The Role of Overseas Study in Systematizing School Education in Later-Developing Countries: Acceptance of Western Academic Study in Modern China

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Abstract

This paper examines trends in Chinese overseas study from the 1870s to the 1920s while analyzing the process of systematizing modern school education in China by considering the significance of overseas study. Texts and official historical documents on Chinese domestic trends and the status of Chinese students overseas were studied. The Qing dynasty attempted a self-strengthening movement (c. 1860–1890) by introducing advanced Western technology; however, a classics-focused traditional system of academia linked to the keju or civil-service examination system in Imperial China, was maintained. Therefore personnel to work with these technologies were inadequate. Starting in the 1870s, the Japanese government sent students to the West despite the expense at the turn of the century, so remaining in Japan for study became a main goal until the 1910s. The start of modern education in Japan to widespread acceptance coincided with dependence on overseas study. Until school education and modern academic study were domestically accessible in China, overseas study fulfilled that role.

Keywords: China (Qing dynasty), Modernization, Mandarins, Overseas study, Keju

1. Introduction

1-1. Background and Objectives

Modernization in the East comprises each individual nation recreating traditional culture, starting by transmitting Western culture (Tominaga, 1996). Modern Western technologies and systems were introduced, took root domestically, and traditional society was distanced. However, developed nation technology did not always take root once introduced; for it to function, specially trained personnel were required[1] for social development.

This paper examines trends in Chinese student overseas study from the 1870s to the 1920s, while analyzing modern school education introduced in the 1860s and its systematization process in China. The role of overseas study in this process is duly evaluated.

Generally, later-developing countries sent students abroad to early-developing countries and created their own parallel school systems. Those who mastered modern academic study[2] domestically or overseas were expected to close the technology gap in early-developing countries. In the context of systematized school education, the implication of overseas study. suggests a link between modernization and overseas study in later-developing Asian countries.

1-2. Previous Research

Research has been conducted on modern Chinese overseas study. Rhoads (2011) focuses on Qing dynasty policies for studying in the United States (US), conducted as a part of the Self-Strengthening Movement, providing insights into overseas study content through a wide-ranging examination of official US documents and newspapers. Yan (1991) analyzes overseas students in Japan in detail by considering relationships between

[1] The term "modern education" in this paper refers to the educational practice of modern academic study, in which a modern curriculum supports technologies and systems of early-developing countries, initially in traditional educational institutions and thereafter gradually in schools. The antonym of this term is traditional education, in which classics are taught in premodern educational institutions. School education, referring to education centered on a modern curriculum in a systematized school system, is a part of modern education; however, depending on the context, it is used to emphasize the education of modern academic study in schools founded in the modern era.

[2] This paper refers to modern academic study, as well as Western academic study to refer to social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and modern Western languages. An alternative approach is classical study.

social fluctuations in East Asia and Chinese attitudes toward Japan. Wang (2010) uses various historical materials to examine a large sample of overseas students and clarify their social awareness and political attitudes.

Their results provide useful insights, but fail to explore the position of overseas study in the systemization process of school education within China. Points to be emphasized are processes by which overseas study began, thrived, and declined in China; changes in destination countries by era, and the fact that linking these two aspects with changes in domestic trends has been insufficiently discussed from a long-term perspective.

1-3. Methods

To position the role of overseas study within school systematization, both must be concurrently analyzed, insofar as success or failure affects overseas study trends. This research uses text and document analysis about Chinese domestic trends, Chinese students in the West, and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where many Chinese studied. A systematization process started in the late nineteenth century of attitudes by educated classes on modern education. Trends in overseas study by destination (the West vs. Japan) are separated and examined, while the role played by overseas study within Chinese modernization is weighed.

One pattern of modernization in later-developing countries is internal reform in response to external pressure, the import of early-developing nation technology and knowledge, and the overcoming difficulties arising during the process. By approaching the case of China from the three aforementioned perspectives, this paper clarifies typical events faced by later-developing countries.

2. Western Impact and Educational Reform

2-1 Zhongti Xiyong Qing dynasty domination was threatened by Western powers and the Taiping Rebellion. Li Hongzhang, moved by a sense of crisis, felt that Western strength derived from technology (Chu & Liu, 1994, p. 23). Along with Zhang Zhidong and other reform-minded officials, Li developed a Westernization Movement with a slogan of "Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for application" (*zhongti xiyong*) and began introducing Western military and mechanical technology. On the basis of this Chinese self-strengthening orientation, the School of Combined Learn-

ing (*Jingshi Tongwen Guan*) was the first modern educational institution in Beijing in 1862 under petition from the Zongli Yamen or Senior Foreign Affairs Department. New educational institutions opened subsequently in Guangzhou, Shanghai, and elsewhere, offering Western language study (Abe, 1993, pp. 35–36).

However, concerns were raised about whether introducing and learning foreign technologies and academic study would diminish the dignity of China (Mitsuishi, 1994, 65). Because educational activities at the School of Combined Learning centered on the use of foreign instructors, conservative officials rebelled against education "taught by barbarians." William A. P. Martin, a US missionary who became a teacher in China in 1864, recalled that

> unlike the Japanese, who adopted the Western system in their schools from kindergarten to university, the Chinese were satisfied with their traditional education and never sought to reform or supplement it significantly (Martin, 1896, p. 327).

Chinese Empire mandarins refused to recognize the Western educational system as superior to the *keju*, the gateway to civil service. The *keju* examination system persisted through dynasties from 598 to 1905 as a selection system embedded in Chinese society. Mandarin bureaucrats were examined for cultural ability, writing poetry in classical formats; and moral ability, by memorizing the *Four Books and Five Classics* (*Sishu Wujing*), the most important Confucian text and explaining its significance based on interpretations by the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian school.

At first, the Chinese classics comprised such a vast system of knowledge that the number of books published in China up to 1750 exceeded those printed in every other language worldwide (Sato, 1996, pp. 12–18). Books on Western technology and science were published in China but not widely distributed, because of low regard for Western learning (Needham, 1981). Mandarin intellectuals believed in the superiority of their country's culture and civilization and considered academic study elsewhere negligible. When Martin invited high officials of the Qing government to observe a demonstration of the telegraph, one contemptuously responded that "China had been a great empire for four thousand years without the telegraph" (Martin, 1896, p. 299).Therefore, examinations continued to focus solely on knowledge of the classics, without testing abilities in science and technology, modern law, or other domains useful for modern

officials.

Almost all educational establishments in China were academies of classical learning (*shuyuan*) and private academies subordinated to the keju, offering classical education centered on interpreting the *Four Books and Five Classics* and writing the eight-legged essay (*bagu wen*) as preparation for Imperial examinations. There was no room for foreign languages, mathematics, or natural science unrelated to the examinations (Abe, 1990, p. 18). Institutions for studying of Western academics were established in China on government mandate. However, even at one, the Shanghai Polytechnic Institution, the focus was on the *Four Books and Five Classics* (Hayashi, 1989, p. 254).

The *keju* excluded staff who mastered modern academic knowledge from the official bureaucracy. (Sato, 1996, pp. 15–20). For mandarins to doubt traditional classical culture would have amounted to negating their own ability proven by examination. In this way, the *keju* system blocked expansion and acceptance of education suited to a new era (Miyazaki, 2003, p. 227).

2-2. The *Keju* System Struggles

As the nineteenth century concluded, intellectuals began to realize that the system was incompatible with producing personnel capable of applying modern technology, leaving and traditional systems inadequate for the new era. However, they could not speak out about this issue. Cohen (1984) writes,

> although more and more Chinese in the last decades of the century saw a need for change along Western lines, the acceptance of such change as a positive good was slower in developing. Reformers therefore often felt obliged to camouflage their advocacy of Western-oriented change in a variety of intellectual disguises designed to make the changes appear innocuous (p. 29).

After failing the *keju*, Zheng Guanying studied English in Shanghai while working for a British-funded company, enhancing his understanding of developed nation politics and economics (Guo, 2010, p. 1). From the 1880s through the 1890s, he worked to establish and operate a modern company. In 1893, he wrote *Words of Warning in a Flourishing Age (Shengshi Weiyan)* sharply criticizing the conventional system and calling for social reform: “If schools are not established there will be no human resources available, and if the keju is not abolished then any schools established will be so in name

only" (Wang, 1991, p. 173). Perhaps because he had not passed the Imperial examinations, his opinion was dismissed as a contrarian view.

However, China's defeat in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War transformed the atmosphere, rendering inevitable social reforms based on the Western model. Japan, erroneously considered a tiny, inferior vassal state, had modernized to such an extent that attacking China became feasible (Kikuchi, 2005). The Westernization Movement, adopting Western science and technology while maintaining the superiority of China's traditional systems with their basis in Confucian culture, was dominant for 30 years, but after the military defeat, its limits were exposed.

As China's confidence in its traditional culture was shaken, a gap was observed between *keju*-produced staff new personnel requirements. A radical reformist group led by Kang Youwei passionately demanded a fundamental shift from outdated educational formats and the establishment of new schools nationwide (Abe, 1993, p. 37). While the Westernization Movement led by Li Hongzhang and others had attempted only a superficial, formal adoption of technology, Kang Youwei's group represented a more radical, revolutionary reform of the basic system.

Huang Zunxian, a late-Qing diplomat and former comrade of Kang, published *Treatises on Japan (Riben guozhi)*, guidelines for reform and the first definitive study of Japan by a Chinese author. Analyzing Japan's efforts to absorb Western culture and integration of a modern educational system, Huang argued that China should abandon a Sinocentric (*zhonghua*) ideology and actively accept Western culture and educational systems (Abe, 1990, p. 23). Emperor Guangxu invited Huang to explain his work in person. Huang's influence was the impetus of imperial reform of several regulations (Lee, 2013, p. 272). The reformist vision included innovative plans to abolish the *keju*, establish a school education system from primary through higher education, and focus on science (Eckel, 1948, pp. 278–280). To achieve these objectives, they launched the Changing-System Movement in April 1898 supported by Emperor Guangxu.

However, within 100 days, this movement buckled under conservative resurgence, driving Kang from power. In June 1898, the Imperial Capital University (*Jingshi Daxuetang*), the precursor of Beijing University, was established. However, repercussions of the Boxer Rebellion forced it to close in 1900 for two years. University curriculum remained subject to traditional constraints, such as preparing for the *keju* (Kobayashi, 2002, p. 142). Even had it offered modern education to future personnel, they would not have received government appointments (Taga, 2006, p. 137).

The Boxer Rebellion refocused reforms, and concepts proposed by reformists were realized. From August 1901 through 1902, each province converted academies of classical learning (*shuyuan*) into higher, secondary, and primary educational institutions, and the Imperial Capital University reopened in Beijing. *Keju* content was also revised, and the eight-legged essay eliminated (Saito, 1981, p. 52). As the *keju* was revised, a school system was constructed. Under the Presented School Regulations of 1904, the *keju* would soon be abolished. As the venerable bureaucratic hiring system collapsed, schools gradually became personnel training centers. In March 1905, Japanese educator and educational administrator Sawayanagi Masataro lectured on "The New Educational System in Qing China," explaining Qing educational trends as follows: "To speak of the content of the Presented School Regulations, one might as well be speaking of Japan's current educational system" (Abe, 1990, pp. 33–35).

However, classical elements remained in the curriculum with educational materials such as the *Commentary of Zuo (Chunqiu Zuozhuan)*, a commentary on a historical text supposedly compiled by Confucius, and the *Rites of Zhou (Zhouli)* Confucian scriptures. The curriculum called for students to read 48,000 characters annually and over 240,000 over five years (Kobayashi, 2002, p. 91). Shu Xincheng, born in 1893, recalled that in Hunan Province villages in 1908, "the people of the region thought of the new schools as institutions for Western academic study, supporting the continuation of the keju and hoped that their children would work hard at their study of the classics, pass the exams, and bring honor to the families" (Saito, 1981, p. 55).

In the 1910s, however, secondary education reform progressed, with additional curriculum hours for foreign language study. According to Kobayashi (2002), in the 1910s, first-year students at secondary schools Hangzhou Prefecture studied for 36 class hours weekly, including eight hours of English, six of math, and four of classical reading, with the percentage of modern sciences steadily increasing (p.98). By 1920, Beijing University students returning from study abroad gradually began to be hired as instructors (Sato, 1996, p. 26).

This trend continued, with Western academic influence increasing steadily in the 1920s. Many intellectuals of this time used Western academic practice as a vehicle for social reform. Nineteenth century intellectuals, or mandarins took for granted the superiority of Sinocentric culture and made no attempts to study Western systems or academia, but progress was slow.

3. Acceptance of Western Knowledge and Technology

3-1. Chinese Educational Mission Students

Pressure had been increasing since the mid-nineteenth century, when defeat in the Opium War (1840–1842) and Arrow War (1856–1860) threatened the Qing dynasty. Qing China had intended to introduce Western technology to interact with the West on equal terms. In 1862, the School of Combined Learning (*Jingshi Tongwen Guan*) was established in Beijing, but with the Qing Dynasty focus on the classics, there was no active approach to modern academic study.

The government established domestic schools during the Westernization Movement and sent students abroad to developed countries. In 1872, the Qing government exported 30 male students aged from twelve to sixteen to the US as government-funded scholars. This was the first governmental attempt at organized overseas study. Until 1875, 120 students or 30 annually were educated in the US (Yokoi & Gao, 2012, p. 104). They were known as liumeiyoutong or Chinese Educational Mission students. Of these 120, 43 enrolled at university, including 29 who studied science and engineering: "Reflecting the practical orientation of the Westernization Movement, a large number of boys chose to become scientists and technicians" (Takegami, 2015, p. 80). This Mission overlapped with an era of scientific and technological innovation in the US, which significantly influenced Chinese youth (Kao, 1981, p. 72).

But in 1881, the Chinese government ordered all students to return to China. The original fifteen year mission lasted only nine (Teng & Fairbank, 1954, pp. 92–93). According to the government, students had become too comfortable with US customs. Liang Cheng, later a successful diplomat, went to the US at age twelve and joined the baseball team at Phillips Exeter Academy (Reaves, 2004, pp. 24–26). Confucian elites who comprised the Qing ruling class were concerned by Chinese student assimilation in the West. In addition, relations between the US and Qing China worsened due to demands for excluding Chinese laborers. In 1881, the US government unilaterally abandoned the Burlingame Treaty, officially imposing stringent restrictions on future Chinese immigration (LaFargue, 1941, p. 69). In June 1881, Zongli Yamen halted the overseas study program, summoning all remaining students home immediately. (Yokoi & Gao, 2012, p. 108).

3-2. Policy for Study in France

The Qing government had dispatched students to Europe as well, starting in 1875. According to Nagata (2006), 88 students traveled to Europe from the 1870s through the 1880s (p.211).

In 1866, the Fuzhou Arsenal was established in Fujian Province on a proposal from Zuo Zongtang, who had advanced military reinforcement, along with Li Hongzhang. Its purpose was to introduce modern naval systems, specifically manufacturing warships and transport and cultivating shipbuilding technicians and modern marine navigators. Starting in December 1867, over 60 French technicians and teachers were appointed to the Arsenal as instructors (Wu, 2001, pp. 88–90). Based on suggestions from Zuo and Prosper Giquel, the French navy officer who had earned Zuo's trust during his time in China, the Fuzhou Naval College was built under the auspices of the Arsenal as a training institution for modern shipbuilding technicians and naval officers. This college comprised a shipbuilding school and naval officer training school, with demanding academic standards. Under Giquel's directorship, 109 students enrolled, of whom six died and over sixty withdrew. Only thirty-nine were left by 1874 (Biggerstaff, 1961, p. 211).

In 1875, when Giquel returned to France, Zuo's successor Shen Baozhen had five of the college's leading students accompany him. Shen, an official from China's first fully fledged modern naval dockyard, proposed in 1872 that students be sent to Europe (Pong, 1994, p. 253). This was a regional official's project, not central government policy. Organized overseas study began in 1877 under plans stipulating student numbers (one dozen) and study intervals of up to three years in France and two years in the United Kingdom (UK) (Wu, 2001, p. 97). Another motivation for overseas study in the Westernization Movement was excessive dependence on foreign technicians and instructors (Smith, 1976, p. 195).

According to Yokoi and Gao (2012), Qing China made significant efforts to acquire European engineering technology. As of 1877, twelve pupils were studying naval technology in the UK; by 1881, six were studying shipbuilding in France; and two were studying torpedoes in Germany. By 1886, these trends had changed, with twenty pupils studying law or naval techniques in the UK and fourteen international law or shipbuilding in France (p. 110). Interest in Western social sciences was increasing.

The program to study in France merits more detailed discussion. Wu (2001, pp. 98–101) divides the Overseas Study Mission from 1877 to 1897 into intervals.

The first was from 1877 to 1880. Four students were sent to the Cherbourg School of Marine Engineering, four to the Toulon Naval Training Centre, four to the Schneider arms plant at Le Creusot, one to the Saint-Étienne École des Mines, two to the Paris Institute of Political Studies, two to the La Seyne-sur-Mer shipyard, two to the Marseilles casting plant, one to the Marseilles wood plant, three to the Saint-Chamond Compagnie des Forges, and one to the Brest Naval Training Centre. Ma Jianzhong, active in late Qing diplomacy, was among these students, receiving a degree from the Paris Law Faculty after passing the baccalauréat, a national traditional qualification that combines a secondary education diploma and higher education entrance qualification (Okamoto, 2007, p. 18).

The second interval was from 1882 to 1886. Of the twenty students sent to France, six were enrolled at the Paris Law Faculty, four at the Paris College of Maritime Engineering, three at the Paris College of Civil Engineering, two at the École normale supérieure, one at the Fontainebleau School of Artillery, one at the Moulin Blanc powder mill, and one at the Brest Naval Training Centre; the destinations of two others remain unclear.

The third interval comprised students sent in 1897, with reduced overseas study budgets decreasing their numbers to five at the College of Civil Engineering and one at the Paris College of Maritime Engineering. All were summoned back to China in November 1900 because of budgetary constraints.

Notably, from the start of the mission, international law and French were subjects of study, in addition to military matters and engineering technology. Starting in 1879, pupils began to return to China but were not always used effectively because the central government remained dominated by the traditional elite[3]. Students returning from Europe had limited scopes of activity, but contributed to transitioning to the new era. European study was limited by high costs and the ensuing professional challenges for many alumni. Modernization was unlikely to succeed without a large group educated in Western academia, so the Chinese looked to Japan for inspiration.

[3] For example, Yen Fu, who studied in the United Kingdom, became a teacher at the Fuzhou Naval College after his return; disappointed at not being granted an important post, he sat for the keju repeatedly but never passed (Schwartz, 1964, pp. 31–32).

4. Japan as a Site for Modern Academic Study

4-1. Studying in a Small Island Country

Starting in the mid-19th century, Qing China became deeply interested in modern Western civilization. As noted above, the government sent students to the US and Europe to introduced developed nation technology. However, defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 drew China's attention to Japan, who since Meiji Restoration reforms had steadily advanced toward modernization, impressing the Chinese elite.

In May 1896, Yu Geng, Chinese legation minister to Japan, requested Japanese Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu to accept Chinese students in Japan; one month later, he submitted a list of thirteen students to Foreign Minister and Minister of Education Saionji Kinmochi[4]. These were the first students officially sent to Japan by the Qing government; one was aged 23, one 22, two 20, four 19, and five 18 (Gaimusho, 1896), or somewhat older than the Chinese Educational Mission students (*liumeiyoutong*) of 1872.

Previously, in 1890, seven students had been dispatched unofficially. The Chinese minister of legation to Japan planned to have them enter Japanese schools. However, deciding that it would be unfortunate if Chinese students not yet fully exposed to secondary education were to enter Japanese schools and encounter negative influences, he established a Japanese language school within the Chinese Mission and educated students in ideological control (Yan, 1991, pp. 9–10). So although the seven youths went to Japan, they were not trained in Japanese schools.

From 1896, an increasing number of young Chinese came to study in Japan. Why? At the time, Zhang Zhidong was among government officials extolling advantages of study in Japan. His book *An Encouragement of Learning (Quanxue pian)* encouraged study abroad in the East, especially Japan where costs were lower than in the West, making study more accessible. Proximity to China made research and investigations easier. The linguistic kinship between Japanese and Chinese facilitated Chinese speaker understanding of Japanese, as opposed to Romance or Germanic languages. Therefore, study in Japan would be the most efficient strategy to master Western learning (Sun, 2011, p. 192). In sum, Zhang posited that the purpose of studying in Japan was not "learning about Japan" but "Western academic study." Japanese books were published

[4] Mutsu Munemitsu resigned from the position of Foreign Minister on May 30, 1896.

in translation in China from 1896 to 1911 in 958 categories" (Zhang, 2009, p. 198), and among new school textbooks published in China from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, translations of Japanese textbooks outnumbered Western books (ibid., p. 206). The trend of learning modern Western academic studies from Japan extended to the domestic dimension.

Study in Japan, which began with thirteen students, became national policy in 1898, with *Quanxue pian* published in March with Zhang's recommendations determining Qing policy. The number of privately and publicly funded students increased to over 100 in 1899 and 1,000 in 1903, peaking at over 8,000 in 1906 (Saneto, 1981, p. 104), after which the number gradually declined.

In July 1898, the Seijo School, a prestigious secondary institution in Tokyo, began accepting Qing Chinese students. Four enrolled, and for the academic year starting October 1903, 170 were present, 47 publicly and 123 privately funded. At the secondary level, increased studying abroad was due to private funding. The number of Chinese students enrolled rose to 273 in 1906 but lessened to 183 in 1913 and 97 in 1920 (Koshi Henshu Iinkai, 1985, pp. 314–315).

Secondary schools targeting Chinese students aspiring to enter the Japanese Military Academy included the Shinbu School, established in 1903; two years later, it had 357 students (Gaimusho, 1908). Chiang Kai-shek enrolled there in 1908 (Yamada, 2017, p. 16). However, in the 1910s, changes in Chinese domestic affairs and worsening Sino-Japanese relations led to a sharp decrease in students, and the school was forced to close in 1914 (Teow, 1999, p. 15).

Regarding higher education, shifts in Chinese enrolment at Tokyo Imperial University—Japan's most prestigious institute of higher education—were not parallel to those at the Seijo School. The number of enrolled students was four in 1900, 16 in 1906, 24 in 1913, and 47 in 1919, with no decrease even in the 1910s. Starting in the mid-1900s, the focus of standard Qing governmental policy toward studying in Japan began to shift to higher education, with students drawn from graduates of secondary education or higher (Tokyo Daigaku Hyakunenshi Henshu Iinkai, 1985, pp. 147–150).

4-2. Patterns of Overseas Students in Japan

Many Chinese were drawn to Japan, a place where they could effectively pursue Western academic study. A detailed examination of the status of Chinese students may be made by examining Japanese Foreign Ministry official documents. According to a

May 1908 survey, of 4,678 students, 4,469 (95.5%) were enrolled in Tokyo schools or universities (Gaimusho, 1908). For Chinese people at the time, studying in Japan meant being in Tokyo.

In May 1914, there were 2,492 Chinese students in Japan, 83.6% (2084) of whom were in Tokyo—a slight reduction in the concentration rate. However, 1,668 (66.9%) of these were in higher education, an increase in number and percentage from the early 1900s. Of the 2,881 students whose funding is known, 1,069 (43.1%) were government-funded scholars; however, an examination of the 655 students attending higher education institutions under the Ministry of Education, such as Tokyo Imperial University and other elite locations, revealed that 621 or approximately 95% were publicly funded and only 34 privately funded (Gaimusho, 1914).

A survey conducted in May 1924 found that the Tokyo concentration rate of 1,818 Chinese students was 57.5% (1046), lower than in the 1914 survey. The decrease in student numbers was due to fewer students in Tokyo and secondary education: 95 students (5.2%) were enrolled in the latter, much less than the 357 enrolled in the Shinbu School in 1905. In higher education, 1,569 students (86.3%) were enrolled, with a slight decrease from the 1,668 of 1914 (Gaimusho, 1924).

Studying in Japan, from its beginnings in 1896, can be summarized as follows: First, until 1906 or so, at the 8,000-student peak, privately funded students enrolled in secondary education in Tokyo composed the bulk of students. Second, the number of students decreased from the late 1900s due to a drop in enrolment at Tokyo secondary schools; the Tokyo concentration rate also decreased. Third, the number of Chinese students enrolled in various higher education institutions, including Imperial universities, remained stable; most were publicly funded. In sum, overall decrease in student numbers included shifts from secondary to higher education and from privately to publicly funded study, and the decrease of students in Tokyo increased the relative percentage of those in provincial cities. The decrease in students enrolled in secondary education was a sign of progress of domestic secondary education in China.

Study in Japan, which began in 1896 and peaked in 1906, declined gradually thereafter; in total, tens of thousands of Chinese students are estimated to have studied in Japan from 1900 to 1920. Why were there as many as 8,000 Chinese sojourners in Japan in 1906? The general view on this sharp increase is that with the abolition of the keju in 1905, the Qing government came to value study experience in Japan. Wang (2010) emphasizes international factors along with this domestic cause:

> One interpretation is that the Qing made the final decision to abolish the keju in September 1905, leading to a sharp increase in students going to Japan; what is considered a more important factor, however, is that the Chinese were stimulated by Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese victory may also have functioned as a stimulus to the final Qing decision to abolish the keju … It was felt domestically that exploration of the causes of Japan's wealth and power had become an urgent issue (pp. 50–51).

Wang suggests that Japan's victory against Russia prompted abolition of the keju while making studying in Japan a trend. In any case, the contemporaneous occurrence of these two events was a major factor.

At the turn of the century, the government proceeded with keju reforms, held hiring exams for returning students, and awarded official positions with consideration of years abroad and levels of schools attended. In 1905, fourteen students returning from Japan sat for the first of these exams and thirteen received high-ranking positions (Sakai, 2005, pp. 201–202). Experience in studying abroad was now rewarded, adding to Japan's popularity as a destination.

However, the number of students in Japan eventually plunged. For some time, it remained steady at approximately 4,000, but interest in Japan decreased rapidly as anti-Japanese sentiment increased in the 1910s, partly because of the Twenty-One Demands made by Japan on China. After the 1920s, although Chinese students continued to study in Japan, the pattern of modern Chinese youth studying in Japan had run its course.

5. Conclusion

In response to Western impact, the Qing government began a Westernization Movement as Chinese self-strengthening by introducing advanced modern Western technology; however, because the keju system and its traditional academic practices were retained, modern education was not fully embraced, and various reforms were incomplete. After 1900, school systematization progressed and became the mainstream of personnel cultivation. By about 1920, the focus of secondary and higher education curricula shifted from classics to modern academics, remaining so.

As discussed, the onetime absolutist attitude about classics made modern academic study difficult in China, leading to exporting students to the West in the 1870s.

Having studied Western technology, these students helped modernize China after their return. High costs made sending students to Europe difficult, and along with China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, it was timely to learn Western academics from Japan. In 1905, the keju was abolished, and many young Chinese people visited Japan. However, this trend gradually declined, and as Sino-Japanese relations worsened starting in the 1910s, fewer students studied abroad in Japan.

What did the behavior pattern of overseas study mean for Chinese modernization?

The first modern school was established in China in 1862, but as classics remained dominant, there was scant opportunity for in-depth modern academic study in China until about 1920. The Qing government began to dispatch students to the West in 1872, substituting Japan for the West due to budgetary constraints. However, by 1920, the importance of Japan also declined.

Thus, the start of modern education to its widespread acceptance roughly overlaps with China's dependence on overseas study. If modernization of later-developing countries in Asia assumed the form of technology transfer from the West, personnel equipped with modern era knowledge was essential. Studying in the West and Japan provided a substitute until school education and modern academic study in China could be domestically produced.

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