

# Knowledge Acts in Modern China



## Ideas, Institutions, and Identities

Edited by  
Robert Culp, Eddy U,  
and Wen-hsin Yeh

CHINA RESEARCH MONOGRAPH 73

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Robert Culp, Eddy U, and Wen-hsin Yeh, editors

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# Knowledge Acts in Modern China: Ideas, Institutions, and Identities

Edited by  
Robert Culp, Eddy U, and Wen-hsin Yeh



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Cover images (clockwise from top right): the Commercial Press building in Shanghai, ca. 1920; Zhu Kezhen in middle age; defense lawyers for the National Salvation Association, Shanghai, 1937; the Zhejiang University Math Department welcoming Su Buqing (center, front), ca. 1931; teachers and students at the Lu Xun Academy of Art, Yan’an, 1940

Cover design by Mindy Chen.

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# Acknowledgments

The idea for this volume came from a conference held at the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, on October 16 and 17, 2009. The conference was titled “Intellectuals, Professions, and Knowledge Production in Twentieth-Century China.” That conference was supported by a “New Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society” grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, funded by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, and a separate conference grant from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. We are grateful to both foundations for their generous funding of this conference and the resulting volume. The objective of the conference was to explore anew knowledge production and its related experiences in the long twentieth century in China. We are extremely fortunate that a stellar cast of scholars accepted our invitations to serve as speakers and discussants. We wish to thank Susan Mann, Ming-cheng Lo, Liu Xin, Thomas Mullaney, Xiaomei Chen, Andrew Jones, Matthew Sommer, and Nicholas Tackett for their insights and encouragement. Their participation turned the conference into an inspiring and memorable event. In addition to the contributors of this volume, several outstanding scholars shared their research during the conference as well as acted as discussants in the productive debate. We thank Li Zhang, Klaus Muhlhahn, Peter Zarrow, Zhihong Chen, Dan Shao, Bridie Andrews, Sean Hsiang-Lin Lei, Ling Shiao, and David Luesink for their participation. We also thank Melissa Dale, Elinor Levine, and their staff at the Institute of East Asian Studies at Berkeley who provided impeccable support.

A follow-up conference was held in Shanghai from November 4 to 6, 2010, after we learned that Professor Xiong Yuezhi, then vice president of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS), wanted to foster a cross-cultural dialogue on the topic of knowledge production in China. The conference, titled “Organized Knowledge in Action: Intellectuals, Professions, and Social Change in Twentieth-Century China,” was jointly sponsored

by SASS and the Institute of East Asian Studies at Berkeley. The meeting enabled us to share our findings with scholars in the Shanghai area and to learn about their research on similar topics. Prior to the conference, the focus of our volume had been revised to knowledge production from the late Qing through the Republican period. The exchange during the conference provided another refreshing round of dialogue and debate that greatly improved the quality of our research. We thank SASS for making possible this scholarly exchange. We are grateful for the participation of an outstanding group of Shanghai-based scholars, who greatly deepened our understanding of knowledge production and elite professionalization during the first half of the twentieth century. Hong Kong-based Lee Pui-tak (Li Peide), as well as Zhihong Chen, Ling Shiao, and David Luesink, who are based in North America, also kindly shared their research again during the conference.

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## INTRODUCTION

# Knowledge Systems, Knowledge Producers, and China's Distinctive Modernity

ROBERT CULP AND EDDY U

In the fall of 1918, Zhu Kezhen 竺可楨 (1890–1974) returned to China from the United States after an eight-year sojourn in which he had studied first in the School of Agriculture at the University of Illinois and then meteorology in the Earth Studies Department (Dixuexi) at Harvard University.<sup>1</sup> After his return Zhu, a bright young talent, initially taught meteorology and geography at Wuchang Higher Normal School. In 1920 he moved to Nanjing Higher Normal School, which later became Southeastern University. There he chaired the newly formed Earth Studies Department and helped shape the fields of meteorology and geography by training a cohort of young scholars.<sup>2</sup> In 1925 Zhu left academia to join Shanghai's leading publisher, Commercial Press, where he became an editor and compiler of the Chinese version of *Encyclopedia Britannica* and worked in the History and Geography Division of the Editing Department. Zhu joined Commercial

---

<sup>1</sup> For biographies of Zhu Kezhen, see Xu Youchun 徐友春, *Minguo renwu dacidian* 民國人物大辭典 [Biographical dictionary of Republican China] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1991), 489; Hu Huanyong 胡煥庸, "Zhu Kezhen xiansheng yu Shangwu yinshuguan" 竺可楨先生與商務印書館 [Mr. Zhu Kezhen and the Commercial Press], in *Shangwu yinshuguan jiuishinian, 1897–1987: Wo he Shangwu yinshuguan* 商務印書館九十年, 1897–1987: 我和商務印書館 [Ninety years of the Commercial Press, 1897–1987: Me and the Commercial Press], ed. Shangwu yinshuguan (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1987); "Zhu Kezhen shengping yu gongxian" 竺可楨生平與貢獻 [The life and contributions of Zhu Kezhen], in *Zhu Kezhen wenji* 竺可楨文集 [The collected writings of Zhu Kezhen] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1979), v–viii; "Qianyan" 前言 [Foreword], in *Zhu Kezhen quanji* 竺可楨全集 [The complete works of Zhu Kezhen], vol. 1, ed. Fan Hongye 樊洪業 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai keji jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004): 21–23.

<sup>2</sup> The development of the geography field and the activities of this cohort of scholars are explored more fully by Tze-ki Hon in chapter 1 of this book.

Press at a time when it was mobilizing some of China's leading foreign-trained scholars to develop publications that covered all major academic disciplines and systems of knowledge, transforming the press into an academic center that rivaled the growing university system.<sup>3</sup> When German-trained scholar and former chancellor of the flagship Peking University Cai Yuanpei organized the national research institute Academia Sinica under the auspices of the nascent Nationalist government in 1927, he persuaded Zhu to establish and direct the Institute for Meteorological Studies there.

In 1936, Zhu returned home to Zhejiang Province to become president of the state-sponsored Zhejiang University (Zheda), which was located in the provincial capital Hangzhou and poised to become one of China's foremost institutions of higher learning. He remained in this university post for the next decade, but the university itself did not stay put. With the Japanese invasion and occupation of Hangzhou in 1937, Zhu led Zheda on a wartime odyssey that went deep into the hinterlands of Guangxi and Guizhou, finally returning to Hangzhou in 1946.<sup>4</sup> During the crisis created by the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and the Civil War (1946–1949) between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Zhu also assumed a series of high-profile political, administrative, and consultative positions under Nationalist Party auspices, including participation in the Academic Review Committee of the Ministry of Education and the party's Central Executive Committee. In addition, he became an inspector and later a Central Executive Committee member of the Three People's Principles Youth Corps, a group that some Nationalist Party members initiated in 1937 to extend political influence and control into higher education.<sup>5</sup> Yet Zhu's cooperation with the Nationalist Party seems not to have tainted him (at least initially) in the eyes of the CCP, for in September 1949 he was invited to the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.<sup>6</sup> In October of that

<sup>3</sup> See Gao Zheyi 高哲一 [Robert Culp], "Wei putong duzhe qunti chuangzuo 'zhishi shijie': Shangwu yinshuguan yu Zhongguo xueshu jingying de hezuo" 為普通讀者群體創造“智識世界”: 商務印書館與中國學術精英的合作 [A world of knowledge for the circle of common readers: Commercial Press's partnership with China's academic elite], *Shilin* 史林 3 (2014): 92–108.

<sup>4</sup> For the wartime sojourn of many of China's leading universities to the southwest, see John Israel, *Lianda: A Chinese University in War and Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> For the development of the Three People's Principles Youth Corps, see Jianli Huang, *The Politics of Depoliticization in Republican China: Guomindang Policy towards Student Political Activism, 1927–1949* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Sponsored by the CCP, the conference formally approved the structure of the Central People's Government.

## Part I New Systems of Academic Learning

Late Qing and Republican China saw the emergence of a variety of academic disciplines based on European and American models as well as Japanese adaptations. The rise of these disciplines redefined China's intellectual and institutional landscape. In the opening chapters of this book, Tze-ki Hon and Clayton D. Brown describe the formation of two such disciplines, historical geography and anthropology, both shaped by the realization that China was no longer a world of its own but existed in an international system of nation-states and had to survive its internal competition. In chapter 1, Hon observes that the emerging discipline of historical geography witnessed a quick transition from a vocal field of knowledge dominated by former literati who sought to address national concerns to a specialized profession within higher education that nevertheless aimed to influence political decisions. In chapter 2, Brown acknowledges that politics was a driving force in the development of anthropology but focuses on the multifaceted struggle to introduce, define, and practice anthropology in Republican China.

The state played a critical role in the rise of both disciplines. For Hon, the literati-turned-geographers consistently had the state as their audience in mind. They considered knowledge of borders, resources, and landscapes key to developing national capabilities against foreign aggression, or defining the boundaries of China. Government officials, in turn, allocated funds to the geographers for their professional association and research. Close ties developed between the Nationalist government and Western-trained geographers. The latter promoted their science-based knowledge to a state eager to exploit it for political legitimacy and development reasons. Brown indicates that state action was crucial to the development of anthropology. The notable Cai Yuanpei and his junior colleagues acted as academic entrepreneurs and promoted what they considered an essential branch of knowledge to the Republican government and, in turn, received official appointment as well as financial, political,

and even military support for their projects, the price of which was a constant negotiation and positioning within a state framework to develop the discipline.

Both chapters highlight the changing conception of the discipline. Hon offers a narrative of displacement. Even though former literati took advantage of their social standing to promote historical geography, their efforts were eventually eclipsed by overseas-trained academic specialists who helped to develop modern higher education and occupied key positions within this institution. The specialists, nevertheless, had to grapple with the type of academic enterprise they wanted, from its core philosophy to the adoption and modification of foreign institutional models. Brown probes the competition to define anthropology. Not only did differences exist between “traditionalists” and returned specialists. The latter were trained under different academic systems and thus sought to demarcate the discipline differently, even though they saw themselves as practicing a modern scientific discipline. Using the example of archaeology, Brown shows that even though anthropological research received endorsement and support from the Nationalist government, the practitioners’ authority was challenged in the field because, among other things, the right of the Nationalists to rule was itself questioned. At the same time, foreign practitioners familiar with archaeological study in China questioned the practices of their new Chinese colleagues, some of whom had been their own students.

## CHAPTER 1

# Coming to Terms with Global Competition: The Rise of Historical Geography in Early Twentieth-Century China

TZE-KI HON

*The cosmos is the fusion of time and space.  
There is no beginning and end in time;  
Nor are there marked boundaries in space.  
In their continuous mixing and interaction,  
We have episodes in history and manifestations in geography.*  
—Liu Yizheng, *Shixue yu dixue*, 1926

It is well known that after the Opium War (1839–1842), Chinese intellectuals took an avid interest in geographical studies in order to understand the world and the global system of nation-states. This interest—first marked by the publication of Wei Yuan’s 魏源 *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖誌 (1842) and Xu Jiyou’s 徐繼畲 *Yinghuan zhiliue* 瀛寰志略 (1848)—was a driving force in the rise of geography as a system of knowledge. It was also an impetus for the growth of professional associations and publication networks that energized China’s print capitalism centered in Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin. More important, the interest ignited a drastic change in the intellectual landscape that would put a premium on empirical knowledge of the globe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Yong 王勇, *Zhongguo dilixue shi* 中國地理學史 [A history of geographical studies in China] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1986 [1938]), 217–262; Guo Shuanglin 郭双林, *Xichao jidang xia de wanqing dilixue* 西潮激蕩下的晚清地理學 [Late Qing geographical studies amid Western influence] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 160–342; Zou Zhenhuan 鄒振環, *Wanqing Xifang dilixue zai Zhongguo: Yi 1815 nian zhi 1911 nian Xifang dilixue yizhu de chuanbo yu yingxiang wei zhongxin* 晚清西方地理學在中國: 以1815年至1911年西方地理學譯著



## CHAPTER 2

# Drawing Boundaries in Sand: Anthropology in Republican China

CLAYTON D. BROWN

China's early Republic saw an efflorescence of new professional fields. This proliferation occurred with the collapse of a highly centralized imperial state and its foundational neo-Confucian orthodoxy, which left men of letters adrift in the search for new sources and structures of authority.<sup>1</sup> The tenuous and short-lived independence of academics from state power created a moment of genuine pluralism and innovation that would persist even when foreign threats precipitated the reassertion of centralized control. Against this backdrop, anthropology developed from neologism to curriculum to institution, as the Chinese confronted a constellation of models of the discipline. In the United States, anthropology encompasses four subfields: cultural anthropology, physical anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. In Europe, each of these is regarded as an independent field. Ethnology is the equivalent of American cultural anthropology, and with archaeology, a "long transatlantic estrangement" produced "two disciplines separated by the same subject."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, within the same country, the discipline of anthropology differed from institution to institution. Chinese scholars seeking to establish the same field hence often found themselves at odds, each promoting standards and methodologies coincident with their own particular training. At stake were not only careers and the power to shape the discipline; anthropology also offered a modern, scientific means of defining China, for while archaeology searched for Chinese origins, physical and cultural anthropology (or ethnology) defined the Chinese people.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to a tradition of Confucian patriarchy, the first-generation anthropologists did not, so far as I know, include any women.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Shott, "Two Cultures: Thought and Practice in British and North American Archaeology," *World Archaeology* 37, no. 1 (2005): 1–10.

## Part II Technical Knowledge and the Professions

Parallel to the formation of the academic fields discussed in part I, late Qing and Republican China also witnessed the development of technical professions such as law and engineering, which are the focus of part II. As chapters 3 and 5 show, schools and training programs initiated and run by foreigners played a vital role in introducing these new fields, especially during the late Qing period. Law and politics (*fazheng* 法政) programs at Japanese universities first introduced Chinese literati to constitutional principles and a whole range of legal subfields, whereas foreign firms and governments operating railways in China established programs to train the engineers needed to build and run those systems.

Chinese governments, however, rapidly seized the initiative by establishing their own schools for law and politics, judicial training programs, and courses to teach engineering at state-run universities. As they did so, Chinese scholars and government officials played an active role in configuring these fields of knowledge and shaping the institutions that taught them in China. We see this most clearly in the cases of law and the judiciary. In chapter 3, Huei-min Sun demonstrates that late Qing literati strongly preferred courses of study that included politics, economics, and international relations over narrow, specialized training in law. This preference reflected a Confucian orientation toward more general moral and political concerns versus narrow, technical ones. Consequently, China's own law and politics schools tended to replicate the diverse, more general curriculum common in Japan rather than focus on specialized legal training. Similarly, in chapter 4, Glenn Tiffert portrays a growing politicization of judicial training during the 1930s and 1940s, through the process of partification (*danghua* 黨化), which reflected both Leninist approaches to law and Chinese proclivities to viewing law as a tool for political projects rather than an independent field insulated from politics. With engineering, by contrast, as Elisabeth Köll shows in chapter 5, a steady stream of Chinese scholars pursued higher degrees in the United States and Europe

and returned to institutionalize those fields of learning by teaching in Chinese universities, leading to a more direct process of knowledge transfer.

However these fields were configured, the vagaries of late Qing and Republican job markets for those with specialized training had a decisive impact on elite professionalization. Each chapter illustrates a distinctive process. Sun demonstrates that declining opportunities for government and academic positions, which late Qing literati valued culturally, forced law and politics school graduates, somewhat reluctantly, into becoming licensed, practicing lawyers during the early Republic, leading to what she calls “unintentional professionalization” in what many of them considered a narrow, technical field. Tiffert shows that those eligible for judicial training in the early Republic often aimed instead at more prestigious positions in the government bureaucracy or, ironically enough, lucrative private legal practice. Together, these two chapters reveal a hierarchy of prestige and profit ranging from government posts and educational positions, which provided both, to law practice (lucrative) to judicial appointments (prestigious). By contrast, Elisabeth Köll suggests that limited railway expansion during the Republic left capable civil engineers with few outlets to practice their craft, so they turned instead to positions in the government bureaucracy or higher education, becoming, in effect, specialists unable to practice their profession. Most importantly, in none of these cases do we see a neat, linear process of professionalization running parallel to foreign examples.

Moreover, in each of these chapters, late imperial cultural frameworks inflected the mindsets and practices of these emergent lawyers, judges, and engineers. Köll, for instance, describes initial resistance by late Qing engineering students to hands-on field research and study. Sun relates that Republican lawyers actively practiced literati pastimes of poetry, painting, and classical scholarship to maintain their cultural prestige, even as they became legal technicians. Moreover, Tiffert argues that “judges were expected to be something more than adept technicians; they also were supposed to reach for the personal rectitude and cultured sagacity of traditional scholar-officials.” Even as more specialized groups of technical professionals emerged during the early twentieth century, late imperial expectations of what it meant to be a scholar shaped the identities and practices of late Qing and Republican intellectuals in ways that differed markedly from their counterparts in the West.

## CHAPTER 3

# From Literati to Legal Professionals: The First-Generation Chinese Law School Graduates and Their Career Patterns

HUEI-MIN SUN

In 1874, Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909), then educational commissioner of Sichuan Province, published a wide-ranging reading list titled *Shumu dawen* 書目答問 (Bibliographical questions answered). Of the more than two thousand books listed, only eight were about judicial knowledge. Twenty-four years later, in another influential book, *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 (An exhortation to learning), Zhang highly praised Western criminal law and business law, but he still did not emphasize the importance of legal knowledge in the education scheme that he was proposing for future literati.<sup>1</sup>

Zhang's opinion about legal education came from a long-standing intellectual tradition that considered law a technical skill and thus a secondary form of knowledge compared with Confucian learning. During the Qing dynasty, there were no formal institutions for legal education; it was assumed that well-educated scholar-officials could learn how to deal with judicial matters by self-study and on-the-job training, but most officials in charge of judicial matters had to rely on the assistance of private legal secretaries trained through apprenticeship.<sup>2</sup> This basic assumption also applied to Western legal knowledge. For example, in 1877, Li Hongzhang

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Dexin 趙德馨, Wu Jianjie 吳劍杰, and Feng Tianyu 馮天瑜, eds., *Zhang Zhidong quanji* 張之洞全集 [The complete works of Zhang Zhidong], vol. 12 (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 2008), 169–172, 176, 184, 268.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about traditional Chinese legal education, see Wejen Chang, "Legal Education in Ch'ing China," in *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 292–339.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Chinese Judge: From Literatus to Cadre, 1906–1949

GLENN D. TIFFERT

Since the late Qing dynasty, arguably no phrase has seized the imagination of legal reformers in China more than “rule the country by law” (*yifa zhiguo* 以法治國), and no group has occupied a more central place in their designs than the judiciary. Yet, the judiciary registers only weakly in the voluminous literature on courts and judicial practice in China. Little is known about its origins and evolution and the intellectual capital it possessed. As long as we assume these lacunae away, we overlook critical dimensions of the judicial system’s formation and operation, neglect historical insights into its present condition, and risk misconstruing important facets of a century of Chinese modernization.

This chapter explores the dynamics of judicial recruitment, selection, and training in the late Qing, Beiyang, and Nationalist governments, and how these processes shaped the legal system in Republican China. For historians, it illuminates the rise of a novel professional community that spearheaded the pursuit of modernization, and the concomitant reconstitution of the state, learned elites, and knowledge and power. For legal scholars, it furnishes a background against which to read the challenges, policies, debates, and values that animate judicial reform today, particularly with respect to the relationship among authoritarianism, the rule of law, professionalization, and the soaring technical sophistication of the Chinese judiciary.

Another objective of this chapter is to contribute to the historiographical reformulation of contemporary China’s connection to the past by retexturing our image of the Republican era and its role in forming the People’s Republic of China. Revolutionary ardor notwithstanding, the PRC judicial system’s architects inherited from Republican China a refractory imprint of what judges, law, and the institutions that supported them should look like and do, and a repertoire of concrete lessons about pursuing judicial modernity under authoritarianism that seems to grow more salient by the

# The Making of the Civil Engineer in China: Knowledge Transfer, Institution Building, and the Rise of a Profession

ELISABETH KÖLL

The role of engineers and their contributions to the industrialization and economic growth of nation-states is widely recognized in the discussion of emerging modern technologies, business, and industries in Europe and North America during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> In the case of China, where political and institutional constraints resulted in a delay of industrialization, the emergence and impact of the engineering profession occurred considerably later. When new mining, shipbuilding, and railroad construction initiatives finally began to take off during the late nineteenth century, urgent demands for engineering knowledge and talent in China remained unmet.

This chapter explores how railroad companies expanding after 1900 laid the tracks for engineering education in China by initiating the building of a localized, company-based knowledge infrastructure. Despite some achievements, engineering as an academic and professional discipline did not mature until the Nationalist government provided the institutional framework for the creation of a formalized knowledge system that would eventually support not only the railroad industry but also the economy at large. In this respect, the chapter confirms a major theme identified in chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9, namely, that the establishment of the various disciplines via the professionalization of the academy proceeded in tandem with the political centralization of the Guomindang state. However,

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Kees Gispén, *New Profession, Old Order: Engineers and German Society, 1815–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); R. A. Buchanan, *The Engineers: A History of the Engineering Profession in Britain, 1750–1914* (London: Kingsley, 1989); Terry S. Reynolds, *The Engineer in America: A Historical Anthology from Technology and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Kevin McCormick, *Engineers in Japan and Britain: Education, Training and Employment* (London: Routledge, 2000).

## Part III Media and the Market

Print capitalism generated powerful media for the dissemination of new systems of knowledge during the first third of the twentieth century in China. Part III explores the development of book and newspaper publishing as outlets for the production and circulation of ideas and the creation of new professional identities from the 1910s through the 1930s. On the one hand, these market-driven industries provided a platform for leading intellectuals, such as economist Ma Yinchu discussed by Bryna Goodman in chapter 6 and the historical geographers featured in chapter 1, to build their disciplines, establish their reputations, and address pressing current events. On the other hand, the demands of productivity for profit led to the proliferation of new occupations for the literate and educated as editors, reporters, proofreaders, and compilers. As all three chapters in this part show, these groups played vital roles in the process of cultural production and often mediated, in important ways, the introduction and circulation of new ideas and systems of knowledge.

How specialized or “professional” were these writers and editors when compared with the academic and technical professions discussed in parts I and II? In chapter 8, Timothy Weston describes systematic efforts by educators and publishers to fashion a mix of moral, theoretical, and practical education in journalism based on an American model that aimed at professionalizing journalism in China in ways parallel to the technical professions analyzed in part II, especially railroad engineering as portrayed in chapter 5. Significantly though, these efforts at systematic training were driven more by the concerns of intellectuals and media specialists than the initiative of the state, which, as we have seen, was much more proactive in the areas of law and engineering. Further, in chapter 7, Robert Culp uncovers in Shanghai’s modern publishing companies increasingly formalized and systematic training for staff editors. Yet, in practice, a wide spectrum of literate people and competent writers could function as staff editors for a book publisher or beat reporters at a newspaper. Thus, the

boundaries around these professions were quite porous, with no possibility of a single group establishing a functional monopoly. Though the university-based journalism programs discussed by Weston in chapter 8 proliferated, providing basic ethical norms and technical procedures for the field, only small proportions of working journalists were graduates of those programs well into the 1930s. As a result, many of the editors and reporters working for commercial publishing and the newspaper industry were people with basic modern educations and functional writing skills, whom Culp labels “petty intellectuals.”

Despite a supposed lack of specialized knowledge or technique, journalists and staff editors could shape new ideas and systems of knowledge in the ways they translated, packaged, and sold them. In chapter 6, for example, we see newspapers shaping public knowledge about stock exchanges and trusts through both advertisements and sensational stories that were intended to sell newspapers and the trusts themselves. In chapter 7, Culp further suggests that specialized academic knowledge became the textual raw material that staff editors and compilers could reconstitute and repackage for a more general readership in the forms of textbooks, reference books, and series publications.

But mediation through newspapers or the works of the modern publishers could also transform even the more systematic, specialized forms of knowledge produced by elite intellectuals like Ma Yinchu. As Goodman demonstrates through her careful analysis of Ma’s journalistic and academic writings on stock exchanges and trusts, Ma’s views of the value of trust companies—and the overall relevance of American economic institutions and systems to China—shifted as he sought to explain the dynamics of the 1921 stock exchange bubble to the mass public. Once published in the mass media, new forms of knowledge were evaluated in relation to broader questions about the public good and the nation’s welfare, which could trigger reconsideration of their very substance.



## CHAPTER 6

# Economics with Chinese Characteristics: The Production of Economic Knowledge in Early Republican Shanghai

BRYNA GOODMAN

*People will distinguish right from wrong and good from bad when science develops and they understand the laws of nature and are able to examine human relations. People will not treat their neighbors as enemies if they understand economic principles.*

—Kexue (1915)<sup>1</sup>

*Economics is the pulse of modern life, and the independence of the individual is the fundamental principle of production, according to economics. . . . [T]he independence of the individual in modern ethics and the independence of individual property in economics bear mutual witness.*

—Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942) in 1916<sup>2</sup>

*What crime is this? It is the crime of economics.*

—Zheng Zhengqiu 鄭正秋 (1889–1935),  
writing of a stock exchange suicide (1922)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Fakan ci” 發刊詞 [Inaugural preface], *Kexue* 科學 [Science] 1, no. 1 (January 25, 1915): 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Duxiu, “Kongzi zhi dao yu xiandai shenghuo” 孔子之道與現代生活 [The way of Confucius and modern life], in *Duxiu wencun* 獨秀文存 [Chen Duxiu’s writings] (Wuhu: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1988), 82–83.

<sup>3</sup> Zheng Zhengqiu 鄭正秋, “Cong Xi nüshi zisha delai de jiaoxun” 從席女士自杀得來的教訓 [Lessons from the suicide of Miss Xi], in *Xi Shangzhen* 席上珍, vol. 1, ed. Cui Weiru (Shanghai: Funü zhiye yaniu she, 1922), 10.

## CHAPTER 7

# Mass Production of Knowledge and the Industrialization of Mental Labor: The Rise of the Petty Intellectual

ROBERT CULP

In the late Qing and Republican periods, commercial publishing gave material form to new systems of thought and circulated them throughout Chinese-reading communities in China proper and beyond. Publishing companies competed to bring to market texts relating new academic fields, such as anthropology and geography, and professional fields, such as journalism, engineering, and law, discussed throughout this book.<sup>1</sup> Journals, monographs, textbooks, reference books, and series publications (*congshu* 叢書) all became vehicles for introducing new systems of thought into China's public discourse. Producing these books and magazines required the mobilization of intellectual labor, a fact that many studies have overlooked in focusing on the content of the ideas and the cultural richness of this period.<sup>2</sup> This chapter analyzes the progressive industrialization of intellectual labor that resulted from the increased pace and scale of commercial publishing during the 1920s and 1930s. In doing so, it foregrounds the experience of the commercial publishers' staff editors, quintessential Shanghainese petty urbanites (*xiao shimin* 小市民) who, I argue, played a pivotal role in producing the flood of publications and consequent spread of ideas that we associate with this period.<sup>3</sup> Understanding the experience

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion of the intense commercial competition among Shanghai's publishers, see Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), chap. 5.

<sup>2</sup> For an exception, see Michael Hill's innovative study of the labor involved in translation. Michael Gibbs Hill, *Lin Shu, Inc.: Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> For the definitive characterization of petty urbanites, see Wen-hsin Yeh, "Progressive Journalism and Shanghai's Petty Urbanites: Zou Taofen and the *Shenghuo* Enterprise, 1926–1945," in *Shanghai Sojourners*, China Research Monograph 40, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and

## CHAPTER 8

# Journalism as a Field of Knowledge in Republican China: Ideas, Institutions, and Politics

TIMOTHY B. WESTON

Chinese newspaper journalism underwent dramatic change between the 1911 Revolution and the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). Newspapers emerged and began to have influence on a narrow band of the population in a limited number of cities between 1895 and the end of the 1911 Revolution, but their visibility and widespread importance exploded after the overthrow of the old order. After 1911, freed from the dictates of the imperial state, which had censored content and controlled how many papers could be published, the number of newspapers as well as their circulations increased dramatically, as did their influence within an ever-broadening swath of society. Nationalistic intellectuals seeking to modernize China zeroed in on the press as a critically important vehicle through which to implement Republican cultural norms and propagate reformed social and political values. Intellectuals had long been accustomed to wielding the brush, their social status having largely derived from their mastery of the written language. Their turn to newly popular forms of print, newspapers central among them, constituted a natural transference of attention from earlier forms of textual authority to new ones whose growing social significance was impossible to ignore.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A robust scholarly literature focused on print culture and elite cultural authority in early modern and modern China has recently developed. For representative examples, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Christopher Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Rudolf Wagner, ed., *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers, 1870–1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

## Part IV Party Control and Construction

The very real possibility of China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War strengthened the hands of the Nationalist Party as well as the Communist Party in political and military affairs. The parties, in turn, exploited such capital to bolster their intervention in the realm of knowledge. In chapter 9, J. Megan Greene shows that the Nationalist regime took advantage of its forced relocation to inland areas to promote science and technology not only for the purpose of national defense but also in preparation for postwar industrialization and modernization. A lack of financial resources and qualified personnel did not prevent the regime from trying to pursue technological rationalization and academic professionalization. Ideas and practices flourished across state agencies, which cooperated, to various extents, to provide training and opportunities as well as guidelines for scientific and technological development. The multipronged effort of the regime included reforming the entire school system to facilitate the production of scientific and technical personnel. Greene describes an emerging developmental state laying its ideological and institutional foundations, some elements of which would become constitutive of the later "Taiwan miracle."

The next two chapters focus on the production of political knowledge within the Chinese Communist Movement during the war, and both allude to the postrevolutionary significance of such knowledge. In chapter 10, Timothy Cheek emphasizes the fecundity of Maoism as a system of political thought, or what accounted for its hegemony in intellectual terms in addition to the physical force brought to support it. He contends that Maoism was built upon two fundamental ideological principles: (1) Epistemological elitism, which invested the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party with the ultimate wisdom of understanding history and development as well as politics and morality; and (2) Attitudinal fundamentalism, which demanded that followers of all sorts acquire the correct attitude needed for revolution and socialism. Yan'an, the relatively

isolated headquarters of the party during the war, became the crucible by which Maoism, for the first time, attained hegemonic status within the revolutionary movement. The early 1940s Rectification Campaign was a key moment. Cheek shows that Maoism was mobilized across the realms of propaganda, organization, and security. Each of these central institutions had its own political purposes and functions; yet, its operation both depended upon the twin principles of Maoism and extended them through specific discursive and administrative practices.

In chapter 11, Eddy U pursues further this constitutive relationship between discourse and organization within the Chinese Communist Movement. He illustrates the formation of the social category of “intellectuals” from a concept of the party since its founding in the 1920s to a highly visible population in Yan’an. In particular, the party’s discourse of intellectuals shaped the headquarters in distinctly spatial, occupational, pedagogical, and hierarchical manners. As a result, men and women from a variety of backgrounds became intellectuals in everyday life, embodied political subjects who allegedly shared tendencies and dispositions not conducive to war resistance and revolution. Like the geographers, editors, journalists, and other knowledge actors featured in the first three parts of this book, the literate men and women who arrived in Yan’an during the war wanted to experiment with knowledge and ideas as well as their own professional and political identities, besides making contributions to the war. In the end, however, their characters were defined and judged not by themselves but by a political regime that countenanced little departure from its own vision and division of society.

## Looking toward the Future: State Standardization and Professionalization of Science in Wartime China

J. MEGAN GREENE

At a Chongqing middle school in March 1944, China's National Resources Commission (NRC) set up an exhibit on mining and industry that attracted thousands of visitors. According to British scientist and sinologist Joseph Needham (1900–1995), at the center of the entrance hall was a display with “all the old provincial weights and measures side by side with the standard measures of weight and capacity” that illustrated the need for standardization. “The importance of standardization was also shown by a medley of pieces of electrical equipment, none of which . . . fit each other, presumably the result of pre-war purchase from Western countries, and showing the necessity of one standardized industry for all China.”<sup>1</sup> Although the exhibits showed only physical items, implicit in the message was that people, too, had to be educated to modern scientific standards. The Ministry of Education (MOE) shared this position. Much of its wartime policy was aimed at churning out graduates who would employ scientific knowledge to serve the nation. Increasingly over the course of the war, the Leninist state apparatus of the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) sought to control and develop the scientific and technical professions because of their potential to contribute to national defense, national development, and postwar reconstruction. The official efforts were met with mixed response from academicians and professionals, who sometimes found the state's tactics to be heavy-handed.

Well before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), the Guomindang state had established its intention to exert control over

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Needham, “Chungking Industrial and Mining Exhibition,” *Nature* 153, no. 3892 (1944): 672.

## Making Maoism: Ideology and Organization in the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1942–1944

TIMOTHY CHEEK

Maoism dominated China during the middle of the twentieth century, interrupting the development of modern professionalism and redirecting the organization of social, cultural, and political conditions toward revolutionary goals. Under Maoism, the cadre replaced the professional as the dominant identity of knowledge producers. Ideology—Marxism-Leninism (and later Maoist thought)—became *science*, the science of human cognition and meaning making that directed all subsidiary sciences and culture. Maoism was both an ideology (a system of knowledge) and an organization (the political state and technical power to form, direct, and employ knowledge and knowledge producers). How did Maoism function? How did it shape knowledge production?

This chapter investigates the operation of Maoism in a new social world, the emerging party-state under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Yan'an, a rural market town in northwest China that served as the party's center from 1937 to 1947, and tracks how this system of thought interacted with the material and social world to create the Communist model of the cadre as a particular kind of knowing and speaking subject. This form of cadre took political power as the Guomindang cadre never did, and it then became the hegemonic social model of the Mao period (1949–1976). The model still challenges liberal professional identity in China today. The analysis here focuses on the first public implementation of this ideological regime during the Yan'an Rectification Campaign (*zhengfeng yundong* 整風運動) from 1942 to 1944. This CCP-led movement, which involved intense political reeducation, mass meetings, organizational training, and widespread hunts for alleged spies, coincided with the rise of Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) and his political thought to preeminence in the Chinese Communist Movement.

## CHAPTER 11

# The Formation of “Intellectuals” in Yan’an

EDDY U

During the 1930s and 1940s, a redefinition of knowledge and literate identity led to the formation of a new social category of intellectuals (*zhishifenzi* 知識分子) in Yan’an. This chapter highlights the category as an example of the powerful countercurrents against the flowering of new systems of knowledge as well as professional and political identities enjoyed by literate people described in previous chapters. A rural town in northwest China, Yan’an served as the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). Upset with the ruling Nationalist regime’s lack of military response to Japanese aggrandizement, a diversity of relatively educated men and women traveled to Yan’an during the late 1930s to join the resistance led by the CCP. The remote town quickly developed into a center of knowledge and learning. Art, science, education, industry, and other sectors saw unprecedented growth in the destitute region. Despite personal devotion and sacrifices, however, the newcomers, along with others, were redefined by the party’s leadership as undesirable political subjects referred to as “intellectuals.” The appearance of this politically constructed category within the Chinese Communist Movement would ultimately eradicate the freedom of literate people to fashion their own professional and political identities and end their broad experimentation with knowledge and ideas. Political authority became the unchallengeable arbiter of knowledge, value, and identity.

As illustrated in earlier chapters, the formation of the category of intellectuals in Yan’an reflected the social dimensions that influenced knowledge production after the late Qing dynasty: foreign influence, domestic legacies, national crises, prior institutional developments, stratification of ideas, and the self-understanding of literate people. However, one set of conditions stood out as different: the category was formed under the CCP’s political hegemony. Through organization, persuasion, and coercion, the party led by Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) inculcated in the



## AFTERWORD

# Rethinking Modern China: The Question of Knowledge

WEN-HSIN YEH

In the last years of the Qing (1644–1911), the dynasty embarked upon a comprehensive program of institutional reform. Known as the New Policies and offering the promise of the eventual creation of a constitutional monarchy, these rules and laws amounted to a wholesale re-design of the mission of the state and the organization of the bureaucracy. Imperial orders tackled critical matters such as citizenship, corporation, civic association, legal punishment, the court system, public works, communications, transportation, resource extractions, finance, taxations, police, the reorganization of the military, the establishment of Western-style schools, the taking of census, the creation of a public press, and so forth. The dynasty created provincial assemblies and ran elections. As part of this sweeping complex of new initiatives, the court announced in 1905 the abolition of the civil service examinations system.

The examinations system had, for over a millennium, been at the center of the education, certification, and recruitment of the imperial officialdom. It had functioned to assure the centrality of Confucian texts in the ordering of a disparate empire the size of a continent. It privileged Confucian texts as a unifying curriculum, empowering them with a civilizing mission and an orienting capacity in the domains of knowledge and morality. It succeeded in sustaining popular beliefs that the imperial bureaucracy functioned on the principles of moral reasoning and literary merit, thereby providing an important ladder for upward social mobility.

The system, despite the critique of its late Qing detractors, was not as stultifying as to preclude, under the Ming or the Qing, the production of knowledge beyond the examination requirements. Still, as the New Policies reforms took hold, the civil service examinations system gave way.

The capacity of the civil service examinations system to unify and orient, to be sure, had been repeatedly challenged well before 1905. The

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