Teachers' civil rights in China: Current and future educational social consequences

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Teachers' Civil Rights In China:
Current And Future Educational Social Consequences

by

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Teachers' Civil Rights in China: Current and Future Educational Social Consequences

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This study investigates the status of Chinese teachers' civil rights since 1949 and its social impact on China's present and future educational development. Data collected from studies and historical documents, official Chinese government documents, reported cases, and personal experience suggest that a crisis facing the Chinese educational system involves the unequal and discriminatory treatment of teachers. This crisis is examined from three perspectives: (a) as defined in research studies and current government policies; (b) as a result of the deprivation of past teachers' civil rights; and (c) as a forecast of social consequences on teacher education. The inclusion of Chinese teachers' civil rights issues in current comparative education studies is advocated.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Education in the Chinese culture is best described by the popular ancient proverb, "Shi Nien Shu Mu, Bai Nien Shu Ren." The English translation is, "It takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred years to raise an educated person" (Chinese Proverbs Dictionary, 1986, p. 1124). This concept originated from one of Guan Zhong's works dating to 600 B.C. Guan Zhong, a well-known Chinese philosopher and social reformer, said, "To plan for one year, plant a crop; to plan for ten years, grow a tree; and to plan for a hundred years, educate a person" (The Chinese Encyclopedia, 1970, p. 4325). Several cultural interpretations can be drawn from the text. First, educating people is a long-term and challenging task that takes more than one generation to accomplish. Second, education is critical to human life. Third, of the basic human needs, such as eating (planting crops), sheltering (growing trees), and self-fulfilling (education), academic achievements are traditionally underscored in the Chinese culture.

Educational Problems In Retrospect

Today's educational system is representative of the political changes that have occurred from 1949, when the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung took power, until 1995, when economic reform resulted in economic growth of 13.4%, a rate 4% higher
than the official target (State Statistics Department, 1994). Even though the economy grew rapidly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the investment on education was less than expected. Teachers did not receive commensurate benefits. Consequently, two additional problems arose. First, Vice Premier Li Lan-qing (1993) pointed out, "...the low living standards and the overall poor health conditions of the Chinese educators, especially those teaching at elementary and secondary schools" (pp. 13-15). Second, poor funding in education resulted in a serious shortage of teachers and teacher training programs, delayed teachers' paychecks, and obsolete textbook materials and teaching methods. Overall government policies toward education and educators violated basic rights and freedoms.

Low living standards, poor health, and heavy workloads. Low living standards are reflected by average salaries below the means of other professions, inadequate housing space, overburdened job responsibilities, and lack of health care provisions. The average annual salary of primary and secondary school teachers, according to Chen (1993), was 2,667.5 Chinese Yuan (=US $333.00/year), while people in public agencies made 2,930.00 Yuan annually (=US $350.00/year). Local newspapers also reported that secondary school teachers earned significantly less than those who worked in three- and four-star hotels as cleaners (Su, 1988). By 1992,
teachers' salaries were the third lowest among other professions in the country (H. Yang, 1993).

One of extreme examples of the grave conditions in China was reported in the *Central Daily* (1993, November 1). A secondary school teacher in a rural area of China's Kwang Xi Province and his wife, an elementary teacher, lived on their combined salary of approximately 200 Yuan a month (=US $30). Because his medical expenses were no longer covered by the local government, he had to terminate medical treatment. To stop his stomach pain, he brought a bottle of liquor to the classroom and drank it. On September 30, 1993, after his last class, he hanged himself at home, leaving only a half-bag of grain for his family. In recent years, teachers' health provisions have been limited by the local-level governments as more funds are needed for economic development.

Until recently housing in China was assigned by an individual's workplace and subsidized by the government. According to a report by the personnel department of the China State Education Committee (CSEC, 1991), about 380,000 secondary teachers in the country were in need of housing or in need of more space (unlike the United States where commercial apartments are available). When housing is unavailable, Chinese teachers must live with their parents or relatives. The average square meters
per person of the household was 6.29, which was below the average of 7.2 of other non-teaching professions (Sun, 1993).

Despite low salaries and inadequate housing, secondary teachers are overburdened by a 1:20 teacher-student ratio (State Statistics Department, 1993; Wu, 1995) and excessive job obligations. For example, in 1989 Mr. Zhang Si-gong of Beijing No. 8 Middle School, a senior high school teacher of 25 years service, reportedly became mentally insane due to overloaded job responsibilities. He committed suicide by jumping from his apartment building (Su, 1989).

During my ten years of teaching experience in China as a secondary teacher, my fellow teachers and I were required to work eight hours a day, six days a week, and were assigned 24 class hours a week. The workload included preparing classes, correcting students' papers, guiding students' political and ideological awareness, teaching extra courses after normal class hours, and supervising extracurricular activities. Unlike American schools where academic counseling is offered in a separate department, Chinese teachers were also required to counsel students.

Inadequate health care for primary and secondary school teachers is a result of poor funding and the non-profit nature of teaching. According to a 1994 national survey reported in Beijing's People's Daily, the average
life span of Chinese educators, including intellectuals of other fields, was 58 years old, 11 per cent lower than the average span of all Chinese and 20 per cent lower than Japanese teachers. The 58-year average age was only 10 percent higher than the lowest life-span country in the world, Mozambique, Africa (1995, June 26, p. 3). In another survey conducted by the CSEC, 1,155 teachers of Yong Ji County of Jilin Province received a government-sponsored physical check-up. Among them, 410 had heart disease, tuberculosis, neurasthenia, or other occupational-related health problems. A report revealed that in Xi-cheng District of Beijing, among its more than 4,000 secondary school teachers, poor health prevented 233 from teaching, 222 worked part-time because they did not have enough sick leave, and 205 worked despite poor health because of teacher shortages. Two-thirds of the teachers who died in 1985 and 1986 never reached their retirement ages of 55 for females and 60 for males (Su, 1989).

Poor funding. Chinese education has been poorly funded in comparison with developed countries. Inadequate funding has resulted in teacher shortages, obsolete textbooks, and delayed paychecks for teachers. Like many countries, Chinese primary and secondary education systems are funded by the government with very few exceptions for private schools. Chinese law requires the mandatory nine-year education to be funded by local and national
governments (Chinese Compulsory Education Law, 1986). However, the unbalanced economic development in regions and inadequate investment in education not only affects teacher recruitment, but also keeps millions of school-aged children from school. For example, Liu (1993) reported that only 33% of the fifty-four million 12-14 age group children in rural areas were enrolled in schools. The CSEC in Beijing provides the following figures for the state investment in education: 1949-1979, an average of 1.19% of the 1949-1979 gross national product (GNP); 1980-1987, 2.72% of the 1980-1987 GNP; and 2.54% of the 1993 GNP (Li, Zhang, & Zhou, 1992; People's Daily, 1995, August 23).

Elementary and secondary school teacher shortages have been a subject in Chinese local and national newspapers. According to a local newspaper, Kwangchow Daily (1992), of the more than 8,668,000 elementary and secondary teachers in China (Liu, 1993), 5,527,000 are elementary school teachers, and 3,141,000 are secondary school teachers. Of that population, 82.7% of the elementary school teachers, 55.6% of the middle school teachers, and 49.1% of the high school teachers were qualified for teaching. The rest were of substandard qualification (Li & Sun, 1993).

Career changes complicate the issue. As reported in Outlook Weekly (1994), in 1992 alone, more than 216,000 secondary teachers changed their teaching careers. In
another report, nearly 450,000 teaching professionals quit teaching in 1992. These figures accounted for 4% of the population of educators (Liu, 1993). In 1988, in one district of Fujian Province, an economically developed area, 850 teachers changed their careers. This led to the closing of 148 schools (Yang, 1994).

Poor funding significantly affects paychecks. According to C. Yang (1994), Wu Xian, a rural county in Shandong Province (Confucius' hometown) witnessed a teachers' strike. After a four-month delay of receiving paychecks, teachers participated in the strike. In another report by Hong (1993), school teachers in 70 counties in Guangxi Province (80 counties in total) were delayed paychecks. Delays of this kind have been reported in a majority of provinces and major cities in China, primarily in rural areas.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

This study investigates the status of Chinese teachers' civil rights in teaching since 1949 and its social impact on China's present and future educational development. The specific focus is urban Chinese primary and secondary educational systems. The problem has not received expressed, official attention from the Chinese government, Chinese media, nor adequate discussion from international educators, including Chinese scholars studying overseas. Three research questions guide the investigation:
1. How are teachers' civil rights defined in Chinese history and by whom?

2. What changes have occurred since 1949, and how have these reforms affected teachers' professional and personal lives?

3. What are the major social consequences of the reforms?

Rationale and Methods

The rationale for this study is three-fold. First, having taught in three public high schools in China from 1982 to 1992 (few private middle schools or high schools were in operation before 1992), I am a representative of the secondary school teachers. Personally, I have witnessed and experienced numerous incidents of unequal treatment in professional practice and personal life. This present study is a modest contribution to my 8,668,000 colleagues (National Report, 1994) teaching in primary and secondary schools in China. The study permits their voices to be heard.

Second, formal recognition must be given to the problem of primary and secondary school teachers receiving lower social recognition and enjoying fewer civil rights when compared to other classes in China. As identified by scholars, practitioners, and administrators, both in China and in the international arena, due respect has not been given to the achievements and problems regarding Chinese educational reform. This study contributes to existing
academic discussions concerning comparative and global education.

Third, as an international student pursuing graduate study in the field of comparative education at The University of Montana for the past three years, I have gained a wider perspective and broader vision of the Chinese teachers' civil rights issue. The issue involves more than raising salaries to offset increasing inflation, adding square feet to dwellings so that a three-member family has more than a standard 200-square-feet studio housing, or reading a governmental administrative decree demanding the public to respect secondary school teachers. The issue examined is not fully disclosed as an educational problem deserving attention from the academic realm.

Resources used in this study are assembled from the following four sources: (a) a selected literature review of eight studies published in the United States on issues of Chinese education; (b) a literature review of official Chinese education and educational reform documents, newspaper commentaries, and articles published in China and written on Chinese history, culture, philosophy, and education; and (c) personal experiences and individual stories restructured from memory. Although the absence of field studies in the area limits empirical data, the
materials support the thesis that the civil rights of Chinese teachers, especially at the secondary level, have not been honored in China. This has negatively impacted the quality of Chinese secondary education and has imposed a sense of crisis in the teaching community.

The preceding research questions are addressed in light of studies and supporting materials collected in both Chinese and English texts. By summarizing historical and cultural literature written in Chinese and English, Chapter 2 addresses the first question: "How are teachers' civil rights defined in Chinese history and by whom?". In reviewing original Chinese texts, including official documents written in Chinese, Chapter 3 focuses on the second and third research questions: "What changes have occurred since 1949, and how have these changes affected teachers' professional and personal lives?" and, "What are the major social consequences of the reforms?". The chapter discloses problematic conceptualizations and social practices of teachers' social status and civil rights both in teaching and in their social functions as citizens. Chapter 4 summarizes the discussion by further exploring several major social consequences resulting from violation of teachers' basic rights. In conclusion, this study addresses the implications of the problems discussed with respect to Chinese teachers in general and those of us who study Chinese education.
Chapter 2

Chinese Teachers' Civil Rights as Defined by History

I believe that the degree of civil rights one enjoys as a citizen is contingent upon one's stratified social class in the culture. Teachers, as the ivory tower of the Chinese intellectual class, have experienced varied social status and institutionalized authority sanctioned by the administrators of government.

Historical reviews of the cultural background of teacher enhance understanding of teachers' civil rights. The Chinese concept and practice of the Confucian Doctrine of Social Status (Lang, 1963; Lin, 1935; Pye, 1987) and the changing social functions of the teacher present a retrospective context to explain where teachers stand in terms of their institutionalized rights.

Teachers' Status Before 1949

Unlike the United States, where people believe in the equality of societal members and make an effort to practice the concept, Chinese cultural tradition has not cultivated the ideal of equality of all social classes nor the practice thereof. This theoretical assumption can be explained by at least two practices of the Chinese. The first is the Chinese belief in the Confucian legacy of the Doctrine of Social Status. Lin Yu-tang (1935), an acknowledged Chinese educator, defines the legacy as:

The Doctrine of Social Status, as Confucianism has
been popularly called, is the social philosophy behind the family system. It is the doctrine that makes for social order in China. It is the principle of social structure and social control at the same time. (pp. 117-178)

The doctrine gives every social person a definite place in society, from each family member to professionals of all walks of life. The doctrine, in addition, also assumes that when "every man knows his place and acts in accordance with his position, social order will be ensured" (Lin, 1935, p. 178). This Confucian cultural dogma governs Chinese attitude and social mores in accordance with what Lin (1935) called "stratified equality."

The second practice of the Chinese in dividing society into unequal classes is that, prior to 1949, the class of teachers in formal institutions such as schools, informal intellectual groups such as associations and clubs, and individuals who practiced scholarship, were an elite and privileged social class in Chinese history. The cultural legacy of the Doctrine of Social Status that controlled Chinese ways of governing and living is a development of Confucian philosophy as recorded and interpreted in the following classic Chinese literature: "The Four Books" (Huang, 1994) and "The Five Classics" (Huang, 1994). The former is composed of four texts embodying the spirit of early Confucianism and Menciusism.
and other related schools of thought. The latter is a body of literature which "reached back earlier into history and brought to Confucianism an element of mysticism" (Pye, 1984, p. 46). Both were compiled by scholars during the Tang Dynasty around A.D. 960-1127.

Studies by three of the most influential scholars and educators on Chinese culture, Lin Yu-tang (1935), Liang Su-yin (1963), and Lucian W. Pye (1984), describe the prominent status of teachers in Chinese society and their instrumental roles in bringing harmony to people and in implementing a checks and balances mechanism in government.

Liang (1963) discusses and compares Chinese social and cultural structures with those of the Western world. The Doctrine of Social Status reveals how the Chinese perceive the proper place or social status of each social group. In old China, in addition to the ruling class of emperor, people were stratified into four classes or four hierarchies. The top was "Shi" class, educated with formal schooling, including teachers of all circles. Next was the "Nong" class or the farmers. Below the farmers was the "Gong" class, the skilled blue-collar workers. The lowest class was the "Shang" class, the merchants or businessmen. In his discussion on the expected functional roles of each class in society, Lang (1963) describes the educated class as follows [translated by the researcher]:

The Chinese rulers in history have been actively
employing education as a means to govern the people rather than by political sanctions. The absence of using physical force in administrating is due to the absence of a powerful military class as a controlling mechanism. Education is crucial in that it develops humans' rational reasoning, cultivates rituals of courtesy, and encourages self-sufficiency. This is the task of the Shi class (the educated). Shi is the leading class of all citizens, winning respect from society for its intelligent reasoning and appropriate social behaviors. With the presence of this Shi class, the social order can be alive and effective; the subordinate classes of peasants, blue-collar workers, and businessmen can peacefully settle down. The Shi class does not produce, but it plays a significant instrumental role in society. (p. 214)

Elsewhere, Liang (1963) observed, "the great majority of the public servants are from the Shi class. They have close ties with the other three classes: peasants, blue-collar workers, and businessmen" (p. 158).

The Shi class, the educated class, played the traditional role of mediator, easing conflict between the government and the governed. Their role in implementing a checks and balances mechanism in government was also visible in old China when they advised the government how
to control wisely by being generous to the four classes of people. Both society and the government recognized the Shi role of "educator," teaching how harmony could be achieved by the obedience of the governed and the humbleness of the governors.

One of the deeply cultivated Mencius concepts is his teaching that "Lao Xin Zhe Zhi Ren, Lao Li Zhe Zhi Yu Ren." Pye's (1987) translation and interpretation is "The corollary was that educated men were inherently superior to the uneducated, and therefore that rulers and governors should be educated" (p. 42). In simple Chinese, "Mental labor is above manual labor." Teachers as a class concerned themselves with the former. Lin Yu-tang (1935) further stated the following in his interpretation of the Chinese philosophy on intelligence:

Supremacy of the mind has more than one meaning. It means not only the application of human cunning to convert a world known to be full of pain and misery into a habitable place for human beings, but it implies also a certain contempt for mere physical courage and strength as such. Confucius long ago condemned the Jack Dempsey type of physical courage in his disciple Tzulu, and I am sure he would have preferred a Gene Tunney who could be at home on circles of educated friends as well.... For the Chinese had a no nonsense understanding about

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equality; respect for the mental laborers or the educated class has been an outstanding characteristic of the Chinese civilization. (p. 77)

Regarding educators' social status in Chinese history before 1949, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, respect for educators, scholars, and the prestigious social status enjoyed by them was a continuation of one of the Confucian legacies: the cultivated belief of one's stratified social status or place in society. Pye (1987) offers an insightful interpretation of the Doctrine of Social Status of the Confucian philosophy:

Confucianism treated man as a social being whose identity is determined by where he stands in relation to others in the web of social relations. Each individual had his unique place in the total scheme, and each individual's behavior differed according to his station and according to the station of the particular person with whom he was dealing. (p. 41)

In Chinese history, the educated, including teachers, formed the Shi class, the most prominent of the four mainstream social classes. Education was the basis of good government and the basis for the so-called "collective perfection" of citizens.

Second, although the educated were respected as the highest rank, the four classes enjoyed a harmonious and
complementary relation. As Lin Yu-tang (1935) observed on the social and political life of the four classes:

The Chinese divide society into four classes in the following order of importance: the scholars, the farmers, the artisans, and the merchants. In a primitive, agricultural society which China always remained, the spirit was essentially democratic. There was no class antagonism, as there was no need.... The farmers, the artisans, and the merchants, being all part of the sap of the earth, are humble, quiet, self-respecting citizens.... They (the farmers), together with the merchants and artisans, all look up to the scholars as a class entitled to privilege and extra courtesy, and with the difficulty of acquiring a knowledge of the Chinese written characters, this respect comes from the bottom of their hearts. (p. 192)

In general, the Chinese government prior to 1949 recognized the power of the educated. As government officials and public servants in the feudal system were selected and promoted primarily via civil scholarly exams, education was indispensable for the art of governing. Government advancement was dependent on education.

Since 1949, not only has China witnessed dramatic economic changes, but also the roles of educators have changed as well. What changes in the rights of teachers
are evident today? How have these changes affected teachers' professional and personal lives? Chapter 3 examines some assumptions and practices underlying the loss of teachers' rights from 1949 to 1995, highlighting the conceptual definitions of the social status of teachers and their rights.
Chapter 3

Historical Influences

Chapter 3 presents and discusses the problem of teachers' rights from a retrospective point of view. The argument is made that compared to other social groups, educators' rights in the People's Republic of China have endured discrimination since 1949. This claim is examined in two sections. The first reviews three historical periods of Chinese modern educational systems and the loss of the rights of teachers. The second section addresses the social implications of the problems.

Teachers' Rights From 1949 to 1966

This period witnessed the formation of a new educational system established by the new regime of China— the Communist Party. After China initially attempted to model the Soviet Union's system, it eventually broke away from the Soviet Union and formed her own educational system. This was due in part to conflicts between the two parties.

This was the period of the "remodeling or reforming" of Chinese intellectuals (Mao, 1957, p. 407). The CPC labeled as "intellectuals" virtually anyone with a secondary education or higher and persons with special skills which were not manual or political in character (Hinton, 1978, p. 266). As intellectuals, teachers were judged according to their "class background" and
political-ideological qualifications before they were allowed to serve as educators. In the 1950s, the CPC regarded all intellectuals with profound distrust and labeled them as fundamentally "bourgeois," ideologically, and politically unreliable. It was crucial to educate and reform their ideology so as to fit the philosophy of the new Chinese educational system. As Mao Tse-tung (1957), the late president of China from 1949 to 1976, stated:

The number of intellectuals who are hostile to our state is very small. They don't like our state, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, and yearn for the old society. Whenever there is an opportunity, they will stir up trouble and attempt to overthrow the Communist Party and restore the old China. As between the proletarian and the bourgeois road, as between the socialist and the capitalist roads, these people stubbornly choose to follow the latter. In fact this road is impossible, and in fact, therefore, they are ready to capitulate to imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism. Such people are to be found in political circles, in industrial and commercial, cultural and educational, scientific and technological and religious circles, and they are extremely reactionary. (p. 3)

The CPC's policy toward intellectuals was to use
their knowledge to serve the new society and at the same time punish and "correct" their actual unreliability (Hinton, 1978). At the 1957 National Propaganda Conference of the CPC, the Party leaders created a slogan "to intellectuals, our policy is uniting, educating, and remodeling" (Mao, 1957, p. 21). In fact, most of the time teachers were educated and remodeled by the working class and the Party in political and ideological fields. Educators were distrusted and suspected and ridiculed by some Party members. While waiting to be educated and remodeled, most teachers, therefore, were cautious and skeptical, wondering what rights they had. During this period and according to their outlooks, most of the intellectuals were categorized as bourgeoisie, and the working class was the dominant class in China's society (Mao, 1957).

In 1956, the CPC launched the Hundred Flowers campaign, letting a hundred flowers blossom together and letting a hundred schools contend. The campaign was originally started to encourage the intellectuals to promote discussion of literature and different schools of thoughts. The campaign was a successful one because Mao effectively persuaded intellectuals to join the campaign. In his February 27, 1957 speech on "contradictions," he invited intellectuals and others to "bloom and contend."

Chinese intellectuals were encouraged to speak out in forums and newspapers. Yet, in actuality educators
were denied freedoms in educational decision-making. Educators protested that they should be given "positions without the Communist Party's supervision" because the actual authority in every school, be it on curriculum development or promotions of teachers, resided in the CPC. The CPC symbolized the "authoritative," but no one was allowed to question their position.

Teachers in schools and colleges testified they lived in constant fear of the domineering cadres, of incurring the displeasure of the "authoritative," and of the possible consequences that would follow. The fear of being reported to the Party for lack of political activism and ideological laxity was with every individual. The professional effectiveness of teachers, as a consequence, was reduced (Fang, 1992).

The campaign was heated when condemnation and criticism of educational policy came in the midst of bold attacks against the regime and the CPC. The political Party's authorities took quick and decisive action in the form of a counterattack. Many of those who had answered Mao's call to "speak up" were soon denounced as the "poisonous weeds." That is, the outspoken intellectuals were harmful to the socialist system. The dissidents were denounced as "Rightists." A nationwide anti-rightists massive campaign was launched to exert group pressure on the dissidents. The purpose of the campaign
was "to bring an end to the escalating protests and enunciation from the intellectuals and to divert the massive discontent of the CPC's leadership" (Fang, 1992, p.17).

The Anti-Rightist campaign was officially announced on June 8, 1957, in the People's Daily, a government media organ in Beijing. The rightist intellectuals were officially criticized for intellectually trying to overthrow the CPC and the government. The working class had no choice but to fight back.

Political forums were organized by the government to refute previous criticisms made by the so-called "dissidents," students were encouraged to speak out against the deviants, and workers and peasants rallied to answer the Party's call. An atmosphere of mass indignation against the "enemies of the revolutions" was thus created. The outspoken intellectuals soon realized that they had no defense against the well-organized and well-supported counterattack. One-by-one they succumbed. Some recanted and confessed that they had committed serious political mistakes. Others acknowledged their need for further ideological remodeling in order to rectify their thinking.

By the end of 1957 at least 300,000 Chinese intellectuals, including tens of thousands of educators (perhaps as many as half a million), were condemned to labor camps or banished to remote areas of the
countryside. Those who were not sent to the labor camps lost their rights to teach, publish, and conduct research (Fang, 1992). According to Mao's directive during the anti-rightist mass campaign, "Among the 5,000,000 intellectuals, the number of rightists we can set is 1%, 3%, 5% or 10%, the local CPC will determine the number by the situation" (Mao, 1957, p. 11).

During this period, the CPC gained full control over the intellectuals and educators. The CPC stratified the social class of intellectuals as the "capitalist class" in the 8th session of the National Congress of the CPC held in May 1958 (Central Daily, 1993). Since then, the persecution of Chinese educators escalated.

Teachers' Rights from 1966 to 1976

The nationwide persecution of educators peaked during the period from 1966 to 1976, the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During the early 1960s, the anti-rightist fervor subsided and conditions stabilized. In 1966, however, Mao Tse-tung and a faction in the Party unleashed the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a titanic and bloody struggle to dislodge the people they accused of "taking the capitalist road" (Fang, 1992). When the Cultural Revolution began, China's educational systems were severely affected. At this time, politics was everything, and revolutionary...
fervor reached such proportions that universities and schools were closed so that teachers and students could participate in "destroying the four olds"—old culture, old ideology, old customs, and old habits (Kam, 1984, p. 32). Apart from some Red Guard tabloids and official propaganda, books and other forms of information were banned.

Personally reflecting, I remember as an 8-year-old boy that I could not find any books to read except for Chairman Mao's Quotation Book (Red Book). During those radical years, because the Red Book was regarded as the only guidebook for every person in the whole country, students studied and recited articles from the Red Book in class and propagated the Maxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought on streets or in residential areas.

At the start of the Cultural Revolution, feelings of outrage often ran high, particularly among students. A series of Mao's directives were published during this period. These escalated the conflicts between intellectuals and the other social classes. In his May 7 Directive in 1966, Mao Tse-tong (1973) said, "School years must be shortened, education must be reformed, and the phenomenon that bourgeois intellectuals control our school systems must not exist any longer" (Shanghai Normal University, 1973, p. 1). The May 7 Directive enabled high school and college students to devote fully to political activities.
Students began to organize themselves into units known as Red Guards, the typical Red Guard being fanatical Maoist (Hinton, 1978). Millions of young students considered themselves victims of oppressive and unreasonable school practice, and, to many, all these had been perpetrated by teachers. Meanwhile Mao Tse-tong and his revolutionary leadership made it clear at the outset of the Cultural Revolution that "...reforming the educational system, old educational policy, and method are important tasks of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (Guangdong, 1971, p. 130) and "...all intellectuals must be educated widely by workers, peasants, and soldiers, and speed up their ideological reform" (Guangdong, 1971, p. 120). Following these directives, the revolutionary members of the Red Guard were led to believe by the CPC that anti-revolutionary and revisionist forces existed not only in the central committee of the Party, but also in their schools. Therefore they saw their roles as fighters against anti-revolutionaries and revisionists. Although many teachers thought their curriculum was in the best interests of their students and the society, they were also brainwashed that genuine "capitalist-roaders" existed among themselves. Nonetheless, criticisms were sharp, often relentless, and sometimes unjust.

During the next few years, violence and chaos
enveloped the whole country; and once again intellectuals and teachers were prime targets of the struggle (Fang, 1992). The Party's criticism affected teachers' beliefs. They were forced to question how they had taught and why and what was wrong with themselves. In a way, teachers were being educated by their students. Those who refused to admit their faults received inhumane treatment; corporal punishment was not unusual.

Personally reflecting, 89% of the teachers from Middle School Affiliated to Naikai University and Tianjin University in Tianjin City, the school which I attended, experienced inhumane treatment, including separation from their families, limited food, or corporal punishment. Twenty-one teachers were driven to march in the streets; seven were female teachers whose heads were shaved. Because they could not tolerate the corporal punishment, political persecution, and inhumane treatment, thousands of intellectuals and teachers committed suicide nationwide (Fang, 1992).

Zheng Yi, a journalist for a national newspaper Democracy and Law, spent nearly two years interviewing the local residents and examining official documents in Xuanwu County, Guangxi Autonomous Region. He disclosed that during the Cultural Revolution, in Xuanwu County alone, 524 people were beaten to death or slaughtered, and their organs eaten by the local Party members, political cadres, workers, peasants, and students.
Three of these victims were teachers (Zhang, 1993, pp. 51-54).

**Teachers' Rights From 1977 to 1995**

From 1977 to 1995 the CPC and its government adopted new policies to open China to the world. Economic reform was the goal. The new general line was directed by Deng Xiao-ping who stated at the 1978 National Conference on Education that "...today's speedy economic and technical development demands rapid improvement in the quality and efficiency of education" (Deng, 1978, p. 104). The Party's policy during this period was shifted to "respect knowledge and talents" (Deng, 1977, p. 40). The shift indicated the awareness of the Chinese leadership that a new generation of scientists and technicians was needed to modernize the country (Kam, 1984).

The ideological shift acknowledged wrong doings by the government. In June 1981, the Central Committee of the CPC passed the "Resolution About Historical Problems Since the Foundation of the People's Republic of China." The Resolution recognized the late Mao Tse-tong's mistakes regarding educational systems, such as his view of the educational system as "bourgeois"; educators labeled as "capitalist-roaders"; the abolishment of "reactionary academic elements" classes; the management of schools by teams of blue collar workers, peasants, and soldiers; and suspension of classes for revolutionary activities (Zhuo, 1992, p. 6).
From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, political leaders attempted to correct the historical mistakes of mistreating educators. Measurements were taken to address the social needs of the teachers and to solve their problems. On May 27, 1985, the CPC passed the act, "Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC on the Reform of the Educational Structure." Here, the CPC emphasized that the teaching profession should be regarded as one of the most admired jobs in the society; social and political status and salary should be raised; housing, working conditions, and living environments should be improved; and morale of teachers should be enhanced. In sum, the political party recognized the practical problems of educators (CPC, 1985).

For a short time, teachers were regarded as "engineers of the human spirit" and "hard-working gardeners attending to the young generation." The slogans, coined by the CPC's media, were intended to boost China's image of working toward the four modernizations (industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology). However, today, the problems of educators--delayed paychecks by the local government and inadequate housing--are not solved. According to Yang Hai-bo (1993), Deputy Director of the Committee of Education, Science, Culture and Health of the National People's Congress, since 1992, teachers' delayed
paychecks reached 1.43 Billion Yuan (=US $0.25 billion). In Yilong County, Sichuan Province, 700 teachers experienced delayed paychecks for more than six months (Hong, 1993).

With the increasing public acknowledgment of teachers' contributions to society, one would assume that teachers now pursue their academic needs and live normal lives. Because the problem of teachers' rights has not been put on the Central Government's agenda, the reality is limited improvement. Teachers' rights are far from protected by the single act initiated by the CPC. The question is, "What are the rights of teachers?"

**Rights of Teachers and Social Implications**

A teaching career in China today is no longer a pursued profession by the great majority of young people. Because teaching is a non-profit enterprise with humble salaries below other professions, the great beneficiaries of economic reform are the workers, peasants, and government employees (Eppolito, 1993). According to national statistics in 1992, primary and secondary teachers' annual average income was 2667.5 Yuan (=US $321.39), that is 386.5 Yuan (=US $47) less than that of the college teachers, 200 Yuan (=US $24) less than the industrial employees, and 210 Yuan (=US $25) less than the government employees (Zhu, 1993, p. 17). In addition, in other professions bonuses are offered as fringe benefits. The income gap between educators and
other social groups is increasing rapidly. According to Hong's (1993) survey, the average income of teachers was next to the lowest ranking in 1980, lowest in 1982, and the third lowest in 1992. In rural areas, teachers' incomes are even lower than their colleagues in the cities. Rural living conditions are below the poverty level.

Today, fewer high school graduates enroll in schools of education. According to the National College Entrance Examination Committee's statistics, in 1992 the national schools of education lowered their admission standards three times before they could attract 276,000 applicants, 20,000 fewer than expected. Teachers in service and new graduates from teachers' colleges are also leaving the teaching profession. In 1984 in Heilongjiang Province, 15,000 teachers left school (Research Office, 1985). In Shanghai 1,500 quit their teaching jobs in 1992, and in 1993 the number resigning increased to 2,292 (H. Yang, 1994). From 1990 to 1993, Beijing city lost 6,326 teachers, and according to the State Education Committee's statistics, in 1992 China nationwide lost 450,000 teachers and educators, nearly 5% of the total (Hong, 1993). This "Great Escape" of teachers indicates the crisis China faces. The crisis, in my view, is rooted in how teachers' rights have been defined and implemented.

Until 1994 when the "Teacher Law" was passed by the People's Congress, teachers' rights had not been
specified. The Law was initiated and passed to "protect teachers' legitimate rights so that a crew of well-behaved teaching professionals can promote the socialist educational cause" (Law of Teacher, 1994, p. 1). The rights of teachers are defined as follows:

1. To carry out educational activities, reform, and laboratory experiment;
2. To engage in academic research, exchange, and fully express academic-related opinions;
3. To guide students and evaluate students' behaviors and academic performance;
4. To receive salaries on time and enjoy the fringe benefits of government employees such as summer and winter vacations;
5. To provide input to school administrations and participate in democratic management through the Teachers' Senate;
6. To participate in on-the-job training. (Teacher Law, 1994, p. 2)

In addition to the six stated rights, six responsibilities are required of teachers. The responsibilities of teachers are defined as follows:

1. To abide by the Constitution Law, professional ethical standards, and to be a role model;
2. To implement the Communist Party's educational policies and school teaching programs;
3. To educate students in the basic principles of
Constitution Law, patriotism, unity of nationalities, ideology and morals, culture, science and technology, and to organize and lead students to participate in social activities;
4. To show loving care for all students, respect students' personalities, and promote students' improvement in morals, intelligence, and physics;
5. To keep harmful or illegal actions from students and to criticize and resist the phenomenon which is harmful to students' growing;
6. To improve ideological and political consciousness, teaching skills, and field knowledge.
(Teacher Law, 1994, p. 2)

China's Constitution begins with the definition that "The People's Republic of China is a socialist country built upon the allies of workers and peasants." Teachers are not defined as equal social members. They are the subordinates of other leading social classes.

The six rights of teachers stated above indicate a clear focus on the pure academic interests of teachers. Although number 5 states the teachers' freedom to participate in school administration, the Teachers' Senate is in control. The Teachers' Senate is comprised of those active in politics and academics, and the Chair must be a member of the committee of the CPC. In this way, the Senate is controlled by the CPC. The only existing laws concerning teachers' rights have excluded their rights as
an independent, social, and political group. Teachers continue to function as a contingent utility tool to the ruling political party of China. Without an independent, social, and political identity (like other social classes), Chinese teachers remain victimized by political and economic reforms.

Evidence indicates that no country has treated teachers as the Chinese government has from 1949 to the present era. Yet, teachers continue to be the most devoted community members to Chinese education. Chapter 4 addresses the social consequences resulting from the lack of teachers' basic rights.
Chapter 4

Social Consequences And Implications

Every social change has a consequential impact on the participants and on the social environment. In earlier chapters, the major problems and changes associated with the basic rights of Chinese teachers were described and considered. This chapter summarizes some social consequences resulting from problems with the basic rights of teachers. Specifically, three areas are selected for presentation: (a) fundamental changes in the social and functional roles of teachers; (b) attitude changes in the younger generation toward the teaching profession; and (c) shifted support from family and community. Although changes in other areas exist, such as education being viewed more from a utilitarian perspective than a liberal education perspective, the three factors above encapsulate the present and future trends in Chinese education. These trends directly impact individuals, families, the professional community, and society. To conclude this study, implications for Chinese teachers and those who study Chinese education are provided.

New Trends in the Social and Functional Roles of Teachers

The contemporary, social, and functional roles of teachers have deviated dramatically from traditional roles. The Confucian philosophy of teaching held sway until 1949, when communist political ideology was imposed in the educational arena. The traditional role of
teachers was as members of an elite, educated social class (see chapter 2 on the discussion of the "shi" class). They were sages who processed and passed on knowledge. The modern communist role cast them as exemplars of model citizenship in the community and as instruments for dissemination of communist political ideology.

Most teachers in contemporary China see themselves losing traditional social status and social values. In traditional China prior to 1911 when semi-feudal and semi-colonial systems were ended, the Chinese "Shi" class (educated) was a leading elite community in society, followed by farmers, workers, and businessmen. Today, the reverse order is the reality in China.

One of the coping mechanisms for present-day teachers is changing careers. According to a survey in 1987 by the Beijing Educational Bureau, among new teachers, 16 percent did not show interest in the teaching profession, and 28 percent left the teaching profession (Su, 1987, p. 134). In 1992 in Shanghai, among the 2300 school teachers who quit their teaching jobs, 69 percent were under 35 years-old. In 1992, Zhejiang Province surveyed 851 teachers via questionnaire. Only 36 percent enjoyed the teaching profession. In another survey by the Educational Bureau of Heping District in Tianjin, 70 percent of the 1,000 teachers surveyed stated that they would quit their teaching jobs if they had the choice.

Another accommodation, especially for those who have
no opportunity to leave their teaching posts or advance professionally, is to become dual-career teachers. After school hours, these teachers either work for other companies or pursue their own businesses to compensate for their low incomes. This side-employment is usually at the expense of teaching quality and the health of the teachers. In the words of a 70-year-old school teacher with 50 years experience in a primary school in Beijing, "The teachers' social and economic standing being well below other professions will cause the whole nation to suffer greatly sooner or later."

Impact on Students in General

The motivations of previous generations in devoting themselves to secondary education often fail to stimulate today's college students. In a stratified society such as China's, secondary school teachers enjoy minimal social status, modest salary, and limited opportunity for social and career advancement. The new generation of college students has conveyed a clear message to society—they don't approve of how teachers have been treated, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, and they don't want to follow that path by devoting their lives to teaching.

The first observable consequence is declining college enrollment in education disciplines, despite generous scholarships offered by the government. These
scholarships are usually adequate to cover one's 4-year tuition, room and board, and carry a contractual obligation to teach in primary or secondary school upon graduation. According to Cai Hong's report in 1994, the most difficult task for school teachers and authorities is to motivate high school graduates to attend teachers' colleges, even though many teachers' colleges keep lowering their enrollment requirements and offer 10,000 yuan (US $1,200) scholarships (Cai, 1994).

In the Chinese national entrance examination to college, those who pass the cut-off score list their first, second, and third choices of majors and schools on their application forms, hoping their first choice is honored. If an applicant's target major(s) and schools have fulfilled their quotas and the applicant failed to provide an option, he or she is not enrolled by any school for that year. This means the person will have to re-take the national entrance exam in following year. After three attempts in three years, the person is not allowed any more re-takes. This ends the goal of attending the university.

Therefore, college applicants commonly select a less desired major or school as their third choice, thus avoiding non-selection. This choice is usually a college of teaching. Although the number of students enrolled in teachers' colleges comprises half the total enrollment nationwide, few candidates rank teachers' colleges as
their first choice.

On August 14, 1987, a national newspaper in Beijing, Guangming Daily, reported "the enrollment of teachers' colleges is more difficult than ever before. In Beijing, top high school graduates do not want to be enrolled in teachers' colleges. The issue of choosing the teaching profession as a career is becoming serious" (Shu, p. 157). In fact, college and major choices submitted by prominent high school graduates reflect the social consequences of the suffering primary and secondary teaching professionals.

The second obvious consequence is that the majority of students of the teachers' colleges try to dodge their teaching assignments after graduating. One of the strategies is to be a top student so as to bypass the rigorous entrance exam required for graduate school. Professor Zheng Qingyuan (1994) of Shanxi Province Normal University observed that seventy percent of the students in his university "work very hard" (p. 4) with a single motive—to dodge the teaching assignment to elementary and high schools by passing future examinations required for graduate school. Zhang further commented that this phenomenon is common nationwide because, according to government policy, all students who graduate from teachers' colleges, except the postgraduate students, must work in primary or secondary schools. As a norm, those
with advanced degrees, master's or doctorate, are assigned to teach in universities, a prestigious position that many seek.

In Su's (1986) survey of the Beijing Teachers' College, 80 percent of its students chose not to be school teachers. Many admitted that their enrollment was a mistake made by recruiters who had quotas to fulfill. The students viewed the teaching profession as undesirable because they had witnessed the hardships experienced by their own elementary and high school teachers.

In summary, those who do not pass the entrance graduate school examinations have no option but to teach in the elementary and secondary schools. Many refuse the assignment and remain unemployed without any social and government support. Also, their personal files may be withheld by the school. For example, in Yilong County of Sichuan Province, 151 teachers' college graduates were assigned to teach in its elementary and secondary schools. Only seven reported to work; the rest were at large (Yang, 1994, p. 155).

**Shifted Support from Family and Community**

The Chinese culture values family support and cohesiveness. Although both parents and the community respect school teachers and the importance of elementary and high school education, they are cultivating a resistance force against their children pursuing teaching careers.
An old Chinese rhyme which used to be humorous is now social reality. It states, "Jia You Wu Dou Liang, Bu Dang Hai Er Wang," meaning, "If you still have five deciliters of grain left in your house, you should not choose the unfortunate career to be the king (teacher) of children."

The government's repeated propaganda on mobilizing the society to "respect teachers and shift national focus to education" has failed. Pressures from parents and society are key considering factors by high school graduates in choosing their future paths. In today's job market in China, the most pursued candidates are those with degrees in accounting, business, computer science, foreign languages, and other practical fields. Highly paid salaries and benefits and social status occupy the attention of society. A strange phenomenon results—people desire quality education for their children but are loathe to support the profession that makes this possible.

The community, in general, also neglects the inclusion of teachers. In the Beijing Public Library, primary and secondary school teachers have been excluded from membership application. Due to the school administration's financial constraints, this group also receives substandard medical treatment. Although all working Chinese are entitled to free medical care, the employee's work unit pays the bills. Since secondary schools are non-profit in nature, they receive limited
government and private funding. Budget constraints are strict. In some places, physicians have no choice but to limit teachers' drug prescriptions to 3 yuan (=US $0.35) for each visit. For business entities and government departments, budgets are more generous, and their employees may be allotted ten to twenty times this amount for a single prescription (Su, 1987, p. 136).

In Tianjin in July 1996 I interviewed Mr. Xiao Guoan, a 65-year-old secondary school teacher who had been hospitalized for more than three years. Because of the restricted budget in his school, he has personally paid more than 24,000 yuan (= US $3,000) on medical expenses. His retirement salary is about 400 yuan a month. His family and his grown children are helping to pay the debt. In contrast, a government-employed patient's "Medicare" fee is usually covered by his work unit in full.

The negative social consequences presented above indicate the seriousness of the crisis facing the basic Chinese educational structure and the overall educational system. The core of the crisis is that three existing generations have developed an unprecedented resistance to the elementary and secondary teaching professions. Older teaching professionals have suffered so severely that they have become incapable of pursuing that cause. To avoid being victimized by the system, the middle-aged and
twenties generations refuse to follow in the suit of their mentors. Children are not seeking a career of being "the king of children" (teacher).

Today, educators must ask themselves: What are the core issues beyond low salaries and inadequate funding? What is the future for China's basic education and education in general? How does the problem affect global education? This study concludes by presenting implications for the future of Chinese education and for research on Chinese educational problems.

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study is to reveal the deep-rooted problems of discriminatory treatment of the elementary and secondary school teachers in the existing Chinese educational system. These problems have been suppressed by the Chinese media and ignored by the international communities studying Chinese education. Hopefully, the voices of former colleagues in China, the 8,668,000 primary and secondary school teachers, can be heard in the international educational community.

The teaching community has long been deprived of basic social rights, more so than any other social group in China's contemporary history. Teachers as a whole have been subjected to frequent political wars, public media exposure, and premature economic development. They are
not only under-represented at political and socio-economic levels, but also they are discriminated against by leading forces.

Historically, teachers have been the "enemies of the working class" in the 1950s, the "poisonous agent" to students in the 1960s, the "spiritual polluters" in the 1970s and 80s, and the "spiritual engineers of mankind" in the 1990s. They have not been independent social beings, and their identities have eroded.

Several implications are presented. First, China is suffering from a weakened basic education structure. This impairs her economic competition globally. According to the World Bank, "One quarter of all investment in rail systems, power plants, and other infrastructure is wasted through technical inefficiencies due to poorly trained operators" (Naisbitt, 1996, p. 190). China is not producing adequately educated young people for its market-driven society, and the problem is intensified when decreasing numbers of teachers remain in the teaching profession.

Second, as China loses talented teachers, she is also falling behind her Asian neighbors in attracting the migration of Western-educated Chinese back to the motherland. Unlike Taiwan, where 50 percent of the 220,000 students studying abroad have returned, or Japan, whose majority of overseas students return, China has not been able to attract its overseas students. The "reverse
flow" of the educated has benefited Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan but not China (Naisbitt, 1996). Unless China alters its treatment of teachers, educated overseas Chinese are not likely to return nor stay.

Third, so that the historically inherited discrimination against the under-represented class of school teachers can be corrected and quality education restored, the Chinese government and society should adopt a version of an "affirmative action program." Laws and regulations protecting education and teachers must be secured by the Central Committee of the Party in practice. Teachers should not be victims of political and ideological struggles and economic reforms.

Finally, now is the time for the international research community studying comparative education to reflect on future research directions. If no man is an island, no teaching community is either. In today's increasingly interdependent global society, what is occurring in China is affecting the world.
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