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A Look at the Educational System in The People's Republic of China and the Impact of Changing Governmental Ideology

Introduction

The Webster's Dictionary definition of educate includes: 1a) to provide school for; 1b) to train by formal instruction and supervised practice, especially in a skill, trade, or profession; 2) to develop mentally, morally, or aesthetically, especially by instruction; and 3) to persuade or condition as desirable. The educational system in the United States concerns mainly those activities included in definitions 1a and 1b, and the mental instruction portion of definition 2. However, the educational system in China today more fully emphasizes aspects in all three of the definitions. Schooling and training by formal instruction and supervision are provided through both the regular educational system and the comprehensive system of adult education. In addition, "mental, moral, and aesthetic development" and "persuading or conditioning as desirable" all have a legitimate place within both the regular educational system and the adult educational system. The first portion of this paper will take a look at the history of education in China and how it has changed in form, scope, and emphasis since the time of Confucius. Consideration will then be given to the current educational system, examining the various levels and types of education and some of the issues involved. Finally, the issues **and** challenges facing the Chinese educational system in general as it moves into the future will be explored.

History

"...education was used as a tool for the ruling class to stay in power rather than to serve society" (She 1989:36). This statement describes the purpose of education throughout much of the dynastic period of China's history. Education at that time required the rote learning of such things as poetry, philosophy, and literary commentaries, with little or no attention paid to scientific, technical, or practical knowledge. The Chinese system of scholar-officials came to be based on a series of highly competitive examinations designed to test men in the aforementioned 'classics' -- and being a scholar-official was the most desirable career to which a young man might aspire. However, while education was highly valued as a means to attain power, prestige, and respect, it was not easy to attain, even if one were highly motivated. Public schools did not exist, and while there were private academies, the cost was prohibitive for most people. Independent of the cost, women could neither attend academies nor become civil servants, the general consensus of the times being seen in the proverb "A woman with education causes trouble" (Clayre 1985:96).

Increasing contact with the West caused China to realize the need to be able to compete on a technological level with the rest of the world; something the civil service system did not provide for. Consequently, the civil service system was disbanded and the Ministry of Education came into being in 1905. Through the Ministry of Education, the government maintained centralized control of the emerging modern system of education and attempted to provide uniform instruction throughout the country.

The thrust of the new educational system was modernization, and toward that goal the most important task of the educational system below the university level was "to inculcate...patriotism, loyalty to the government, respect for authority,

diligence, thrift, etc." (Reed 1988:5). While colleges and universities were established which specialized in a variety of areas (particularly science and technology), there were few programs at the master's level or beyond, which created the necessity for those desirous of such degrees to go abroad.

The Chinese actively sought outside ideas and strategies for developing their new system as early as 1895, first turning to the Japanese and later to the Americans (Broaded 1989:98). In 1931, the Nationalist government invited a group of European scholars sponsored by the League of Nations Institute of Intellectual Cooperation to review their system and make suggestions for reform (Hayhoe, 1987:255). However, in spite of all the good intentions at educational reform, civil war and foreign invasion hampered progress.

When the communists came to power in 1949, education was seen as a critical element in the transformation of the country, and in 1952 they patterned their new system after the Russian model. As in the previous period, a centralized system of control was set up. Appointments were political in nature, which later led to the 'red' vs. 'expert' debate. One of the problems with this system was that it alienated education from the educational needs of society. Graduates found themselves unable to use their knowledge on the job, and in some cases even had difficulty finding jobs (Li 1988:26).

During the Cultural Revolution, 'education' came under strong suspicion; the knowledge and training of the educated were seen as having strong pernicious Western influence. Teachers were often publicly humiliated, sent to remote regions to work the land, tortured, or even killed. Schools were closed for long periods of time, ranging from months at the primary and secondary levels to years for colleges and universities. When schools were in session, the quality of education received was low because former teachers had been sent away or were retained but denied

permission to teach, which meant that those teaching classes were often unqualified or underqualified. Also, the withdrawal of textbooks created a serious problem.

The Ministry of Education was dismantled in 1969, and decentralization of education took place. Revolutionary committees controlled by workers and peasants ran the universities (Kwong 1987), and studies in "Mao Zedong Thought" replaced science and technology in importance. During this time many universities became overstaffed as teachers who were "politically incapacitated" were retained and new teachers were hired to fulfill their duties. In addition to the "iron rice bowl" concept which kept teachers on the payroll, the "big rice pot" concept meant that the collective or state would look after everyone and the schools weren't required to concern themselves with things like performance or budgets...and they didn't. In extreme cases, student-teacher ratios were as low as 1:1 (Kwong 1987). This situation led to low morale and wasted resources. Antipathy ran rampant as faculty were afraid to make waves, carry on research which might show Western influence, or voice opinions, lest they be attacked in the next round of scourges. Buck passing or "kicking the ball" was a prevalent way to keep from having responsibility pinned on oneself in the future if things went badly.

Huang Wei cites Soong Ching Ling (widow of Sun Yat-Sen and famous children's educator) as saying "For children, ideological education is more important than material conditions" (Huang 1990:23). Ideological education stressed love of the motherland, loving people, loving labor, loving science, and loving state property. Although such teaching is still considered important, one of the major shifts in education since 1976 has been from an ideological to a technological emphasis. Deng Xiaoping's 1978 speech on the Four Modernizations emphasizes that education is the cornerstone of modernization.

Some of the specific changes which have occurred in the post-Mao period include: 1) nine-year compulsory education; 2) enhanced vocational education programs at the secondary level; 3) the re-implementation of a system of "key" schools; 4) the reintroduction of a national university entrance exam; and 5) the adoption of scientific management and the responsibility system in higher education.

The structure of the educational system in present day China is similar to that found in the U.S., as can be seen in Appendix 1 (Reed 1988:61). It must be remembered that China is a huge country with a widely dispersed rural population, and the educational structure has changed dramatically since 1949. With so many people and so many changes within such a short time span, inconsistencies exist, and this chart must be taken as a general guideline. Appendix 2 (Paver 1990), shows some of the challenges that exist in equating diplomas or degrees received in China at different times and in different places.

Types/levels of education

Keeping in mind that there are variations in the system, a discussion of the various types/levels of education in China and the challenges faced by each will follow. The types include: primary schools; secondary schools (both academic and vocational); colleges and universities; and adult education, which is not a part of the academic stream presented in Appendix 1. Schools in China are the responsibility of the State Education Commission (SEDC), but direct supervision may be done by provincial or municipal bureaus of education, local municipalities or counties, industrial ministries, and in some cases people in an area can finance, organize, and run their own schools. All of this depends in part on the level of education under discussion: the higher the level of education, the higher the level of bureaucratic supervision.

Primary education has been compulsory in China (through grade 9) since the mid-1980's, but compliance varies greatly between rural and urban areas. There is an adage "9-6-3" which means for every 9 students who enter primary school, 6 complete it and only 3 go on to secondary school (and the first 3 years of secondary school are part of the 9 years of 'compulsory' education). Particularly with the advent of the responsibility system, rural families have found it economically advantageous to keep their children out of school

The literature reports inadequate facilities, e.g. classes that are held outdoors with umbrellas for roofs in the event of rain; school buildings with only one restroom for 2,000 students and teachers; teachers who use their laps for desks; and classrooms and halls that are dilapidated...some of which have even collapsed, killing or injuring students and teachers (State Statistical Bureau 1988:32). Wu Fushing, (Department of Education, Science, Culture, and Public Health) agrees that too little has been spent on construction of primary and secondary educational facilities (Beijing Review 1987:8). The problem of poor facilities is coupled with a low quality of teaching at the primary level, particularly in rural areas. Teachers rank third from the bottom among employees in state-run units, which provides little incentive to enter the profession (State Statistical Bureau 1989:27).

The goals of primary education include: 1) instilling the ideological goals of loving the motherland, loving people, loving labor, loving science, and loving state property; 2) developing comprehension, expressivity, and calculating ability, grasping rudimentary knowledge about nature and human society, and acquiring the ability to observe, think, and study independently; 3) enabling students to develop a healthy body, good social habits, familiarity with manual labor, and the ability to take care of themselves; and 4) cultivating a love for beauty and the beginning of aesthetic judgment.

Those students who go on to secondary school attend 3 years of junior middle school (which completes the compulsory 9-years of education), and 3 years of senior middle school. The curriculum at both levels is similar. With the exception of political and ideological education (taken all 6 years) and physiology and hygiene, the curriculum resembles that in American schools. Upon completion of the first 3 years, those students who continue their secondary education are divided into two streams: Regular Senior Middle School; or Specialized, Technical, Vocational, or Agricultural Senior Middle School (Appendix 1). The government has been pushing for increased vocational/technical education, and according to Reed (1988: 11), they hoped to have equal numbers in the two categories by 1990.

Ranson (1988:751) sees the Chinese system as unnecessarily meritocratic, and feels this starts at the earliest levels. Students are sorted out based on how they excel in one area of the secondary educational system: the ability to calculate or manipulate symbols. Those who are identified as good in this area are encouraged **in** their studies, while those who don't are shunted into vocational streams. Those students who do extremely well are sent to "key" schools, a system that exists through the university level. Under this system, selected schools (usually in urban areas) receive the best teachers, priority in allocation of funds, better equipment and resources, and the 'best' students. "Key" schools are regarded as vital to the campaign of modernization and educational reform (Holcomb 1989:5). Ranson feels that one indicator (i.e. the ability to calculate) in no way adequately reflects a child's ability to go on and make significant contributions to science and technology. He feels the nation needs to raise the level of technological mastery of the masses; as opposed to a few elite. This meritocratic system may, in part, be responsible for the high primary school dropout rates, as students who do not excel

in this one specific area withdraw when they realize there is no future for them on the educational ladder to success.

The National Entrance Exam, given once yearly throughout China, determines who will be admitted to colleges and universities and which schools they will attend. Students are allowed to list preferences of schools they wish to attend, but final selection is made by the universities based on their national examinations scores. Those with the highest scores end up in the "key" schools, and only about 25% of those taking the national entrance exam are selected to go on to higher education. For those **who** complete their undergraduate degree and want to earn a master's degree, there is again an entrance exam, and in addition to the test scores, students are evaluated with respect to politics and physical health. Interestingly, a graduate student must be under 35, which means that many who missed schooling during the Cultural Revolution cannot pick it up at a later date; one of the reasons many Chinese students attempt to study abroad. Similar age requirements exist at the undergraduate level.

Chinese universities generally specialize in a specific area, e.g. engineering, natural science, etc. Unlike the liberal arts system of the United States, in which only about 25-30% of the courses are in the student's major subject, Chinese students have 70-80% of their courses in their major subject, with the remaining 20-30% divided between political courses and general courses.

One of the major recent changes at the university level is the introduction of the responsibility system and scientific management. Since the Decision of Educational Reform in 1985, universities have seen a dramatic rise in decision making power. They benefit from surpluses, and have to be responsible for losses, just as the rural farmers do under **the** responsibility system. This has forced universities to take a close look at how they can increase their resources, and best

use the resources they have. Scientific management was considered a means to this end. Some of the changes that have occurred are: a streamlining of human resources through creative methods of inducing retirement; circulating lists of excess staff and encouraging local enterprises to hire them; periodic reviews of staff, which can lead to rewards, promotions, censure, or dismissal; hiring based on qualifications; augmentation of income through contract research, joint ventures with industries, and teaching classes in the local communities; running factories and farms; and renting of assets (e.g. guestrooms, cars, swimming pools, laboratories, computers, etc.). Schools who tried these scientific management principles have been so successful that the government has urged other schools to emulate them. Eventually such changes were mandated (Kwong 1987). Some of the ramifications of the responsibility system on Chinese education will be discussed in the final section on issues and -challenges.

The last major type of education found in China is adult education, which provides education at many levels: primary, secondary, tertiary, job training, and farmer education. Schools may be run by the State, factories, businesses or trade unions,- work units, social organizations, or individuals. Subjects taught include almost everything one might encounter within the regular academic and vocational educational stream plus such things as cadre education. Within this vast system there are more than 1.5 million adults who receive education and training every year (Yang 1990:35).

One of the first major tasks tackled by adult education was literacy. In 1949, 80% of the people in China were illiterate. Today, the illiteracy rate is around 25%. When adult education first started in China, much of the coursework was at the primary level. Progress has been made, and today a larger percentage of the

instruction is needed, and provided, at the secondary and higher specialized educational levels.

The methods of instruction also take a variety of forms, such as direct instruction from classroom teachers, small group study, radio and television broadcasts, correspondence, on-the-job training, and self-study. Degrees and certificates earned from such instruction are recognized in different ways. Those who earn degrees or certificates in job training and farmer education do so mainly to continue in the same line of work, but often with a promotion. Some job training certificates allow workers to work independently rather than under supervision. While secondary and tertiary adult education are considered separate from the regular educational stream and do not serve as a vehicle to get back into the formalized educational track, the State recognizes the diplomas, and promotions and job transfers result from them. Although the literature does not specifically address the issue of recognition of self-study, it mentions that degrees and certificates are awarded. Reed's educational chart seems to imply that self-study is separate from the main track, yet allows students to take the university entrance exam (as long as they **mēet** the other requirements). Self-study is very economical for the State, in that it only spends 100 yuan (US\$21) on a self-teaching adult student, while they spend 6400 yuan (US\$1,350) on a student in the college of arts and 7300 yuan (US\$1,570) on a student in the college of engineering (Yang 1990:35).

Issues and Challenges

Consideration will now be given to the challenges that face the educational system in general, and possible courses of action for the future. The issues fall into four categories: 1) providing equality in education; 2) improving the status of teachers; 3) reaping the benefits of the responsibility system without losing track

of the overall goal of education; and 4) the need for development of an educational infrastructure.

There are a number of areas where inequality exists within the Chinese educational system. Specifically discussed will be minority, gender, and geographic based inequality. Many minorities live in the interior regions, and economic policy has most recently been aimed at development of the coastal areas. The need to develop a system to accommodate the new 9-year compulsory educational plan has put a serious drain on the limited funds that are allocated to interior regions. Illiteracy is much higher among minorities than it is for the majority population, and the level of schooling attained is significantly lower, although the absolute levels vary considerably depending on the minority group under discussion. Postiglione (1992) sees part of the overall minority educational problem as a result of underutilization of existing facilities by minorities. Some possible explanations for this situation include: poor facilities, untrained teachers, irrelevant curriculum, low family socioeconomic background, cultural tradition, religious beliefs, and/or a resistance to being assimilated into the mainstream Han culture. However, in spite of generally lower levels of educational attainment, minority enrollment at all levels has shown rapid improvement in recent years (Postiglione 1992; Beijing Review 1988:40).

Gender inequality in education is quite prevalent in China, particularly at the lower levels of the system. The responsibility system has had an impact on female education in rural areas, since extra hands mean extra profits. Girls end up taking care of younger siblings and doing household chores to free their mothers to work in the fields. Bauer, et.al. (1992) points out that having a brother reduces the probability that a female will be enrolled in school. If a brother and sister *both* attend school, the **family** often supports the son more, through the assignment of fewer chores or provision of more private tutoring, both of which can influence

future educational opportunities. This could be recognition by the parents of potential return on investment, as boys are likely to make more money in the work force and are the ones who will look after their parents when they grow old (Bauer 1992). Gender inequality in educational opportunities decreases at higher levels of education, which Lavelly (1990:89) feels is logical as higher education takes place more often in urban areas where adherence to governmental policy is more likely to occur. Bauer also found that having an educated father increases the likelihood that a 15-18 year old daughter will be enrolled. Improvement in the educational level of women (who are responsible for early education of the next generation) can only have a positive effect on the educational level of the entire nation.

The last area of inequality is based on the rural-urban distinction, and inequality in this area is related to minority and gender inequality. It is more difficult to bring education to a dispersed rural area than it is to an urban area. Facilities are often poor, and teachers who are assigned there often have poorer qualifications, which makes the quality of education in rural areas low. According to a 1% sample done in 1987, illiteracy for rural people 12 and older was 29.34% compared to 15.79% for urban dwellers (State Statistical Bureau 1989). One possible method of dealing with this issue might be to expand the radio/television educational programming for rural areas. Typically this type of education has dealt more with higher education, and is largely confined to urban areas (McCormick 1986:72).

The next major area of concern that needs to be addressed is improvement of the situation of teachers. The government recognizes that this is a problem, as seen in Premier Li Peng's 1990 address at a working conference of the State Education Commission in which he urged society and governments to support the development of education by improving the living conditions for teachers (Beijing

Review 1990:5). The teaching profession lacks appeal among the youth of today, and not surprisingly, with its low pay, low status, often poor working conditions, and meager benefits. But these are not the only concerns of prospective educators. There is a great deal of cautiousness and distrust that exists in light of the way teachers have been viewed and treated in the past 40 years; although Broaded (1989:100) feels that many aspects of the intellectual's position improved after the 1978 redefinition of teachers as part of the working class, and relaxation of restrictions on academic and artistic expression. There are signs, however, that the pendulum may be swinging the other direction with respect to academic expression since the 1989 incident at Tiananmen Square. An example is the requirement that university students, faculty, and administrators study Deng Xiaopeng's speeches in order to "unify their thinking" about the "counter-revolutionary rebellion" at Tiananmen Square. Many students, including those interested in teaching, fear that the job assignment process will be used to banish them to remote rural areas. It will be interesting to see in the next few years whether the government actually follows through on its concerns for the plight of teachers, or whether they are only giving lip service to the problem.

The next major issue for discussion is the responsibility system and whether China can reap its benefits without compromising the higher educational system. The various forms the responsibility system has taken within education were seen in the previous discussion of higher education, and its impact on education will now be considered. Economically speaking, the changes have been positive, both for professors and universities and colleges. Teaching off-campus is lucrative for professors, who receive direct compensation for their services. Joint ventures, contract research, farm and industry management, and rental of assets are profitable for the universities, and schools are allowed to keep all surpluses they generate.

About 60% of the surpluses stay at the university level and the rest are retained by the level that provided the services, with a small portion going to staff benefits like health resources, cultural events, training opportunities, or bonuses. Surpluses may be used for supplies for teaching and research, or for capital expenditures for machinery or buildings for the university-run factories and farms (Kwong 1987).

The responsibility system as applied to the educational system, however, has created problems. Professors spend less time on campus since off-campus teaching is so profitable, which means the quality of teaching on campus is negatively affected as students have less contact with their professors. To combat this, the State has restricted the amount of money that can be earned from outside sources. It has also become more lucrative (and prestigious) to do contract research, and while this has improved the availability and quality of equipment and facilities, it has had some detrimental effects: 1) teachers spend less time on teaching and more time on research, which means classes are taught by younger faculty and lecturers; and 2) it has caused a shift away from basic research, and while industry and agriculture have benefited as universities become more responsive to their needs, the long-term needs of the country may be adversely affected as basic research is de-emphasized.

The responsibility system has also had an effect on the faculty make-up in the universities. Performance criteria have been established, and bonuses, promotions, and even dismissals are now based on individual performance. The number of excess staff members has been reduced through the method previously discussed. Retirement of older administrators has been encouraged through the establishment of honorary positions and through allowing retirees to keep their housing and other fringe benefits. This **reduced** the age of top administrators by 10 years between 1979 and 1982, and although this did little to reduce cost, it has

created a less conservative atmosphere and given younger faculty increased opportunities.

The last major concern is the development of an educational infrastructure. Often a university is isolated from disciplines which it does not teach, from other universities, and from the rest of the world. Chinese universities generally specialize in one academic area instead of having a variety of disciplines at the same institution. This lack of interaction among students and teachers from various disciplines can lead to a very narrow focus.

Lack of communication between colleges, universities, and research units also creates problems: research may be duplicated; expensive equipment that might be shared may be duplicated; and there is not enough sharing of information that could be synergistic in nature. All of this leads to the wasting of already scarce resources. With **respect** to communication at the international level, while participation in international conferences is very beneficial for researchers, and has been encouraged in recent years, the events at Tiananmen Square may change that.

Another means of participation at the international level is through students studying abroad, and it is the government's hope that such study will provide Chinese students with a better understanding of China's conditions and challenges. However, there has been much concern over the issue of students who extend their stay abroad instead of returning immediately to China to resume their place in society. This will continue to be a problem until the issues of intellectual freedom, low pay, poor benefits, and low prestige are addressed. The government recognizes the problems that exist in this area, as evident in the following comments by He Dongchang, Vice Minister of the State Education Commission, "We'll try to understand them. While preparing good conditions for them in the country, we'll persuade them and inflame their patriotic enthusiasm. They'll become an important

force to serve China's modernization drive sooner or later, at home or in foreign countries." (Wang 1989:36)

What are the prospects for the future of education in China? Recent statistics {State -Statistical Bureau 1989:25} show that: in proportion to GNP, China's educational expenses rank 100th in the world; the entrance rate of Chinese students into secondary school ranks 80th out of 139 countries and regions of the world; the entrance rate and number of college students per 100,000 people is 110th out of 139 countries and regions; and China's per capita educational expenses come to only 25% of that of the developing countries.

While increased educational spending might improve the situation, the World Bank suggested in 1986 that efficient use of available resources, rather than absolute funding, might be the key problem (Delfs 1988:32). Statistics show that the average student-teacher ratio in China is perhaps the lowest in the world at 3.7:1. (The average student-teacher ratio in the U.S. is 15:1.) Allocation of classroom and laboratory space per student was also found to be extremely high.

While the emphasis has varied since 1949, there is no doubt that great strides have been made in Chinese education, but there is still much to be done. China faces the challenge of providing education to the masses (25% of whom are illiterate) and still being able to provide education appropriate to produce the professionals needed to carry through with its modernization. China must also find ways to provide more educational opportunities and yet maintain the quality of the programs already offered. While some approaches such as the responsibility system and scientific management have been successful in providing short-term benefits, care needs to be exercised to make sure that long-term goals are being met. If long-term modernization goals are not met, a violent backlash may occur and progress in education may move backward as reorganization occurs once again.

Care needs to be taken in evaluating and/or equating degrees received in China. For example, "B" represents a university diploma received in the mid-1970's based on 3 years of university work and 10 years of primary and secondary education. "B," which also represents a university diploma, is one received after 12 years of primary and secondary education, and may have been received after 2 or 3 years of university education. "C" represents a "bachelor's degree earned after completion of 12 years of primary and secondary education plus 4 years of university work (similar to C₃, which represents roughly the same amount of education before the cultural revolution).

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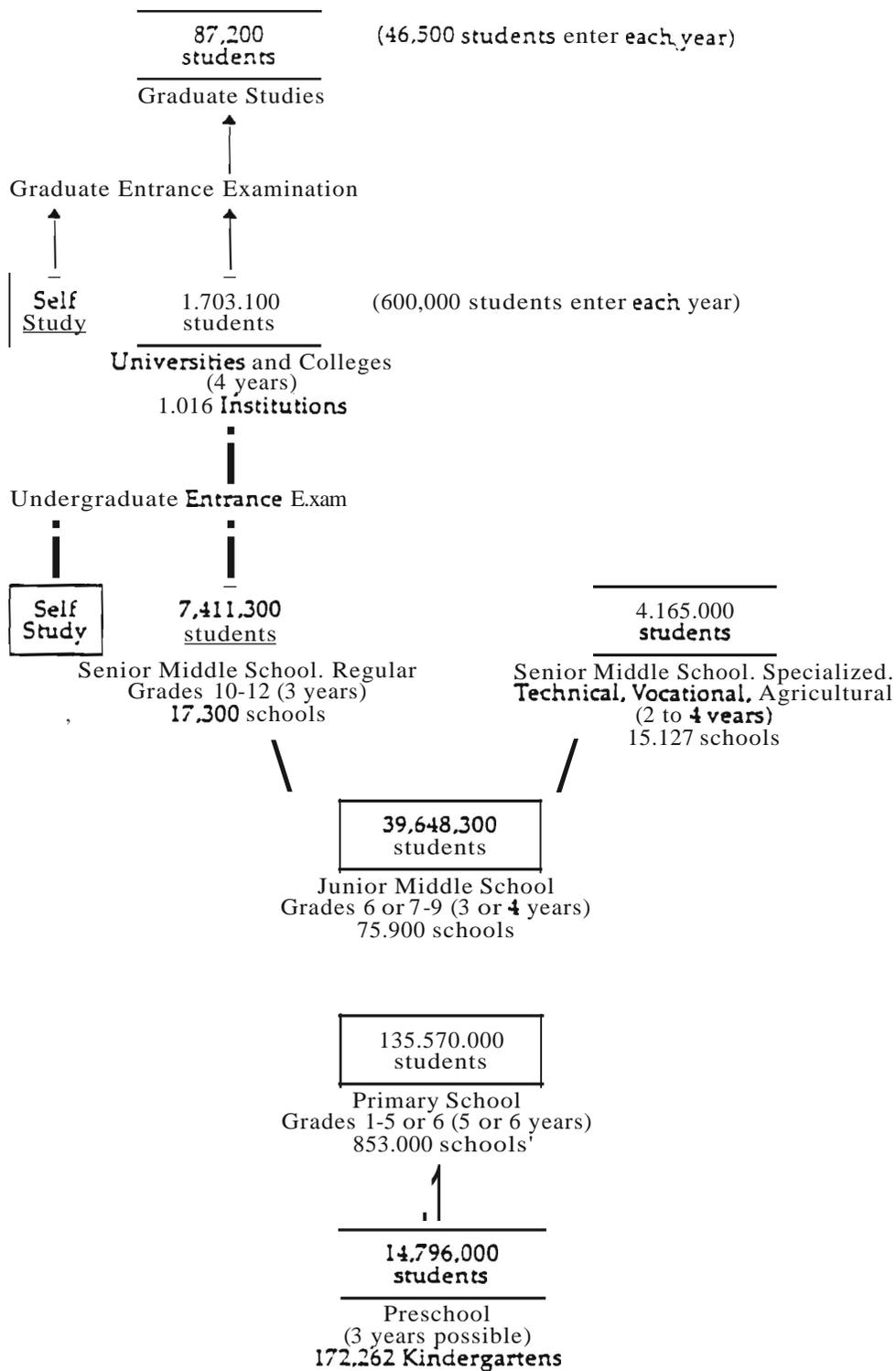
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APPENDIX 1.

Pre Educational Track (Dickey 1985).

PRE EDUCATIONAL TRACK (1985)*



* This chart is based upon one compiled in 1980 by Karlene N. Dickey (Stanford University) that has been updated with 1985 SEDC statistics.

APPENDIX 2.

Educational System of the Peoples Republic of China (Paver 1990).

Educational System

Primary			Secondary					Tertiary												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
										A ₄	A	B	B ₁	B ₁	B _J	C ₁	D	D	E	
										A ₅	A ₁		B ₂		B ₆	C ₂	D ₁			
										A ₂			B ₄		B ₇	C _J	D ₂			
										A _J			B ₈		C	C ₄				
										A ₄			B ₆		C _J					
										As			B ₇		C ₄					
															C ₈					

- A Certificate of Graduation from a senior middle school-awarded for completion of three years of education following six years of primary school and three years of junior middle school. Admission is based on regional entrance examinations.
- AI Certificate of Graduation from a normal school-awarded for completion of three years of teacher training for kindergarten and primary school teachers following junior middle school. Admission is based on entrance exams which are comparable to senior middle school entrance exams. (See NOTES.)
- A₂ Certificate of Graduation from a nursing school-awarded for completion of three years of nursing education following junior middle school. Admission is based on entrance exams which are comparable to senior middle school entrance exams. (See NOTES.)
- A_J Certificate of Graduation from a vocational senior secondary school-awarded for completion of three years of technical education following junior middle school. Admission is based on entrance exams which are comparable to senior middle school entrance exams.
- A₄ Certificate of Graduation from a vocational senior secondary school-awarded for completion of two to three years of vocational education following junior middle school or agricultural junior middle school. Entrance exams are less demanding than senior middle school entrance exams.
- As Certificate of Graduation from an agricultural senior secondary school-awarded for completion of two to three years of agricultural education following junior middle school. Entrance exams are less demanding than senior middle school entrance exams.
- B Diploma of Graduation from a university/college awarded in mid-1970s-during the Cultural Revolution, admission to colleges and universities followed 10 years of primary and secondary education (sometimes less) and was based on political recommendations rather than on academic entrance exams. Programs required three years of study, political lectures, and practical work.

- B: Diploma of Graduation from a university/college—awarded for completion of two to three years of higher education following senior middle school or its equivalent. Admission is based on the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE).
- B₂ Diploma of Graduation from a military academy—awarded for completion of two years of study at military academies following senior middle school. Admission is based on the NCEE and political recommendations.
- B₃ Advanced Diploma of Graduation from a military academy—awarded for completion of four years of military education following senior middle school education or its *equivalent*. Admission is based on the NCEE and political recommendations. Some technology-oriented military academies award bachelor's degrees.
- B₄ Diploma of Graduation from an evening university—awarded for completion of the equivalent of two years of higher education on a full-time basis following senior middle school education or its equivalent. Usually programs require three to four years of study on a part-time basis. Evening universities are run by formal institutions of higher education, but the standards of the entrance examinations prepared by each institution are not as high as the NCEE and the curriculum is less demanding.
- B₅ Diploma of Graduation from a vocational college—awarded for completion of two years of vocational training following senior middle school education or its equivalent. Institutions that award this type of diploma are also called "institutions of adult higher education." Admission is based on regional entrance examinations which are less demanding than the NCEE.
- B₆ Diploma of Graduation from an administrative college—awarded for completion of two or four years of study following senior middle school or its equivalent. Admission is based on political recommendations, work experience, and entrance exams that are less demanding than the NCEE. Curriculum emphasizes Marxist theory.
- B₇ College diploma for self-education/study—awarded for successful completion of examinations on the curriculum for two or four years of university studies. Students who are self-taught sit for examinations prepared by university professors selected by provincial education commissions. Many students with two- or three-year college graduate diplomas pursue this kind of study to upgrade their education. Some provinces also award a bachelor's degree along with a graduate diploma for completion of examinations on a four-year curriculum.
- C Bachelor's degree—awarded for completion of four years of university study. Admission is based on the NCEE. Bachelor's degrees were first awarded in 1982.
- C₁ Bachelor's degree—awarded for *completion* of five years of university studies in medicine and in engineering at some universities.
- C₂ Double bachelor's degrees—awarded for completion of five years of university studies in two majors. Students who pursue two majors must meet certain academic requirements and obtain special permission from the administration of the institution.
- C₃ Diploma of Graduation from a university/college awarded before 1970—awarded for completion of a pre-Cultural Revolution university program of four to five years following twelve years of primary and secondary education. Admission was based on entrance exams. Students who discontinued regular studies in 1966 when universities closed were said to *have* graduated when they completed the curriculum through independent study.
- C₄ Diploma of Graduation from a university/college awarded in 1980 and 1981—awarded after the Cultural Revolution but before degrees were introduced in 1982 for completion of four- or five-year university programs to students admitted through entrance examinations first offered in 1977.
- C₅ Diploma of Graduation from a university/college awarded since 1982—awarded for completion of four years of university study by institutions of

higher education that have been newly founded or upgraded from two- or three-year institutions. They are fully recognized but may not grant bachelor's degrees to their graduates for a specified number of years. Admission is based on the NeEE. Diplomas are also awarded by universities along with degree certificates. A student may receive a diploma that verifies completion of all **program** requirements and eligibility to graduate in addition to a diploma that verifies conferral of the degree.

- O Graduate Study Diploma-awarded for completion of two to three years of study following the bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Admission is based on **entrance** examinations and recommendations. This credential was awarded before 1966 and between 1978 and 1981, prior to introduction of master's degrees. Since 1982, this diploma is still awarded to students who have completed *all* degree requirements except the thesis or to nondegree graduate students.
- O₁ Master's degree-awarded for completion of two to three years of graduate study, research, and a thesis. Admission is based on entrance examinations and recommendations. Master's degrees were first awarded in 1982.
- O₂ College teacher training certificate-awarded for completion of two years of graduate study to holders of bachelor's degrees or the equivalent who have been employed as full-time teaching assistants or assistant instructors. Only institutions that have graduate programs may award this credential and all courses **must** be offered by the graduate faculty. Admission is based on entrance examinations, recommendations, and work experience.
- E Doctoral degree-awarded for completion of a minimum of three years of advanced study, research, and a dissertation following the master's degree or its equivalent. Admission is based on entrance examinations, recommendations, research experience, and **interview**. Doctoral degrees were **first** awarded in 1984.