai died in the way as I discussed in the text. Just before Cai left for Hong Kong with the CCP Central Committee's order, his niece, Liu Ang, who just came back from Hong Kong, tried to stop him from going and told him the situation in Hong Kong was very dangerous, but Cai replied: "[Since I'm] doing the revolutionary work, I must go wherever I'm needed. I can't consider my personal safety a priority." Quoted by Luo Shaozhi, "Cai Hesen" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuans, vol. 6, p. 44.
advocate the establishment of the CCP and was one of the most important theoreticians for the CCP. His impact on the development of the European Chinese Communist Organization (ECCO) was influential. He was an important stimulus in the formation of the ECCO and was its mentor on theory. His writings of the 1920s formed an important contribution to the Party literature of the period and were crucial in helping the CCP gain momentum in Chinese mass politics. He was also a creative interpreter of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

Conclusion

By examining his ideological transformation, we can see that Cai's political ideas began to take shape while he was studying at the Hunan First Normal School, where he was for the first time exposed to the new Western ideas and became greatly influenced by his teachers. It was at the First Normal that he made friendships with his classmates, including Mao Zedong, which became a very significant chapter in his life. Patriotic and highly motivated, Cai and his friends were drawn by the common interest to reform China, so they formed the "Xinmin xuehui" in April 1918. Cai's involvement with this society, however, completely changed his course of life. Soon after the society was formed, Cai was sent to Beijing by the society to work on
the work-study program in France for the Hunanese students. His stay in the capital was a very important stage for his intellectual transformation. In Beijing, Cai not only admitted himself and many other Hunanese students to the work-study program in France, but also acquired a new intellectual identity by exposing himself to the latest theories of Marxist and Leninist doctrines, besides the mainstream Western ideas like anarchism, as well as by participating in the May Fourth Movement. Cai was swept off his feet by the political activism unleashed by the May Fourth Movement and was strongly attracted by the Marxism at that, however, it was his French experience that consolidated his identity with Marxism and actually converted him into a faithful Marxist-Leninist. Thereafter, he quickly became a revolutionary theoretician and strategist of the CCP, and a dedicated and untiring fighter of the Chinese people in their struggles against oppression and inhumanity in the first half of the twentieth century.

Besides Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong, there was a whole group of radical youth from the Hunan First Normal School who eventually became the founding figures of the CCP. Among them were He Shuheng (1876-1935), Li Weihan (1896-1984), Zhang Kundi (1894-1932), Luo Xuezan (1894-1930), and Chen
Chang (1894-1930). He Shuheng was the oldest of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui and the oldest delegate present at the first CCP congress in July 1921. Two of the twelve delegates representing Hunan at the founding congress of the CCP in Shanghai in 1921 were Mao and He. Both of them graduated from First Normal. Li Weihan, Zhang Kundi, Luo Xuezan, and Chen Chang were all founding members of the Xinmin xuehui, all participated in the work-study program in France, and all became leading figures of early CCP. Li was also a founding member of the European Branch of the Chinese Communist Youth Corps (ECYC) and First Organizational Secretary of the ECYC. With so many founding figures, principal ideologists and activists from Hunan First Normal, the school’s contribution to the students’ ideological formation and transformation cannot be overlooked.

Among the radical youth from First Normal who were also the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui, many worked in education. For instance, Zhou Shizhao (1897-1976), a good friend and deskmate of Mao at the First Normal, was elected to head the literature department of the Student Friendship Society (Xueyou hui) and won the third place at the “mutual election of model students” at school in June 1917. He then taught at First Normal for many years after graduation.
After 1949, he also served as director of the Education Department of Hunan Province, vice governor of Hunan Province, and the principal of Hunan First Normal School. He was also elected to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Chen Shunong was another one of the founders and one of the two secretaries (the other one was Mao) of the Xinmin xuehui. Chen also taught at Hunan University for his whole life. Another classmate of Mao, Zou Wenzhen, had been teaching for many years until 1949 he was sent to work in the Research Institute of the CCP's literary history. More First Normal Radicals and the Xinmin xuehui members will be discussed in appendix.

Hunan First Normal School, a seemingly ordinary school, had produced so many radical youth in the 1910s, who first formed a more closely knit organization - Xinmin xuehui and twenty of the twenty-one founding members were from Hunan First Normal School. Its members reached seventy-two by 1920, and "nearly all of them later on became distinguished activists in the Communist movement in China." Given that twenty of twenty-one founding members of the Xinmin xuehui were all graduates of Hunan First Normal School and constituted the staunchest pillars in the New Culture
Movement, the May Fourth Movement, and other social and political movements, one cannot overlook the immense contributions First Normal made to the student and youth movements during the May Fourth period and the Revolution as and a fostering place for so many young people's intellectual transformation and radicalization, which in turn, had great influence on subsequent events in Hunan and all of China.

145 Emi Siao (Xiao San), *Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth*, p. 57.
CONCLUSION

Studying Hunan First Normal School as a hotbed that fostered radical intellectuals in the first decade of the 20th century, is a topic rich in fascinating insights into the interactions of the radical youth with their historical and intellectual milieus, as well as the processes of change on both an individual and organizational level. Especially is this true because most of them became the founding figures and important activists in early Chinese Communism.

This dissertation has examined the historical and intellectual context in which that generation of students interacted, showing how the social and intellectual environment facilitated student radicalization. It examined the educational philosophy, policies, practices, and curriculum of the First Normal School and their effects on the students' intellectual formation and transitions. We further examined the profound impact the teachers had on the students during their formative years.
and the process of intellectual transformation among the students. The specific historical situation of China as well as of Hunan was the setting for the lives of this generation of First Normal students and inspired their radicalization during the May Fourth Movement and after. Born between the 1890s and 1905, except for He Shuheng who was born in 1876, the students of this generation found their generational crisis combined with a national crisis. The humiliation of the defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 was part of their early childhood experience. As children and teenagers, they witnessed the abortive Qing reforms, the corruption of the Qing government, the impact of the encroaching imperialist powers on China and the sufferings of the common people. For instance, in the summer-autumn of 1909, northern Hunan had heavy flooding, and southern Hunan experienced a serious insect infestation; there was a severe famine the following spring. Yet, the government took no measures to help the starving peasants. Consequently an Uprising - the 1910 Changsha rice riots - broke out. The rice riots were finally suppressed by the Qing government. Many of the leaders were beheaded and their heads displayed on poles as a warning to all
future rebels. This event greatly disturbed the students of this generation. Mao Zedong recalled in 1936: "This incident was discussed in my school for many days. It made a deep impression on me. Most of the other students sympathized with the 'insurrectionists,' but only from an observer's point of view. ... I never forgot it. I felt that there with the rebels were ordinary people like my own family and I deeply resented the injustice of the treatment given to them."¹

Another important event was the Wuchang Uprising of 1911, which had a particularly stirring impact on students, who responded to it vigorously. After the Wuchang Uprising, there were many demonstrations and inspiring speeches by the students. "Hubei declared independence [from the Qing court] on August 19, and Hunan responded on September 1, ... a student army had been organized in Hunan."² This is one example showing how the student movement in Hunan was connected to the national fate from the beginning. Although the generation of students of the 1910s did not play any role in the

¹ Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 118.
² Mao Zedong, ed. "Xiangjiang pinglun" (The Xiang River Review), no. 4.
Republican Revolution of 1911, they experienced it. They also witnessed the failure of the Republican Revolution, the turmoil of the warlord era, the humiliating unequal treaties, the Twenty-One Demands and the Versailles Peace Treaty, as youngsters. By then they were mature enough to participate in political activities, and the May Fourth Movement commenced.

Hunan’s particular situation also aided the students’ radicalization. As Mao wrote: “During nine years (1912-1920), Hunan was conquered three times, and Hunanese were constantly trampled under the northerners’ horses’ hooves. They used centralized unification as an excuse to perpetrate tyranny in [Hunan].” The first conquest of Hunan came in 1913. After the short-lived “Second Revolution” organized by the Guomindang (GMD) in July and August, Hunan responded quickly and declared its “independence.” However, Tang Xiangming seized the governorship of Hunan in October 1913 and began to arrest and kill revolutionaries and pro-revolutionary elements.

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3 Here “the three-time conquest” referred to the fact that the northern warlords government appointed three military-governors to rule Hunan respectively during the founding of the Republic in 1912 to September 1920. The three military-governors were Tang Xiangming, Fu Liangzuo, and Zhang Jingyao.

4 Mao Zedong, Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao, p. 514.
Records are only extant in Changsha, but those who were killed numbered nearly 10,000. Hunan, in other words, lived under a reign of terror. The second conquest came in 1917 when Sun Yat-sen founded his southern government to compete against the Beijing warlords' government. Fu Liangzuo was appointed as the governor of Hunan by the Beijing government, making the second conquest of Hunan. After Fu's short-term as governor (September 9, 1917-November 14, 1917), Hunan became the main battlefield of the northern and southern warlords. During this period, a student volunteer army was organized by Mao Zedong to guard their school and the city. The third conquest came at the hands of the military-governor Zhang Jingyao (1918-1920), an extremely despotic ruler. Because of his cruelty, the students led the Hunanese people in an effort to oust Zhang, an initiative which accompanied the May Fourth Movement in the province.

One should emphasize that the intellectual atmosphere in Hunan was favorable to the students' radicalization. In modern Chinese history, Hunan had always been a leading province in a cultural sense. Wei Yuan (1794-1857), the famous reform-minded scholar-official, was the first to urge the Chinese to adopt the
West's advanced technology. Then came the leading figures of the Self-strengthening Movement, Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang, who directly put Wei Yuan's slogan, "To learn the superior techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians" into practice. During the One Hundred Days Reform Movement of 1898, Hunan was the most active province in that effort. In the early twentieth century, Hunan had the largest numbers of students who studied in Japan and became active in the province's education reforms after their return to China. During the New Culture Movement starting from 1915, the predominant trend in Chinese nationalism was an introspective social Darwinism which blamed China's weakness and lack of wealth on her own traditional culture, especially on Confucianism. Attacks on Confucian tradition, emergence of new values, and a new kind literature all demonstrated the impressive intellectual ferment of the place and time. People's thinking became very active and all kinds of schools of thought were flourishing. At First Normal, there were over ten student study organizations, and each association had its own journal; but Xinmin xuehui was the most influential. The free atmosphere of academic research at First Normal was inseparable from the reform-
minded principals, Kong Zhaoshou and Zhang Gan, who promoted a series of educational reforms which in turn helped to train the students academically, socially and politically.

Fundamental characteristics of the *Huxiang* culture or were identical to some of the characteristics of the May Fourth Movement, and these contributed to students' intellectual transformation. There was a linkage of *Huxiang* culture which ran from Wang Fuzhi through Wei Yuan to Yang Changji, and finally to this generation of students. A traditional characteristic of *Huxiang* culture was patriotism, which referred to alien non-Chinese conquests in their earlier stages and to anti-foreign-imperialism and nationalism in the later stage. Immersed in the atmosphere of *Huxiang* culture, this generation of students eagerly participated in the May Fourth Movement.

Another characteristic of *Huxiang* culture was its emphasis on investigating fundamental principles and on searching for truth which could contribute to national salvation. Both Confucianism and *Huxiang* culture emphasized moral cultivation, regarded as the fundamental principle for managing a household and administering a country. Not surprisingly, this generation of students
was very serious about the study of philosophy and ethics. In 1914 they formed a "Philosophy Study Group" with their teachers, Yang Changji and Li Jinxi. Their interest in philosophy gradually developed into the study of ideologies during the May Fourth period.

Huxiang culture also emphasized Jingshi zhiyong (bureaucratic statecraft) and the unity of knowledge and action. After Liang Qichao was invited to head the School of Current Affairs in Changsha in 1896, many more of this new type of school appeared in Hunan. The students then were very interested in the study of Jingshi zhiyong and often discussed current issues and how to save the country. For instance, both Mao Zedong and Cai Hesen had discussed the importance of the unity of knowledge and action and the Jingshi zhiyong in their writing.®

The May Fourth Movement was this generation of students' first attempt to reform Chinese society. Because they were embodied with theory of the unity of knowledge and action, these students were eager to put

® For details see Mao Zedong, Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao, p. 514, 517, and 643; also see Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Chen Shaoxiu, Xiao Zizhang (Xiao San), Xiao Zisheng, and Mao Zedong, August 27, 1918; Cai Linbin (Cai Hesen) letter to Mao Zedong, July 21, 1918 in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 1.
all kinds of theories they had learned into practice, and they used practice as a standard to test whether the theories were correct or not. When one theory was tested and found not to work, they immediately abandoned it and began to pursue a new one. That is why this generation of students showed rapid changes of ideals during the May Fourth period, and why most of them embraced Communism after Russian Communism was put into effect and seemed to them successful.

There was also a group of progressive, open-minded teachers at First Normal who should be credited in regard to the students' intellectual transformation. These teachers were learned in both Chinese learning and Western learning. They were concerned about the fate of their country and the fate of its people. They believed that education was the best means for saving their country, so they worked hard in teaching and hoped that through education, they could prepare capable people for reforming society. Since these teachers were progressive, knowledgeable, and of high moral character, they were respected by their students and had a profound influence on the students, not only in academic studies, but in the way the students lived their lives.
Under the influence of Yang Changji, the students formed a more closely knit organization—Xinmin xuehui (New People's Study Association) in April 1918. Twenty of the twenty-one founding members were students of Yang Changji, who played a leading role in the New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement, and the Work-Study Movement, and had a widespread influence on the affairs and destiny of China. The Xinmin xuehui had over seventy members by 1920, and "nearly all of them later on became distinguished activists in the Communist movement in China." Many became founding figures of the early Chinese Communist Party -- Cai Hesen, Mao Zedong, He Shuheng, and Li Weihan. Given the above fact, one cannot overlook the profound influence the teachers had made on their students.

Mostly born between 1890s and 1905, this generation of students also experienced the abolition of the civil service examinations in 1905, which disrupted their educational training in a Confucian tradition which would earlier have prepared them for careers. Still, they had solid training in traditional Chinese learning and were

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* Emi Siao (Xiao San), *Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth*, p. 57.
the last generation to memorize the Chinese classics for career preparation. Though they later consciously attacked traditional culture, especially the Confucian tradition, they unconsciously retained a strong reliance on Confucian values. They regarded themselves as the Xianzhi xianjue, or the awakened. Xiao Zisheng recalled when they first founded the Xinmin xuehui: "We considered ourselves eleven 'sages,' guardians of the wisdom of the ages!" They were the last to feel the weight of Confucian living in the sense of personal destiny. They were thus infused with Confucianism, especially the concept of the role of the intellectual as a moral example.

This generation was also the first to be educated in the new Western learning, and the extent of Western education was an essential factor in their intellectual transformation. The students at First Normal mainly came from poor families. Unlike the richer students who sought more liberality and better opportunity, they chose First Normal because of its free education, board, and lodging. And most of them came from peripheral agrarian counties in Hunan. These counties were often conservative,

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7 Xiao Yu (xiao Zisheng), *Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars*, p. 61.

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comparatively isolated, and had a strong commitment to Confucian tradition. When they arrived in Changsha in the 1910s, they were astonished by the bustling urban world. They were introduced to newspapers for the first time and exposed to new ideas, thoughts, concepts, and knowledge, dramatically different from what they had learned at home. They also felt the great impact of the Western powers in the regional commercial center of Changsha. They saw foreigners, foreign steamships, and foreign products for the first time. The introduction of newspapers and the profound impact of the New Culture Movement and its journals, as well as the sharp differences they felt between the two worlds, home and school, old and new, contributed critically in making them consciously and seriously rethink their previous views and questions, and in making them acutely conscious of the national crisis and their own responsibilities. They thus, were infused with a sense of having a unique mission: to save their country. This led to the formation of the Xinmin xuehui, and the Xinmin xuehui to the Chinese Communist Party in Hunan - and elsewhere. Many of the members of the Xinmin xuehui had participated in the work-study program in France; and their French experience meant a broader world.
view, broader viewpoint of knowledge, and more understanding of advanced technology and the Western world. The French experience marked a transition period of ideological conversion for them, and contributed to the formation of the CCP.

After searching among the values, ideologies, concepts, and solutions to their country's problems and crisis, they concluded that communism was the most effective solution to those problems and crisis. They therefore threw themselves into the formation of the Chinese Communist Party and Communist activities, with the belief in the Communist Party organization and the conception of moral leadership. Their earnest search for solutions to personal and national crisis shown in the development of their minds, lay in the feverish interest of this generation in modern ideologies and traditional thought. Although their Western education was not in itself a guarantee of radicalism, Western ideas and values did play strategic, catalytic role of an ideological change that directed their selective attention and sensitivity to certain implications in traditional ideas and values. One can thus say that the combination of traditional thought and Western influences...
in certain novel ways facilitated their ideological transformation and radicalization into communism.
He Shuheng

He Shuheng (1876-1935), a native of Ningxiang, Hunan, was the oldest of the founding members of the "Xinmin xuehui" and the oldest delegate present at the founding congress of the CCP in July 1921. He was a close associate of Mao Zedong for two decades. He played an important role in the establishment of the Party’s branch in Hunan and was prominent in its attempts to use the Hunan school system to spread Marxist-Leninist ideas.

On May 27, 1876, He was born in Shaozichong, a small, remote village located over seventy kilometers west of Ningxiang county. There were seven or eight families in the village and all were very poor. He’s family was a bit better off than the others but still lived a hard life. He Shuheng had two elder sisters, two elder brothers, and

\[1\] This date is given by Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui bian, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi renwuzhuan* (Biographies of Chinese Communists) (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1982), vol 4, p. 2; also by Yang Qing, *He Shuheng* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1997), p. 2.
one younger brother. His mother died when He was five and
his father never remarried. At the age of seven, He began
to look after cows, cut grass, and cut firewood. Each
year, at the temporary shortage period, every family
member had a ration of food for each meal. He always felt
hungry and once said: "It would be wonderful if I could
eat as much as I can for each meal as the cow can eat as
much grass as it likes!"² His father heard him and
replied: "When you grow up, if you work as hard as ox
does, you will have enough to eat."³ According the
traditional Chinese saying, "nanzi yaowu budewu, fengwu
jiuyoufu" (a man needs wu [the period of the day from 11
a.m. to 1 p.m.], but cannot get wu [the lucky period and
the number 5], if he is born on the wu, he will be very
lucky." He Shuheng was not only born in wu period, but
also born on the fifth date of the May according to the
Chinese lunar calendar, so he was considered to be lucky
and would have a bright future. His father believed this

Howard L. Boorman, Biographical Dictionary of Republican China
(BDRC) has put the date incorrectly as in 1874.

² Yang Qing, He Shuheng (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe,
1997), p. 3.

³ Ibid.
saying and sent him to school by saving on food and expenses.

He studied at a private tutorial school for eight years. In 1902, following his father's request, he took the civil service examinations. He passed the lowest rank of the civil service examinations and gained the Xiucai degree. After that he became a private tutor in his native village and continued in that occupation for six years. In the spring of 1909, he began to teach Chinese literature, history, and geography at the Yunshan Primary School. On his recommendation, his close friends, Xie Juezai (1884-1971), Jiang Mengzhou (n.f.), and Wang Lingbo (1889-1942) all came to teach at the Yunshan Primary School. Under his influence, all three later became Communists in Hunan. They were called "The Four Beards of Ningxiang" since they all came from Ningxiang, all had beards, and all became radical intellectuals.

While teaching at the Yunshan Primary School, he was influenced by his cousin, He Zilin, who had joined Sun Yatsen's "Tong menghui" in Fujian province and often sent him revolutionary books and newspapers. He thus became a
supporter of Sun. In class, he often quoted Gu Yanwu’s famous saying: “Every common man has a hand in determining the fate of his nation” to urge his students to be patriotic and resolve to save their country. After the Wuchang Uprising on October 10, 1911, Hunan became the first province to respond and to declare independence from the Qing court. He was very happy to hear the news and was the first to cut off his queue. In the following month, He went home to convince his father, his brothers, and his neighbors to cut off theirs. In the summer vacation of that year, He went home and forced all his female family members to unbind their feet. After the Republic of China was founded on January 1, 1912, He was very excited. He and his friends began the educational reform at the school. They organized a student association, opposed the reading of Confucian classics, and favored the study of science and other practical subjects which would encourage modernization and reform.

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4 Gu Yanwu (1613-1682) was a well-known philosopher of the late Ming and early Qing, a leading scholar of the school of “Empirical Research,” and a Ming loyalist who fought against the Manchus. He blamed the Ming school of Song Neo-Confucianism – the so-called “Song Learning” for causing the collapse of the Ming. He advocated the pursuit of “knowledge of practical use to society,” and became the chief founder of the great Qing school of the “Han Learning,” which sought to restudy the classical inheritance by going back to writings of the pre-Song period.
These initiatives were strongly in conflict with the attitudes of the conservative provincial gentry. Therefore, He resigned his teaching position from the Yunshan Primary School in late 1912.

In the spring of 1913, He was admitted to the Hunan Fourth Normal School in Changsha, which was combined with the Hunan First Normal School the following autumn. Mao entered the Fourth Normal at the same time as He and transferred to the First Normal the following year with him. During his school days in Changsha, He met Mao Zedong and became his close friend. Mao often remarked about He, "He the Beard is a mule, a pile of feelings," and again, "Old Man He is splendid at doing things; he is not a learned man, but a doing man." He returned the compliment: to him "Mao Runzhi is a splendid human being (liaobuqi de renwu)." At First Normal, He studied under Yang Changji, Xu Teli, Fang Weixia, and Wang Jifan, and became close friends with Cai Hesen, Chen Zhanfu, Luo Xuezan, Zhang Kundi, and Xiao San, besides Mao.

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7 Yang Qing, He Shuheng, p., 22.
He graduated from the First Normal in 1914. After graduation, he went to teach at the famous Chuyi School in Changsha. He and his friends often met at the Chuyi School to discuss political problems of the day. After Chen Duxiu's radical magazine the "New Youth" was founded in 1915, he and his friends were very interested in the articles and much attracted by the journal's new ideas. They thus began to plan the creation of the "Xinmin xuehui." The "Xinmin xuehui" was formed in April 1918, and he was the oldest among its founding members. In the summer of 1918, when Mao and Cai went to Beijing to investigate the possibility of participating in the work-study program in France, he remained in Hunan and took charge of the "Xinmin xuehui."

After the May Fourth Incident in Beijing, Changsha newspapers began to carry "inflammatory" reports about the Paris Conference. They reported the students' demonstration in Beijing and continuously published articles with headlines such as "The Shandong Emergency is Ready to Explode!" and "Alarming Reports on the Shandong Question." He participated in this movement with great enthusiasm. He and Mao used the "Xinmin Xuehui" as the nucleus for organizing the students to the
"imperialists." He, Mao, and other members of the "Xinmin Xuehui" thus helped to form the students union of Hunan. Their meetings were often held at He's place at the Chuyi School. On June 3, 1919, under the leadership of the Hunan students union, students from all schools in the province organized a students' strike. In November, He was elected executive chairman of the Xinmin xuehui.

Following the May Fourth Incident, Zhang Jingyao, the Beiyang warlord who governed Hunan from 1918 to 1920, forbade agitation and threatened to tighten censorship of the newspapers, and suppressed the students' movement. Zhang determined to keep the lid on in the old, hierarchical way. Thus, in the winter of 1919, Mao, He, and the members of the Xinmin xuehui decided to start a movement to oust Zhang Jingyao from Hunan. The activists of the student union and the members of the Xinmin xuehui held a meeting at the Chuyi School to organize a province-wide student strike for this purpose. He was the chairman of the meeting. At the meeting, participants decided to send delegates to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hengyang, Zhuzhou, and Changde to petition for driving out Zhang.
Mao led a delegation to Beijing, while He led one to Hengyang. In Hengyang, He and other delegates organized the students, kept close contact with delegates in other cities, arranged large-scale anti-Zhang meetings, organized anti-Zhang marches, founded the "Xiangchao" weekly journal, and sent telegram to various places around the country to seek support. On the other hand, by exploiting conflicts between the two warlords Wu Peifu and Zhang Jingyao, He mobilized the masses to petition Wu Peifu. He also tried to win over the Xiang Army leader, Tan Yankai, as an ally. In May 1920, Wu Peifu began to move his forces northward to prepare for a likely battle. As Wu’s army moved, Tan Yankai’s army advanced, and Zhang Jingyao’s army fled Changsha on June 11, completely leaving Hunan on June 26. He Shuheng’s Hengyang delegation thus played an important role in the movement to oust Zhang Jingyao. That was why Mao Zedong said of him, "Old Man He is splendid at doing things."

After Zhang Jingyao was replaced by Tan Yankai as governor of Hunan, Mao Zedong was invited to teach at the

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First Normal and to be schoolmaster of the institution's primary school. While Mao was in Changsha, He was one of his close associates in a series of political events. Soon after the anti-Zhang delegates streamed back into Changsha in the summer of 1920, He began to help Mao establish a Cultural Bookstore. The founding meeting of the organization of the bookstore was held in He's classroom at the Chuyi School on August 1, 1920. Participants felt that Hunan, like most of the rest of China, did not have real New Culture. As the group stated in its "Announcement of the Organization of the Cultural Bookstore":

There is no new culture because there is no new thought; there is no new thought because there is no new study (yanjiu); there is no new study because there are no new materials. Now the aspirations of the Hunanese are starved, [and this is] a starvation worse than that of the belly. The youth especially cry from hunger. The Cultural Bookstore will faithfully use the swiftest and most convenient means to introduce every kind of new Chinese and foreign magazine in order to provide youth and the progressive people of Hunan with material for study. If perhaps because of this, new thought and a new culture are born, that will be our fervent prayer, the fulfillment of our hopes.\(^{10}\)

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\(^{10}\) Changsha Dagongbao, August 24, 1920; “Wenhua shushe yuanqi” (August 24, 1920) in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 250-252.
The bookstore formally opened on September 9, 1920. He soon set up a distribution center at the Chuyi School. He and his friend Jiang Mengzhou also opened a branch of the Cultural Bookstore in their hometown, Ningxiang. The Cultural Bookstore was not designed only to sell books, so everyone could come to read. It displayed correspondence from Mao Zedong, Cai Hesen, and others that discussed the questions of socialism and communism. Its goal was to bring about social change in China, as well as in the whole world. During this period, He and Mao, together with other progressive intellectuals in Hunan, also organized a Russian Study Society in late July. Its members read the growing literature in Chinese on the events and meaning of the Russian Revolution and began planning for a work-study program in Russia.

In September 1920, He Shuheng was appointed by the provincial education council to the post of director of the bureau of popular education in Hunan, and also took over direction of the Tongsubao (Commoners' newspaper), which was published by the bureau to promote popular

11 "Eluosi yanjiuhui chengli" (The founding of the Russian Study Society) (August 23, 1920) in Xinmin xuehui ziliao, p. 254-255.
education in the province. Soon after he took charge of the newspaper, He together with his friends from the *Xinmin xuehui*, Xie Juezai, Zhou Shizhao, and Xiong Jinding who were helping him in planning and editing the paper, began to use the paper to spread their political ideas. The *Tongsubao* soon assumed a new aspect, opposing imperialism, warlordism and advocating social reforms, such as women’s liberation and the rights of labor. The newspaper quickly increased in circulation and influence among the students and peasants in Hunan. The bureau of popular education in Changsha also opened a library, and classes for continuing education; thus it became an active center of political discussion and planning.

Disturbed by the radicalism of the *Tongsubao*, Zhao Hengti, the warlord governor of Hunan, dismissed He Shuheng from his post in June 1921, and soon stopped publication of the *Tongsubao*.

On New Year’s Day, 1921, Mao Zedong and He Shuheng organized the three-day New Year’s meeting of the *Xinmin xuehui* in Changsha. Members of the society remaining in China attended the meeting and discussed the society’s goals and how to reach them. At the beginning, Mao introduced Cai Hesen’s opinions expressed in his letter
from France - class struggle, the importance of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the structure of the Soviet Communist Party, and the urgency of establishing a communist party in China. Then He Shuheng expressed his opinions. He said: "[I] advocate violent revolution, [because] I deeply believe the saying that one time disturbance is worth twenty years education."\(^{12}\) "I basically agree with Mr. He's opinions,"\(^{13}\) Mao said, "The communism of violent revolution, ... by using the dictatorship of the proletariat, can be expected to be effective. That's why it is the best method to be adopted."\(^{14}\)

In July 1921, He Shuheng and Mao went to Shanghai where they represented the Marxists in Hunan at the founding congress of the Chinese Communist Party. After the meeting, He and Mao both returned to Changsha where they worked on the formation of a Hunan. After the branch was established, He and Mao began to recruit new members

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\(^{12}\) "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao," No. 2, in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian p. 140-141.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 141.

for the Party and began developing branches in various provincial districts. In May 1922, the Xiangqu Committee of the CCP was founded, Mao became its chairman, and He Shuheng served as its committee member in charge of organizational work.

He remained in Hunan until 1927. During these years, he was primarily an educator and played an important role in the Hunanese school system, an important channel for organizing and spreading Communist propaganda because many young teachers were Communists. He was a member and later the director of the Chuanshan xueshe (The Wang Fuzhi Study Society). His most notable contributions to the Party in the early twenties came in connection with the Self-Education College (Zixiu daxue), which he and Mao founded in Changsha in August 1921 by using the location and funding of the Chuanshan xueshe. At the beginning, both He and Mao were students there, and later He became a faculty member. The Party used this school to convert a number of students to communism. For instance, the famous revolutionary martyr, Xia Minghan, joined the CCP in the winter of 1921 under the introduction of He and Mao. In 1923, after the Self-Education College was closed by governor Zhao Hengti, He became headmaster of
the Xiangjiang School which was founded and sponsored by
the CCP. This school subsequently trained many cardres
for the CCP.

After the break between the Guomindang (KMT) and the
CCP, He was sent to Moscow to study at the Sun Yat-sen
University by the Party. Here he became classmates with
Xu Teli, Wu Yuzhang, and Lin Boqu, all considerably old.
After graduating in 1930, He returned to China, first in
Shanghai, then went to the Communist area in Jiangxi.
When the Jiangxi Soviet was established in Ruijin in
November 1931, Mao became the chairman, and He was
elected to its Central Executive Committee. He was also
appointed as the head of the workers' and peasants'
inspection department. Soon He was given another cabinet-
level post as the acting head of the internal affairs
department. In February 1932, He became chief justice of
the Soviet's Supreme Court.

In the fall of 1934, when the Communists were forced
to retreat from the Jiangxi base and embarked on the Long
March, He Shuheng stayed at the base to assist the
remnant units that remained there. In February 1935, He,
with a group of leaders which included Qu Qiubai and Deng
Zihui, moved from the Ruijin area to Fujian province. In

357
late February, the Guomindang forces surrounded this
group and captured Qu Qiubai and others. When the
Guomindang forces encircled the He, Deng Zihui, and the
remaining members in Shuikou county, Fujian, He refused
to be taken prisoner, jumped off a high cliff and ended
his life.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Li Weihan}

Li Weihan (1896-1984),\textsuperscript{16} (other names: Li Hesheng,
Luo Mai), was a native of Chunyang (modern day Gaoqiao),
Hunan. Li was one of the founding members of the Xinmin
xuehui and one of the earliest CCP members. He was also
elected to the CCP Central Committee. He was the head of
the Party’s united front department in 1944 and also
headed the Commission on Nationality Affairs.

Li was born in a small village called Badouchong,
Chunyang xiang,\textsuperscript{17} which was located over 100 Chinese li

\textsuperscript{15} Yang Qing, \textit{He Shuheng} (Shijiazhang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1997),
p. 192-203; also Wang Xinggang, “He Shuheng” in Hu Hua, ed.,
\textit{Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuanyi}, vol. 4, p. 35-37; also see Howard L.

\textsuperscript{16} This date is given by Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui bian, ed.,
\textit{Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuanyi} (Biographies of Chinese Communists).
Howard L. Boorman, \textit{Biographical Dictionary of Republican China} (BDRC) has put the date incorrectly as in 1897.

\textsuperscript{17} Li’s birth place is given by Zhonggong dangshi renwu yanjiuhui
bian, ed., \textit{Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuanyi} (Biographies of Chinese Communists). Howard L. Boorman, \textit{Biographical Dictionary of
358
northeast of Changsha. In his grandfather's generation, the family was well-to-do. Later on, the family lost money in the black tea business and fell on hard times. Li was born in a poor intellectual family. His father was a teacher for his whole life. His mother was a typical housewife. He had two elder brothers. His father's meager income was the main support for the whole family, so the poor household lived under considerable stress.

At the age of seven, Li began to study with his father at a private tutorial school. In 1909, he entered the Yangzheng primary school. The following year, he went to study at the Qingtaixiang zuomin School where he was classmates with Zou Yiding and Ren Bishi. In 1912, he entered the Xiangjun gongchang yitu school, a work-study school, where became close friends with Zhang Kundi and Zou Yiding. Later both Zhang and Zou were admitted to the First Normal School, while Li was not qualified to apply because he did not have a formal diploma. In the spring of 1916, he borrowed a diploma from a friend and was admitted to the First Normal. He graduated with academic excellence from First Normal in the summer of 1917 and

*Republican China* (BDRC) has put Li's birth place incorrectly as southwest of Changsha.
began to teach at the institution’s primary school. During the time he was studying at the First Normal, the reform-minded Kong Zhaoshou was the principal and hired a group of reform-minded teachers, including Fang Weixia, Yang Changji, and Xu Teli. Li studied very hard and constantly absorbed new ideas. Through his friends, Zou Yiding and Zhang Kundi, Li got to know Mao Zedong and Cai Hesen and became one of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui when it was formally formed in April 1918.

In August 1918, Li joined the work-study program in France. On August 15, Li left Changsha for Beijing together with Mao Zedong, Xiao Zisheng, Zhang Kundi, Zou Yiding, Xiao San, Luo Xuezan, and Luo Zhanglong. Li attended French language classes in Baoding. Early the following year when his friend Zou Yiding’s tuberculosis became worse, Li and Zhang Kundi escorted Zou back to home. Zou Yiding soon died. Li did not go back to Baoding.

The May Fourth Movement occurred soon after Mao returned to Hunan from Beijing. In Changsha, as in Beijing, the students were the driving force of the movement during the first phase. Mao played an active role in the creation of the Hunan Student Union, which founded the influential weekly magazine, Xiangjiang.
Pinglun (The Xiang River Review), with Mao as chief editor. Li helped with the distribution of Xiangjiang Pinglun. He mailed the magazine to First Normal graduates according to the school directory and wrote them about the May Fourth Movement. Meanwhile, he also worked on fund raising for the possible trip to France.

On October 31, 1919, Li Weihan, Zhang Kundi, Li Fuchun, who married Cai Chang in France, and 159 other students left Shanghai for France. They arrived in France in December 7. Xiao Zisheng recalled:

Another old friend who came to France at this time was Li Weihan. His second name was also Hesen and we called him Li Hesen or sometimes Lao Li (Old Li). He too was one of the earliest members of the Association [Xinmin xuehui] and we were very fond of him. I had known him in Changsha where we attended the First Normal together, and I liked him very much. His father was old and very poor but, though Li loved him dearly, he was not able to help him and we all felt very sorry for both of them. Li Weihan was a very modest, quiet person who spoke slowly and carefully. He always took great pains to understand the other person’s point of view in any discussion. He had no Chinese books to read and he could not read French; so in Montargis he spent much of his time talking with Cai Hesen. The two Hesens usually agreed, and it was quite natural that Li Weihan should accept Cai’s ideas and opinions. ... Li Weihan, Cai Hesen, and Xiang Jingyu were the three most enthusiastic evangelists who worked to spread the Communist doctrine!18

18 Xiao Yu (Xiao Yu), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 180.
In February 1920, Li Weihan, together with Luo Xuezan, Zhang Kundi, and Li Fuchun, formed the Qingong jianxue lijin she (The Work-Study Students Society). Its aim was to get people together, work together, help each other, encourage each other, and go through hard times together. The members of the Qingong jianxue lijin she were mainly anarchists. During the summer of 1920 in the crucial debates at the Montargis, Li came out against forming a Russian type party. He wrote to Mao after the meeting:

I’m afraid I cannot agree with the [violent] Russian type revolution, [however,] I don’t object if other people support it or adopt it. [The issue] cannot be made clear within a few words. It needs to be studied. ... Before I can reach a conclusion, [I] need to read more, study more, and discuss with friends about it.19

After he moved to Montargis in July 1920, Li had more opportunities to talk with Cai Hesen and spent more time reading Cai’s translations of political books. Li also circulated these books among the members of the Qingong jianxue lijin she. In early August 1921, with the help of Cai, the Qingong jianxue lijin hui changed its name into the Gongxue shijie she, and most of its members were
converted into Marxism. Afterward, the Gongxue shijie she gradually evolved into the French branch of the Chinese Communist Party, and Li himself became a Marxist.

While in France, Li actively participated in political activities, such as the February 28 Movement of 1921 and the Lyons Incident. Due to the struggles of 1921, Li became a founding member of the European Branch of the Chinese Communist Youth Corps (ECYC). In late 1921, Li, Zhou Enlai, and Zhao Shiyian began planning to form the ECYC, which was formally brought into being in June 1922, with Zhao Shiyian as its general secretary, Zhou Enlai as its propaganda secretary, and Li Weihan as its organizational secretary.

On November 20, 1922, Li returned to China with a letter from the ECYC to the CCP Central Committee. There he succeeded Mao as secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee of the CCP. He stayed in that position for five years until May 1927 when he went to work in the CCP Central Committee. During this period (1923), Li served as the academic dean of the Self-Education College; in the meantime, he also taught philosophy and psychology at

[19] Li Weihan letter to Mao Zedong, August 28, 1920, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 3. 363
First Normal. After the Self-Education College was closed by governor Zhao Hengti in November 1923, Li and He Shuheng founded the Xiangjiang School, a CCP Party school in the same month, where Li was on the faculty. This school had trained many cardres for the CCP. In December 1923, Li, together with He Shuheng and Jiang Mengzhou, founded the semimonthly journal Xiangjiang (Xiang River). In the following year, Li founded another journal the Xinmin zhoukan (New Citizen weekly) and was its chief contributor and editor.

In January 1925, Li attended the Fourth Congress of the CCP in Shanghai and was elected to the Central Committee of the CCP. In late April of 1927, the CCP held its Fifth Congress in Hankou. Li was elected to the Politburo. Cai Hesen was also for the first time elected to the Politburo at the CCP's Fifth Congress. Afterwards, Li went to work as the head of the Party's Organization Department.

In July 1927, Li participated in planning the Communist insurrection at Nanchang on August 1, 1927. After the failure of the Nanchang Uprising, an emergency meeting of the CCP was held in Hankou on August 7, 1927. At this meeting, a "rump" Politburo was established, and
Qu Qiubai replaced Chen Duxiu as the Party's general secretary, Li and Su Zhaozheng were elected members of the "rump" Politburo. At the CCP's Sixth Congress in Moscow in 1928, Li was removed from the Central Committee, and received frank criticism for having fled the scene of disaster during the peasant uprisings in Hunan.

After the CCP's Sixth Congress in 1928, Li went to work for the central apparatus of the CCP in Shanghai. At the Second meeting of the CCP's Sixth Congress in June 1929, Li was elected to alternate membership on the Central Committee. Although his influence on policy making in the CCP waned after 1928, Li continued to play an active administrative role. In September 1930, Li became the secretary of the Jiangsu provincial Party committee. Between June 4, 1931 and March 1933, Li was studying in Moscow. In April 1933, he went to the central soviet area in Jiangxi, where he took the role of the Party's Organization chief, and then became the head of the Central Party School. He participated in the Long March in 1934-35. In December 1936, Li became the secretary general of the Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region government. In 1938, he began to head the
Commission on Nationalities Affairs, which was responsible for Party work among non-Chinese minorities.

Starting from 1948, Li began to head the Party's united front work department, which was responsible for political mobilization of non-Communist elements for Communist objectives. After the PRC was established in October 1949, Li continued to be the head of the united front work department. He also served as head of the Nationalities Affairs Department and held several other responsible positions. However, after the CCP's Sixth Congress in 1928, Li Weihan's career never regained its momentum. He lost his former eminence, and did not achieve the prominence his early career indicated he might.

Zhang Kundi

Zhang Kundi (1894-1932), other name: Zhipu, was a native of Taojiang county, Hunan. He was one of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui. In October 1919, he went to study and work in France and was expelled in 1921 because of the Lyons Incident. After his return to China, he mainly worked in the north as a labor movement organizer.
Zhang was born into a peasant family in Banxi xiang. His mother died when he was five and his father died when he was thirteen. He was brought up by his grandmother and uncle. He went to study in a private tutorial school at the age of seven and finished the Four Books of the Confucian classics, the *Book of Poetry*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. At the age of thirteen, he entered the Yiyang Longzhou Academy (a traditional type of higher senior primary school), which was located eighty Chinese *li* away from home. In 1913, he passed the entrance examinations for the Hunan First Normal School and studied there for five years.

The five years he studied at First Normal were very important period for his intellectual formation and transformation. As earlier noted, Changsha in general and the First Normal in particular were alive with intellectual and political ferment. Living in this environment, Zhang was very excited and studied very hard. He was especially interested in Chinese literature, philosophy, and history. He particularly liked the ethics teacher, Yang Changji, and was strongly influenced by him. From his remaining diary from July 31, to October 2, 1917, we can see that he often went to Yang’s home to consult
with him about academic and political issues, as well as the way of conduct in society. Under the influence of Yang, Zhang became very interested in Western principles and institutions and advocated introducing them to reform Chinese society. Zhang and his friends, like Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong, also emulated Yang in self-discipline.

Xiao San recalled:

One year, during the summer vacation, Mao, Cai and Zhang Kundi shared a pavilion on top of the Yuelu Mountain; ... They went without breakfast and supper as well. Their diet consisted largely of fresh broad beans. Of course, there was an idea of economizing since none of them had much money. They went to the hilltop to meditate in the morning and then came down to bathe in a cold pond or in the river. This went on until the end of the vacation. They believed in the steady practicing of this "austerity training" programme. They also enlarged what the term "bathing" usually connotes, often stripping and exposing their bodies to the elements: sun, wind and downpours. Mao Zedong referred to these practices facetiously as "sunbath," "windbath," and "rainbath." They also frequented a little isle in the Xiang River [known as the "Island of Oranges"] where swimming was good. All this was intended to help build up a strong constitution. ... On certain points, their training was in curious agreement with popular modern methods, which emphasized sunlight, open air and shower-bathing.

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10 Tang Yi, "Zhang Kundi" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, vol. 35, p. 118. The original copy of Zhang's diary of this period is kept in the Hunan Provincial Archives.

21 Emi Siao (Xiao San), Mao Tse-tung: His Childhood and Youth, p.41.
A poem by Mao describes this period and illustrates their all-embracing sympathy and lofty sentiments:

Alone in the chilly autumn,
With the Xiang River flowing northward,
On the Island of Oranges,
I saw ten thousand hills reddened all over
With thickly painted leaves;
And the river transparent green,
In which a hundred boats were racing.

The eagle soared into limitless space,
Fish gathered in shoal--
Life in its multifarious form under the frosty sky
Was bursting forth for Freedom.
I opened the casement of a solitary tower
And inquired: Who, on the immense planet,
Decides the fate of creatures?

With a host of comrades I revisited this spot,
And recalled the high-spirited, bygone days,
When all my friends were young
And light of heart;
And the hand that wrote and knew no restraint
Commanded a free, yet delicate imagination.
We pointed at the river and hills
Which stimulated the creative instinct,
And scorned the dukes of yore that ruled over ten thousand families!

Have you forgotten
How in the midst of rapid-flowing waters
Riding over the waves forward sailed our barge?

--- Written to the melody of Xin Yuan Chun²²

During his school years in Changsha, Zhang also developed several close friendships with other progressive youth. They frequently gathered to discuss
academic and political issues, and took trips around the province. Zhang was very fond of by his teachers and schoolmates. In a "mutual election of model students" in the school in June 1917, Zhang ranked fourth among about four hundred students. Mao received the most votes. Eventually, they formed the *Xinmin xuehui*. Zhang was one of the founding members of the society and one of the chief organizers of its important activities.

Zhang also participated in the work-study program in France. On August 19, 1918, Zhang together with Mao, Luo Xuezan, and over twenty other Hunanese students arrived in Beijing to join Cai Hesen. Zhang went to Baoding to study French for a year. On November 31, 1919, Zhang, Li Weihan, Li Fuchun, and 159 others left Shanghai for France. While in France, Zhang was one of the founders of the *Qingong jianxue lijin hui* (The Work-Study Students Society), which was transformed into a socialist society in early August 1920. In late December 1920, the society invited Cai Hesen to deliver a speech at the annual meeting. When Zhang spoke, he strongly supported Cai's advocacy of adopting Marxism and the

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370
Russian type revolution in China. "The reform of Chinese society is completely adapted to the socialist principles and methods." He believed that "the only way to reach their goal of reforming China and the world is to follow the Russian October Revolution." Zhang, therefore, played an important role in helping convert the members of the society from anarchism to Marxism. Zhang also actively participated in the political activities in France and was expelled in the Lyons Incident in October 1921.

Upon his return to China, the Party sent Zhang to the north to lead the labor movement. He organized and led several workers strikes, including the famous Beijing-Hankou railway workers' strike of February 4-7, 1923. In September 1925, Zhang was elected chairman of the Henan provincial federation of trade unions. In April 1927, he began to work in the Northern Bureau and was in charge of labor unions. In May 1931, he was sent to develop the labour movement in the soviet area of Hunan.

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24 Ibid., p. 122.
and Hubei and became the CCP secretary of the Hunan and Hubei provincial federation of trade unions.

In January 1932, the central committee of the CCP Hunan and Hubei branch held the Party’s Fourth Congress. At the Congress, Zhang, Wan Tao, and other cadres severely criticized the adventurist proposals of Xia Xi, the head of the central committee of the CCP Hunan and Hubei branch. However, with the support of the CCP central committee headed by Wang Ming, the criticism of Xia Xi was regarded as “factional activities of counter-CCP central committee.” Thus, “suppression of the counter-revolutionaries” began in May 1932. Zhang Kundi was charged with having engaged in counter-revolutionary conspiratorial activities and was killed by the CCP Party in Qujiawan, Honghu county, Hubei province in the fall of 1932. Later on, the CCP announced his rehabilitation and came to regard him as a revolutionary martyr.

Luo Xuezan

Luo Xuezan (1894-1930), (other name Luo Rongxi), was a native of Xiangtan, Hunan. He was one of the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui, and its most prolific

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correspondent. In July 1919, he went to study and work in France but was expelled to China during the Lyons Incident in 1921. After his return to China, he worked in the workers' movement as a labor organizer. After 1927, he became the head of the Organizational Bureau of the Hunan Provincial Committee. In 1929, he became the secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee.

Luo was born into a peasant family in Xiangtan county of Hunan on January 31, 1894. Before eighteen, his grandfather supported his schooling. In 1902, he began to study in a private tutorial school. In 1906, he went to study in the Luoshi Mingde liangdeng primary school, a boarding school, located eight li away from home. He thus became the first educated member of his family.

In 1912, Luo graduated from the Mingde Liangdeng Primary School at the age of eighteen and was admitted to the Xiangtan Middle School. His grandfather refused to pay the school fees (60-70 silver dollars) for him, so he applied to the Hunan Fourth Normal School. When Fourth Normal was combined with First Normal the following spring, Luo was in the same class as Mao Zedong. During the five and half years at First Normal, he studied very hard and was well respected by his classmates. He was a
firm believer in an organized, arduous schedule of study and exercise. From the remaining essays and diaries of Luo written in the years at First Normal, we can see that he was very diligent in study and followed a rigorous schedule. He was also very serious about exercise. At First Normal, he developed close relationships with Mao, Cai, He Shuheng, and Chang Kundi and was one of the chief organizers of the Xinmin xuehui.

Luo graduated from First Normal in June 1918; he soon went to Beijing with Mao and other Hunanese youth to join Cai for the work-study program in France. There were many other groups of students in Beijing also waiting to go to France. Because of the local housing shortage, the poverty of the students, and the necessity of their language training, the students were divided into three groups to facilitate living and learning French. Two groups of students went to study and live at a middle school in Baoding and Lixian. A third group went to study at Beijing University. Luo was assigned to study French at Beijing University.

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26 Luo's diaries and essays on rigorous schedule were quoted by Luo Lizhou, "Luo Xuezan" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuany, vol. 5, p. 178-181.
Luo, together with seven other friends, including Mao, Cai, Xiao Zisheng, and Luo Zhanglong, rented a three-room house in Sanyanjing Street near Beijing University. In the "Report of the affairs of the Xinmin xuehui, No. 1, Mao described their experience: "In 7 Sanyanjing Street, ... [we] eight people lived in a small three-room house, and huddled together on a big bed at night." Xiao Zisheng also recalled their experience in Three Eyes Well Street: "The bed was a Kang, a Manchurian-type stove bed, made of bricks and heated by a fire underneath. In the icy winter weather, [eight] of us slept on this big bed, huddled together to keep warm, because we had no fire underneath."^27

After about a year's study of French, Luo went to France in July 1919. He first studied in the Montargis College for three months, and then began to work in a factory. He was one of the founders of the Qingong jianxue lijin hui (The Work-Study Students Society) in 1920. He was also active in the activities of the Xinmin xuehui French branch. He took charge of collecting

27 "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao" (Report of the affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society), No. 1, in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian, p. 123.
28 Xiao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 166. 375
letters and articles of the Xinmin xuehui members in France\textsuperscript{29} and mailed them to Mao Zedong back home who could publish them in the newspapers of Shanghai or Beijing, or in the society’s own publication which was circulated among its entire membership.

Luo disregarded many of his more moderate views in 1921 and took part in many important political activities. He was expelled to China during the Lyons Incident, together with Cai Hesen, Zhang Kundi, and 101 others. Soon after his return to China, he joined the CCP. In the spring of 1922, Luo went back to Changsha and worked in the workers’ movement and was very successful in forming a rickshaw drivers’ union in Changsha. He contributed to various propaganda organs and educational work.

During 1922 and 1923, he was on the faculty of the Self-Education College. After the Self-Education College was closed, he went to teach in the Xiangjiang School. He also taught at a number of other schools, including Shandang Qilu University. After 1923, when Li Weihan

\textsuperscript{29} At the Mortargis meeting, it was decided that each member should write one letter home or an article per month in turn and Luo Xuezan was in charge of collecting these letters and writings. Luo Xuezan letter to Mao Zedong, July 14, 1920, in Xinmin xuehui huiyuan tongxin lu, vol. 2, p. 73.
became the secretary of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, Luo first headed the Organizational Bureau of the Hunan Provincial Committee, and then became head of the Propaganda Department of the Hunan Provincial Committee. He also became the secretary of Liling county Party Committee in 1925. In 1929, he became the secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee. He was captured and executed by the Guomindang in the summer of 1930 in Hangzhou.  

Chen Chang  

Chen Chang (1894–1930), (other name: Chen Changfu), a native of Liuyang, Hunan, was born in Wuzhou, Guangxi province. He distinguished himself as an orator. He was one of the organizers of the Xinmin xuehui, and one of the earliest members of the CCP. He was a close associate of Mao Zedong in the twenties. Together with Mao, he "participated in the formation of the CCP in the Hunan area. ... He was a major participant in the Hunan workers' movement under the leadership of Mao Zedong." In 1925,  

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31 Li Rui, Mao Zedong tongzhi di chuqi geming huodong (Early revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1957), p. 68.
he was elected to the Hunan Provincial Executive Committee of Guomindang after the first CCP-GMD alliance in 1924. In 1927, he was elected to the Shuikousha District Party Committee, and also taught at Qunzhi University in Shanghai.

When he was young, Chen first studied at his uncle's private tutorial school, and then went to study at the Jinjiang primary school. He was very bright, good at poetry and prose, and especially good at debating and making speeches. He graduated from the primary school at the age of sixteen and stopped schooling because of poverty. In the following year, he entered First Normal, where he studied with Yang Changji, Xu Teli, Li Jinxi, and Fang Weixia for five years. He was very much liked and greatly influenced by them. Xiao Zisheng recalled their school days at First Normal:

Every Sunday morning my friends, Xiong Guangchu, Chen Chang and I visited Mr. Yang's [Yang Changji] home to discuss our studies together. We read each other's notebooks, talked over our problems, and returned to school after lunch [at Yang's home].

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32 Xiao Yu (xiao Zisheng), *Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars*, p. 40.
Chen was not only diligent in academic studies; he was also very serious about practice. In his "Diaries of Dahua Studio," Yang Changji wrote:

[I] read three of my students' diaries, Xiong [Guangchu], Xiao [Zisheng], and Chen [Chang], [and found] all of them have improved. Kunfu (Xiong Guangchu) mainly wrote what he had learned from readings and lectures; Zisheng mainly wrote about his thinking; Zhangfu (Chen Chang) mainly wrote about conduct and practical work. One lays stress on erudition; one on thinking deeply; one on earnest practice.\textsuperscript{33}

Another teacher, Li Jinxi also commented on Chen and Mao:

"[I] read Ruizhi's (Mao Zedong) diary in his place, and found the unity and coherence in his writing is better than that of Zhangfu's (Chen Chang). However, they both have a similarly sincere behavior, and can be expected to become men of extraordinary ability, ...\textsuperscript{34}"

After Mao came to study at First Normal, Chen quickly made friends with him. He also made friends with other political minded youth like Cai Hesen, He Shuheng, Zhang Kundi, and Luo Xuezan. They often studied together, discussed political issues of the day, made trips around the province, and did physical exercise together. He

\textsuperscript{33} Yang Changji, \textit{Dahuaozhai riji} (Diaries of Dahua Studio), p. 152.

\textsuperscript{34} Qian Jiamei, "Chen Chang" in Hu Hua, ed., \textit{Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan}, vol. 4, p. 40.
helped found the Xinmin xuehui, and played an important role in the society. At First Normal, Chen was well known for his speeches, as he had been at the Jinjiang primary school. Xiao Zisheng recalled: "The Association (Xinmin xuehui) had only one member who liked to talk just for the sake of talking and this was Chen Chang, who was famous for long speeches." Xiao San also recalled: "Chen Chang distinguished himself in debating. He was an excellent orator and agitator." Because of his talent for making speeches, Chen was elected to head the debating department of the Student Friendship Society (Xueyou hui).

Chen graduated from First Normal in the fall of 1915. After graduation he began to teach at the institution's primary school, and then taught in his hometown, Liuyang, for a short while. Soon he returned to Changsha, first teaching at Wumei primary school founded by Xu Teli, and then at Changsha Girls Normal School, Zhounan Girls School, and First Normal.37

35 Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 62.
36 Emi Siao (Xiao San), Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth, p. 57.
When the members of the Xinmin xuehui were preparing to work and study in France in 1919, Chen hoped to go too, but both Mao and Cai wanted him to stay in Hunan to maintain the base of education in Changsha and help Mao to take care of the Xinmin xuehui. Therefore, Chen did not go to France and stayed in Changsha and taught at various schools until 1925. In September 1920, he joined Mao's Marxist Study Society and read a lot of materials of Marxism and the Russian Revolution, and then began to veer towards Marxism. His speech at the 1921 New Year Day meeting of the Xinmin xuehui shows he was a Marxist at the time. “Before I merely looked from the commoners' point of view, and thought the social system was satisfactory; later on I considered it from all angles, and found it was not good. Therefore, I began advocating Bolshevism.” Chen was one of the founders of the Cultural Bookstore and established a branch bookstore in

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38 See Cai Hesen's letter to Mao Zedong; also see Qian Jiamei, "Chen Chang" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, vol. 4, p. 40. However, Xiao Zisheng recalled differently: "Chen Chang was an only child and he had no one to look after his family if he went away. He was sorry, but he himself would never be able to go abroad. ... However, he said he would stay in Changsha and would help us from there in whatever way he could." Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tsetung and I were Beggars, p. 162-164.

39 "Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao," No. 2 (November 30, 1920) in Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian, p. 141-142.
Liuyang. In 1921, he founded the first girls' school in Liuyang - Jinjiang Higher Girls' School. He also set up a Jinjiang Peasants Night School. In 1923, Chen came back to Changsha and became one of the founders of the Xiangjing School. He sent his younger brother, Chen Anhuai to study at the Xiangjing School. After graduation Chen Anhuai was sent to do the propaganda work in Zhuping by the Party, where he was captured and killed by the Guomindang at the age of sixteen.40

After the first united front of the CCP and Guomindang in 1924, Chen was elected to the Hunan Provincial Executive Committee of the Guomindang at the First Guomindang Congress in 1925. In 1926, he was sent by the CCP to reestablish the Party's organizations and the labor unions in Shuikoushan, and was successful in organizing a workers' movement there. In 1927, he was elected to the Shuikousha District Party Committee. In 1929, the CCP transferred him to Shanghai to teach at Qunzhi University, but also to do underground work for the Party. At the end of 1929, the Party sent him to join He Long's army in West Hunan-Hubei. On the way to his

40 Qian Jiamei, "Chen Chang" in Hu Hua, ed., Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, vol. 4, p. 53.
destination, he was captured in Li xian, Hunan and was killed on February 23, 1930. His obvious bravery and oratorical skill made him as a political agitator on his way to the execution. "He made a fiery speech in which he lashed the Guomindang executioners and called on the people dauntlessly to carry on the struggle."  

**Xiao Zisheng**

Xiao Zisheng (1894-1976), (other names Xiao Yu or Xiao Xudong), was a native of Xiangxiang, Hunan. A schoolmate of Mao Zedong at Dongshan Primary School and First Normal, Xiao was Mao's closest friend before 1921. He was a major founder and the first director-general of the Xinmin xuehui, while Mao was a secretary and the most influential person in the work-study movement. As an advocate, organizer, and leader of the Hunanese students' work-study program in France, Xiao played a decisive role in this program. However, most accounts of early CCP history tend to ignore his important role in the Xinmin xuehui and the work-study movement because of his break up with the radicals, such as Mao and Cai, in the early 1921 by commiting himself to moderate means for national

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41 Emi Xiao (Xiao San), *Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth*, p. 57-58.
salvation. He definitely deserves more attention. Yet since he was not a founding leader of the CCP, he was not a major subject in this chapter. I am hopeful that this short study would bring more scholars' attention on him.

Xiao was brilliant and capable, good at writing essays, outstanding at calligraphy. He could use both hands to write beautifully. During the five years at First Normal, he was always the top student. His essays were always exhibited as the best ones, though Mao's essays were also exhibited. From reading each other's essays, Xiao and Mao began to learn each other's ideas and opinions; thus, a bond of sympathy formed between them and they became close friends. They were together at First Normal for two and half years and "[their] evening talks became a regular habit. ... [Their] greatest pleasure was in discussions, in hearing each other's opinions of things in general."\(^{42}\) They also took a famous month-long trip together in the summer of 1917, traveling through Changsha, Ningxiang, Anhua, Yiyang, and Yuanjiang.\(^{43}\)

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\(^{42}\) Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), *Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars*, p. 35.

\(^{43}\) Zhonggong Hunan shengwei dangshi ziliaozhengji yanjiu weiyuanhuibian, *Hunan dangshi luncong* (On the history of the Communist Party of Hunan Branch), 104; also see Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), *Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars*. 

384
Because of his energetic, brilliant personality, Xiao was very much liked by his teachers and fellow students. Xiao recalled,

Many of the phrases in my notebook pleased Mr. Yang [Changji] so much that he copied them for himself. On my examination papers, he often gave me the maximum mark of 100 and added “plus 5.” Once Mao Zedong wrote an essay which he called “A Discourse on the Force of the Mind” (Xinli lun) and Mr Yang gave him the famous 100 plus 5 mark.

Xiao became the favorite student of Yang Changji who wrote in his diary, and often repeated in public: “My three most notable students, of the several thousands I taught during my six years in Changsha, were first, Xiao Xudong (Zisheng); second, Cai Hesen; and third, Mao Zedong.” So Xiao recalled, in 1936 when his old friend Xiong Guangchu came to see him, he asked Xiong a question, what Mr. Yang told him when the three of them (Xiao, Xiong, and Chen Chang) were leaving Mr. Yang’s house together back in 1912, Mr. Yang called Xiong back. Xiong said, “Mr. And Mrs. Yang wanted you to marry their daughter Kaibai,” and he added that Kaibai herself had

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44 Yang Changji, Dahuozhai riji (Diaries of Dahua Studio).
45 Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 40.
46 Yang Changji, Dahuozhai riji (Diaries of Dahua Studio); also Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 41.
this wish. "I had to tell Mr. Yang that you were already married." He felt guilty and sorry that Kaihui had been arrested as Mao Zedong's wife and been shot.

After graduation from First normal, Xiao went to teach at the Chuyi Elementary School where he maintained his friendships with former schoolmates from First Normal. They corresponded and often met at Chuyi School or Cai Hesen's house. After two years of discussion Xiao and Mao decided to form the Xinmin xuehui. According to Xiao, they first found Cai Hesen, their mutual friend who shared their ideas, and then Xiong Guangchu, Chen Chang, and Chen Shaoxiu. In the April 1918 formation of the Xinmin xuehui, Xiao was elected general-director of the society, while Mao and Chen Shunong were elected secretaries.

Soon after the establishment of the Xinmin xuehui, its leaders were actively organizing its members to participate in the work-study program in France. Xiao, as the general-director of the Xinmin xuehui, secretary to Li Shizeng, and favorite of Li, had a profound influence on his fellow Hunanese youth and played a decisive role

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47 Siao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 44.

386
in the work-study movement. Before he left for France in 1919, he accepted the invitation of Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng to work for the Sino-French Educational Association, which greatly helped his fellow students to work and study in France. Instead, friends and acquaintances relied heavily on him for connections. A 1919 article in Dagong bao (Hunan) mentioned contacts who could help those who wanted to participate in the work-study movement: "There is Mr. Xiao Xudong (Zisheng). He is a Hunanese and has obtained the trust of Mr. Li [Shizeng], all public communication and pronouncements coming from his [Xiao's] pen."\(^\text{49}\)

After he arrived in France, Xiao continued to work for the Sino-French Educational Association. He also played a leading role in the French branch of the Xinmin xuehui. However, he opposed the violent Russian type of revolution, but was committed to more moderate means for national salvation and sincerely believed that education was the best means for national reform.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 58-59.

Xiao debated with Cai and others about which was the best method for China at the Mortargis meeting of the Xinmin xuehui in the summer of 1920. After he returned to China, he continued the discussion and debate with his friends. Both his friends Chen Chang and Mao told him that most of their friends had accepted Marxism and believed that the Russian Communism was the most suitable system for China and the easiest to follow. Xiao recalled the days he stayed in Changsha when he and Mao had many sincere talks and discussions about the problem. "Sometimes our talks made us very sad, even to the point of shedding tears, since we were unable to find a basis for mutual cooperation. I was unable to accept Mao's reasoning, but neither did my answers satisfy him. During the months consumed by these fruitless discussions, we never expressed a word of anger; rather it was a cause of genuine disappointment and sadness to both of us that we were unable to work out a common plan of action."\(^{50}\)

So, his old friend, Chen Chang said to Xiao:

All our friends have secretly become members of CY and it would be very difficult to bring them back. You know that the Association [Xinmin xuehui] aimed at reforming China in a sort of abstract way. It had

\(^{50}\) Xiao Yu (xiao Zisheng), Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars, p. 191.
no political views and no fixed plan of action. They now think the only way to attain practical results is to follow Russia's lead and to go all out to propagate the Russian doctrine. No one is looking for any other way to bring about the reforms. Why? First, because they have Russia's model to follow. ... I doubt if anything would induce them to turn back. I know that you have your own "anarchist" ideas of freedom, but everyone could not be expected to agree with Communism. I think you and Mao Ruizhi (Mao Zedong) will follow different roads in the future.  

Soon Mao and his comrades began the formation of the CCP, while Xiao began to work in Beijing Guomindang Committee and served as professor and president of several universities. He also served as the vice-minister of agriculture and minerals in the Guomindang government. After 1949, he first moved to Taiwan and finally Uruguay. A brilliant person with many capabilities, Xiao, never emerged as the leader his early career suggested. On November 21, 1976, he died in Uruguay at the age of eighty-three.

**Xiao San**

Another founding member of the Xinmin xuehui, Xiao San (1896-1893), (other name Xiao Zizhang, brother of Xiao Zisheng), was a native of Xiangxiang, Hunan. He was a schoolmate and friend of Mao both at Dongsan primary

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51 Ibid., p. 189-190.
school and the First Normal. He not only participated in the formation of the Xinmin xuehui in 1918 and the work-study program in France in 1920, but also in the founding of the Chinese Communist Youth Party in France. In 1923, he went to study at the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and returned to China the following year. Then he became the secretary of Hunan Communist Youth League (CYL), the secretary of CYL North Bureau, the secretary of Zhangjiakou CCP, and the head of the organizational department of CYL respectively. He attended the CCP’s Fifth and Seventh Congresses. After 1949, he attended the First, Second, and Fifth Congresses of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and was elected to the standing committee of the Fifth Congress. He also attended the First and Second National People’s Congress. He was an internationally known poet. He was also a biographer of Mao Zedong. Ironically, he and his German wife were put in prison for seven years on charges of espionage during the Cultural Revolution. There were some other important figures who died young. For instance, Zou Liding, one of the founders of the

52 Hu Qiaomu, "Huainian Xiao San tongzhi" (In Memory of Comrade Xiao San), Wang Zhengming, Xiao San zhuang (Biography of Xiao San)
Xinmin xuehui who drafted the regulations of the Xinmin xuehui together with Mao, died of illness in 1919 before he left for France. Chen Shaoxiu, another chief organizer of the Xinmin xuehui, died of illness in Paris in 1921.

Guo Liang

Guo Liang (1901-1928), a native of Wangcheng, Hunan, and a famous leader of the Hunan workers, headed the Hunan Labor Union, and was the CCP Hunan Provincial Committee member, the Executive Secretary of the CCP Hunan Provincial Committee, the Secretary of the CCP Hubei Provincial Committee, and the CCP Central Committee member. He died a hero of the Party in Changsha in 1928.

Xia Xi

Xia Xi (1901-1936), a native of Yiyang, Hunan, was an important figure in Hunan political activities. He served as Secretary of the CCP Hunan Provincial Committee, and was elected to the CCP Central Committee at the Fifth Congress. He also headed the West Hunan-Hubei District of the Party Committee but drowned during the Red Army's Long March in 1936.

Besides the founding members of the Xinmin xuehui from First Normal we have discussed, there were other members who were distinguished leaders in early CCP. See below:

**Li Lisan**

Li Lisan (1899-1967), native of Liling, Hunan, was an early participant in the work-study movement. He participated in the formation of the ECCP and became a firm believer in Marxism there. After he was expelled to China in the Lyons Incident, he immediately involved himself in Communist activities. He distinguished himself in the labor movement, held positions as CCP propaganda chief, CCP Central Committee member, and served as general secretary of CCP in 1930.\(^5^4\)

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\(^{53}\) There is some discrepancy about the membership of Li Lisan. Xiao Zisheng stated that Li Fuchun and Li Lisan were the first two new members of the Xinmin xuehui introduced at the Montargis Meeting in July 1920. Xiao recalled, “Li Fuchun was small and quite young. We all knew him and had a very good opinion of him. ... Li Lisan was a very different type of person. He was large, coarse, and loud-speaking. ... At one time during the meeting, he yelled out, ‘Lisan Road!’ at the top of his voice, indicating presumably that we should all follow his lead. Many of us considered this childish and in very poor taste.” Siao Yu (Xiao Zisheng), *Mao Tse-tung and I were Beggars*, p. 185. Wang Xingguo, in his Wusi Yundong (manuscript) claimed that Li Lisan was not a member of the Xinmin xuehui. P. 26.

Li Fuchun

Li Fuchun (1899-1975), native of Changsha, Hunan, married Cai Hesen's sister, Cai Chang in France. He served as assistant secretary for the Jiangxi Provincial Committee, CCP Central Committee member, and chairman of the State Planning Commission.

Cai Chang

Cai Chang (1900-), younger sister of Cai Hesen, was an early supporter of the ECCP. She was one of the most important early women Communists and had held a preeminent position in the CCP from the late twenties. She was elected to the CCP Central Committee and chaired the National Women's Federation of China.

Xiang Jingyu

Xiang Jingyu (1894-1928), a native of Xupu, Hunan, married Cai Hesen in France. She was bright and active during her school days and one of the three most favorite female students of Yang Changji. She was one of the most important early feminists in the Communist movement. She was the First Minister of the Women's Bureau of the CCP, and the first female CCP Central Committee member. She

393
died a martyr’s death in 1928 at the age of thirty-four.\textsuperscript{55}

**Luo Zhanglong**

Luo Zhanglong, (1896-1995), a native of Liuyang, Hunan, was a founding member of the Xinmin xuehui, and an early member of the CCP. Before 1934, he was already preeminent in the CCP. Elected to the CCP Central Committee and the CCP Northern Bureau committee, he also served as the secretary of the CCP Working Committee and the head of the National Labor Union.

**Xie Juezai**

Xie Juezai (1884-1971), a native of Ningxiang, Hunan, joined the Xinmin xuehui on New Years Day 1921 and the CCP in 1925. He was a prominent figure in newspapers and periodicals. He worked in judicial administration, and Party administration before 1949, and after 1949 became the first Minister of Internal Affairs of the CCP government, chief of the Supreme Court, and Vice Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

\textsuperscript{55} Gu Ci, "Xiang Jingyu" in Zhonggong dangshi renwuzhuan, vol. 6, p. 58-89.
bing zhuren
Cai Chang
Cai Hesen
Cai Yuanpei
Chen Baozhen
Chen Chang
Chen Duxiu
Chen Shaohui
Chengnan shuyuan
Chuanshan xueshe
Ci
Dahua zhai riji
daxueling
Da xuetang
Duiyu jiaoyu fangzhen zhi yijian
Fang Weixia
Fu
fuwu sheng
Ge Jianhao
Gongxue shijie she
guannian shijie
guowen
gushi
He Changgong
He Shuheng
Hou Wailou
Huang Xing
huiyilu
Hunan dangshi dashi nianbiao
Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi
Hunan gaodeng shifan  
Hunan gongli diyi shifan xuexiao  
Hunan quansheng shifan xuetang  
Hunan renmin gemingshi  
Hunan shengli diyi shifan xuexiao  
Hunan shifan guan  
Hunan youdeng shifan  
Huxiang wenhao  
jianyi shifan xuetang  
jiaoyu zongzhi  
jie biaobingguan yishi  
Kang Youwei  
Kong Zhaoshou  
Li Dazhao  
Li Fuchun  
Li Jinxi  
Li Lisan  
Li Rui  
Li Shizeng  
Li Weihan  
Li Yuandu  
li ze feng chang  
Li Zehou  
Lizhi  
Liang Qichao  
Luo Xuezan  
Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao  
meigan zhi jiaoyu  
Nan xuehui  
Nanxuan fuzi ci  
Qingong jianxue lijin she  
Renxue  
Renzi. guichou xuezhi  
Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui  
shifan benke  
Shifan guan  
shifan jiaoyu ling  
shifan xuexiao guicheng  
shijie guan jiaoyu  

Kong Youwei  
Kong Zhaoshou  
Li Dazhao  
Li Fuchun  
Li Jinxi  
Li Lisan  
Li Rui  
Li Shizeng  
Li Weihan  
Li Yuandu  
li ze feng chang  
Li Zehou  
Lizhi  
Liang Qichao  
Luo Xuezan  
Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao  
meigan zhi jiaoyu  
Nan xuehui  
Nanxuan fuzi ci  
Qingong jianxue lijin she  
Renxue  
Renzi. guichou xuezhi  
Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui  
shifan benke  
Shifan guan  
shifan jiaoyu ling  
shifan xuexiao guicheng  
shijie guan jiaoyu  

396
实体世界
时务报
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文化人
吴玉章
吴稚辉
学监
学监主任
五四思想
五四运动
五四爱国运动
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Wang Xingguo. Qingnian Mao Zedong de sixiang gui ji (The Development Pattern of Young Mao Zedong's


This dissertation draws on existing works about the May Fourth Movement and early Chinese Communism, but it is mostly based on primary materials available in Changsha, the capital city of Hunan province in China. The following works are important sources though some of them might not be wholly satisfactory.


Cai Hesen. Cai Hesen wenji (Collections of Cai Hesen). Beijing: Renmin chupanshe, 1980. This is a very useful and valuable collection of Cai Hesen’s writings.

Changsha shi bowuguan (Changsha Archives). Zhongguo gongchandang xiangqu zhixing weiyuanhui shiliao huibian (Historical documents of the Chinese Communist Party Hunan Branch). Changsha: Hunan chupanshe, 1993. These are
important documents from the early days of the Chinese Communist Party Hunan Branch, until liberation.


Hunan sheng bowuguan lishibu (Hunan Provincial Archives). *Xinmin xeihui wenxian huibian* (Documents Collection of the New Citizen Association). Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980. This is an important and valuable document collection of Xinmin xeihui in the years of 1920 and 1921, in which Chapter Five has heavily relied upon.

Hunan Shengzhi shengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (Editorial Committee for the Hunan Provincial Gazetteer), ed. *Hunan Shengzhi: Hunan jinbainian dashijishu* (Hunan Provincial Annals: Chronological record of major events in Hunan during the past one hundred years), 15 volumes. Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1959. A very useful detailed chronological record of major political and historical events in Hunan from 1840 to 1949. The volumes also cover a number of important Hunanese. However, the events and persons covered in the volumes are selective and some of the descriptions sound subjective. Some less famous but important events and persons are left out.


Zhongguo gemin bowuguan. Xinmin xuehui ziliao (Documents Collection and Memories of the New Citizen Association). Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980. This is a valuable collection of Xinmin xuehui’s historical documents and written memories of its members.

Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi, Hunan sheng weiyuanhui wenshi weiyuan huibian. Hunan jin 150 nian shishi rizhi, 1840-1990 (The Daily Records of Hunan’s Historical Events in the Latest 150 years, 1840-1990). Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1993. It is a more objective and more inclusive chronological record of historical events in Hunan from 1840 to 1990 than the previous one. The unsatisfactory part is that it is too brief and somewhat selective. However, it contains invaluable materials for the study of Hunan during the past 150 years.

The Editing Committee of the History of Hunan First Normal School. Hunan diyi shifan xiaoshi -- 1903-1949 -- 1903-1949 (The History of Hunan First Normal School--1903-1949). Shanghai: Shanghai Educational Press, 1983. This is a very useful and comprehensive history of Hunan First Normal School on which Chapter Three has heavily relied upon. Chapter Three is about the background of the school and this book contains most of the data and curriculum of the school. However, this book contains one section about Mao Zedong, which does not totally break away from the conventional Maoist focus.
There are only three but very good studies in English about Hunan.


Lewis, Charlton M. Prologue to the Chinese Revolution: The Transformation of Ideas and Institutions in Hunan Province, 1891–1907. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Lewis examines how Hunan rose to political preeminence in China, from its deep traditional roots to the modern period, thus, providing us a better understanding of China’s transition into modernity.