Rethinking Cai Yuanpei: The Chinese and Japanese Origins of His Ideas on Women[1]

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Abstract

Although Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940) is generally accepted as a leading liberal educator of modern China, his contributions to female schooling and his ideas on women have been ignored by Western scholarship. This article, therefore, intends to make known to scholars some neglected aspects of the sources of his ideas on women. Previous assumption has emphasized excessively the influence of a radical mid-Qing scholar, Yu Zhengxie (1775-1840), on Cai's ideas. Yu only constituted one source of Cai's ideas. The assumption reflects the progressive side of a coin. When fuller attention is paid to other sources of Cai's ideas, a different picture emerges. Cai actually derived some traditional views on women from his predecessors and contemporaries. These views, to some extent, slowed down his progressive speed when he implemented female schooling at the later stage of his educational career.

How did Cai's predecessors and contemporaries identify the inferiority of women in traditional China? How did they contribute to women empowerment? How did Cai learn from the experiences of his predecessors and contemporaries? This article will argue that Cai borrowed his ideas on women not only from Yu alone, but also from some indigenous Chinese and Japanese intellectuals. This alternative interpretation stems from the use of new materials, including archives, new versions of Cai's collected works, and unexplored literature on women.

Key words

equality, sexes, female education, women's issues.

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Introduction

In traditional China, women from non-gentry families were not expected to be highly educated. This was especially the casein literary education. The stereotypical concept of male superiority was so influential that it dominated traditional, semi-traditional, and modern societies. In modern China, the leading educator, Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940), was renowned for his progressivism towards women. His broad-mindedness can be perceived in the way he advocated and implemented equal education for women. This equality of education became an essential element of some of his progressive educational reforms for Chinese women. Female education should be seen in a complex web of Chinese women's issues because these issues were interrelated. Therefore, the main themes of this article include: firstly, signs of the inferiority of women such as footbinding, gender segregation, chastity, and marriage; secondly, methods of women empowerment including promotion of equality and women's rights and provision of female schooling; and thirdly, expectation of independent women. By adopting a chronological approach, the article will discuss ideas of certain groups of Cai's predecessors (early and mid-Qing scholars) as well as his contemporaries (late Qing reformers and Japanese intellectuals) in line with these main themes. These certain groups constituted the major sources of Cai's ideas on women.

How did Cai's predecessors and contemporaries identify the inferiority of women in traditional China? How did they contribute to women empowerment? How did Cai learn from the experiences of his predecessors and contemporaries? This article is worthy because it makes known to scholars some neglected aspects of the sources of Cai's ideas on women. Previous assumption has emphasized excessively the influence of a radical mid-Qing scholar, Yu Zhengxie (1775-1840), on Cai's ideas. Yu only constituted one source of Cai's ideas, which may be regarded as radical. The assumption reflects the progressive side of a coin. The title of this article "Rethinking Cai Yuanpei" means that, when fuller attention is paid to other sources of Cai's ideas, a different picture emerges. Therefore, we need to rethink Cai's ideas from both the progressive side and less progressive side of the same coin. In this

connection, Cai actually derived some traditional views on women from his predecessors and contemporaries. These traditional views have been excluded from previous analyses of Cai as a "progressive educator", an educator that was prompt in absorbing and developing ideas contrary to Chinese tradition. Further, the article is worth reading because it will argue that Cai borrowed his traditional and modern ideas on women from some indigenous Chinese and Japanese intellectuals. Such an alternative interpretation stems from the use of archives, new versions of Cai's collected works, and literature on women. These are new sources because they have been excluded from previous biographies of Cai.

There are some clarifications that we need to make here. Firstly, tradition and modernity are complex terms. Cai contained characteristics of both of these terms at one time. We cannot use the either-or approach to identifying Cai's ideas. While he was a "progressive educator" who absorbed ideas contrary to Chinese tradition, he was also a "traditional thinker" who occasionally defended Chinese tradition. Secondly, it would be wrong to say that Cai borrowed his ideas on women solely from Chinese and Japanese cultures; he found some Western ideas fascinating and worthy of borrowing. It is, however, beyond the scope of this article to explore ideas directly derived from Western thinkers. Therefore, the author's intention is to look at these two (Chinese and Japanese) origins of his ideas in-depth, supplemented briefly with some effects of these ideas. Development of Cai's ideas and his ideas in practice deserve two separate full-length papers, which are again, beyond the scope of this article. The next section will first look at how Cai absorbed his ideas on women in his formative years.

Early and Mid-Qing Scholars

Cai Yuanpei came from a mercantile, middle class family in Zhejiang province. He was born into a period when the very notion of female schooling was unpopular in China. As a reformer in education, Cai at a later stage established schools for girls. Female education must be understood in the context of a complex web of Chinese women's issues, including footbinding, gender segregation, and marriage customs, among

others. These issues were not only signs of the inferiority of women but also sources of the problem of female schooling. Cai observed the inferiority of women through personal experience and extensive reading during his formative years. He derived his ideas from several sources.

During the period of 1874-1885, Cai received education from some highly reputable Confucian scholars and learned of some defects in traditional Chinese education. For example, one major defect was that the curriculum was strictly confined to Confucian classics. To ensure that Cai was successful in the civil service examinations, his tutors did not allow him to read any books other than the Confucian classics. However, from 1885 onwards, Cai could study any books freely. That was vital because he was ready to absorb ideas on women without the restrictions of his tutors (Cai, 1967, pp. 1-3; Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 6, pp. 548; vol. 7, pp. 275; Cai, 1995, vol. 3, pp. 161-163, 357-365). This was particularly so after 1890, when Cai continued to study Confucian classics and began to read publications by Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801), Yuan Mei (1716-1798), Cao Xueqin (1715-1764), Yu Zhengxie, and other prominent early and mid-Qing scholars. Most of them advocated relatively progressive ideas on women for those times.

Evidence in Cai's diaries shows that he had read the important books by Zhang and Yuan. Both Zhang's *Wenshi tongyi* (General principles of literature and history) and Yuan's *Suiyuan shihua* (Poetry talks in the Sui Garden) were eighteenth century publications. Cai wrote in 1896 that Zhang had made some severe criticisms of Yuan's book in his essays, namely "Fuxue" (Women's learning) and "Shihua" (Poetry talks) (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 49). Zhang's two essays and Yuan's book mainly dealt with female education. Through reading, Cai learned of the vigorous Zhang-Yuan debate on women's learning.

The two scholars attacked one another regarding their conflicting views on accepting female students, teaching the students artistry and literacy, and publishing their poems. Zhang was a rather traditional man, who almost equated women's learning with the four womanly virtues (morality, speech, appearance, work). To him, neither poetry-writing nor publication was the career of a learned aristocratic lady. Seemingly, Zhang thought highly of traditional womanly virtues. In contrast, Yuan accepted young gentry girls as pupils, taught them poems, and published

their masterpieces. This gives the impression that he was not a traditional teacher, who treasured ladies'poetic talents (Yuan, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 115, 128, 137-140, 154-155, 189-196, 204-206; vol. 2, pp. 572-573, 590-591, 835; Zhang, 1964, pp. 168-176).

Despite the extreme Zhang-Yuan perspectives on female learning, Cai appears to have borrowed ideas from both scholars and to have implemented them at different stages of his life. Firstly, he encouraged the cultivation of female virtues and ladies' artistry and poems in later years. This would be a traditional aspect of female education. As the Qing society still demanded traditional education for girls, Cai retained this conventional view on women. Secondly, besides domesticity, he saw the importance of women's careers as a way to achieve economic independence. This would be a modern aspect of female education, as women in Confucian China were expected to stay at home. In some cases, such traditional and modern ideas were so conflicting that they slowed down Cai's progressive speed when he implemented female schooling in China.

Perhaps Cai was less receptive to Yuan Mei's conduct as a male teacher in a Confucian society because Yuan disregarded the traditional gender segregation. In Cai's words, it was "a great fallacy to instruct poems" by adopting a romantic approach. Not only had Yuan employed this pedagogy but also enhanced his reputation by mixing up young handsome boys and beautiful girls. Co-education is common nowadays but it contrasted to Confucian norms in Qing society. Therefore, Cai continued and Zhang blamed Yuan for neglecting the traditional gender segregation (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 49; Zhang, 1964, pp. 158, 162). It is clear that Cai supported Zhang's defense of gender segregation, a belief that had existed in traditional China and in Qing society. In 1902, Cai was affected by this belief when he founded the separate schools for the two sexes in Shanghai. This strategy appealed to traditional Chinese parents. Cai's view on women was conventional because he was not prepared to mix up boys and girls in a learning institution. The mix up could be seen as an innovation at the time. It was not until 1912 that he first implemented elementary co-education in Republican China (1912-1949).

Another way of understanding Yuan's conductis by observing his

attitudes towards women. Was Yuan sympathetic towards women? Were his ideas on women consistent in both public and private life? In public life, Yuan had progressive ideas about women's literacy and poetic publications (Yuan, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 154-156, 188). In private life, however, his ideas on women were not as progressive as we might expect. He defended Chinese tradition. Firstly, Yuan showed an interest in young beautiful ladies. His friend claimed that he enticed "young ladies of good family to his house". Normally, a respectable male teacher instructed his female students in the students'houses. This practice was common in good families in the Qing period. Yuan's conduct aroused Zhang's criticisms, the latter likened Yuan's book to "an anthology of judgments of feminine beauty". Yuan's poems only concerned romantic love between the sexes (Nivison, 1966, p. 263; Waley, 1956, pp. 77, 188; Yuan, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 145, 182-183, 207-208; Zhang, 1964, pp. 158-160, 173-176). With this romanticism in mind, it is natural that Yuan favored polygamy. Secondly, Yuan kept several concubines. He reckoned that it was "all right for a man to have concubines". He even specialized in securing concubines for other men. Thirdly, he had conventional views on women's chastity. He wrote that a wife had to be "loyal to her husband until death". When his female student, Chen Shulan, committed suicide after her husband's death, Yuan wrote a biography of her to praise her chastity. Fourthly, Yuan did not encourage women to remarry. His young widow daughter was never induced by him to seek a second husband (Lin, 1935, pp. 134, 143-144; Nivison, 1966, p. 266; Yuan, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 206-207). Normally, a less traditional father would expect his widowed daughter to do so.

From the above analysis, we may then ask: what was Yuan's real motivation in teaching young ladies artistry and poems? Maybe, influenced by Zhang's criticisms, Cai was suspicious about Yuan's motivation. Given his solid Confucian background, Caiadmired serious scholars rather than those perhaps like Yuan who took a playful attitude towards women. Cai recalled his teenage education in 1935, exclaiming that, although "one or two [male] literati" in Qing China (1644-1912) defended women's rights, they mostly took "a playful attitude" (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 6, pp. 549-550).

Cao Xueqin's full-length novel, *Honglaumeng* (A dream of the Red

Mansions), had influenced Cai's early ideas on women. Cai read the novel after 1895 and was fascinated by it. From the late 1890s, he tried to trace its hidden meanings. In 1915, Cai published his commentary on the novel, which is thought to belong to the *suoyin* school (trace out the hidden) of *Redology* (study of *Honglaumeng*) (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 44-52, 129-130, 406-467, 553-593; Cai, 1987, pp. 60-115; Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 41-46). It is obvious from this commentary that he was familiar with the novel's central themes and its chief female characters.

To Cai, although *Honglaumeng* was a political novel becausenationalism and power struggles were involved, its ideas were progressive. The novel represented new thought, including the concepts of equality (race, gender, class) and freedom (marriage, social intercourse, sex). Cai noted that Cao had adopted the *yin-yang* dualism to explain equalities between Hans (women, slaves) and Manchus (men, masters). Their relationships were relative but not subordinate ("Beijing minguo", 1912-1927; Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 76-77; Cai, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 354-355; vol. 3, pp. 47-48; Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 879-881). Cai saw the political nature of *Honglaumeng*, for he was probably affected by his predominant discontent with the Japanese victory over the Manchus in the War of 1894-1895. He expected to uplift the positions of Han Chinese and women through education, like Cao's similar inclination in his 120-chapter novel.

One aspect of Cao's novel is the power struggle between men and women, and amongst influential women in an aristocratic Jia family. Some of these women were literate and they had distinct personalities. Cai believed that, in the novel, women represented Hans whereas men represented Manchus. In other words, the power struggle between men and women may have corresponded to that between Manchus and Hans. The Qing government granted officialdom to excellent literati, who had passed the imperial examinations. In the novel, most young women had achieved a good standard of literacy (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 75-77; Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 39-40, 403-405; vol. 2, pp. 599, 757, 843; Cooper & Zhang, 1993, p. 100). Indeed, through the study of *Honglaumeng*'s female characters, Cai tacitly admired Cao's ideas on women and his encouragement of women's literacy.

In the novel, we find the different levels of literacy among aristocratic

ladies of the Jia family. These ladies were mothers, wives, daughters, granddaughters, and nieces, who lived in the different parts of the Jia mansions. Madam Wang Xifeng was known for her illiteracy and her ambition in the domination of household affairs (Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 3, pp. 1189, 1263; Edwards, 1993, pp. 34-59). The young widow, Li Wan, was taught basic literacy and the traditional feminine arts of spinning and weaving during her girlhood (Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 95; vol. 2, pp. 1019). At the advanced level, some literate girls were presented in the novel, who had a good command of literacy and who were gifted in artistic talents. Jia Tanchun was noted for elegant calligraphy, whereas Jia Xichun was good at Chinese painting. Xue Baoqin was skilled in poetry-writing. These talented girls, together with Xue Baochai, Lin Daiyu, Shi Xiangyun, and Miaoyu (a nun) organized a poetry club in the Grand View Garden of the Jia mansions. The poetry club aimed to promote literary and artistic talents through discussions and poetry competitions in the Garden. The club's sponsors included Madam Wang and Widow Li (Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 757, 1015-1037, 1051-1077, 1109; vol. 3, pp. 1351-1377, 1409-1447, 1485-1487; vol. 4, pp. 2101-2103, 2309-2323).

The above aristocratic ladies were mentioned in Cai's commentary on the novel and intermittently in his diaries. He was fully aware of the literary backgrounds of these women. *Honglaumeng* actually reflects some of Cao Xueqin's ideas on female education. Firstly, Cao himself was sympathetic towards women. He praised female talents directly in his novel (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 82-104; Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 129-130, 422-433, 457-458; Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 3, 47, 551-553; Edwards, 1990, pp. 407). To him, the content of girls' education was broad enough to cover female virtues, literacy, and artistic skills.

Secondly, Cao saw a valuable link between female literacy and domesticity. In the novel, Madam Wang was blamed for causing the Jia family's decline. Her illiteracy hindered her household management because she relied heavily on literate servants to perform daily family routines. Widow Li though, was elementarily literate, and was successful in educating her son (Jia Lan) and helping him to pass the imperial examinations (Edwards, 1993, pp. 46-48). It is clear that Cao admired

her behavior as a widow and a mother.

Thirdly, Cao may have sought a balanced fulfillment of female virtue and talent. The cases of two important heroines in the novel, Baochai and Daiyu, illustrated this. Both ladies were literally and artistically educated. The beautiful Baochai was very conventional. She valued traditional femininity over brilliance. Daiyu was sensitive, jealous, and pessimistic. It seems that she valued poetic talent over conventional womanhood. On some occasions, she expressed her unhappiness by quoting lines from the so-called indecent books like *Xixiangji* (The Western Chamber) and *Mudanting* (The Peony Pavilion). Therefore, Baochai reminded her to stick to traditional feminine qualities (Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 3, p. 1187; vol. 4, pp. 1909-1911; Waltner, 1989, pp. 70-76). The novel eventually offered both ladies an ill-fated destiny. That treatment in the novel may suggest Cao's lack of appreciation of their imbalanced emphases on virtue and talent.

Although *Hongloumeng* may not reflect the reality of Qing families, it does demonstrate Cao's pessimistic views towards Qing society. Cao's ideas on women served as an illuminating source of Cai's later progressive ideas on women. In the 1900s, Cai advocated balancing girls' schooling and girls'domesticity. This sentiment had its early inspiration from the novel. However, Cao arranged for Daiyu to burn her poems in the novel. This meant that he discouraged publications by female poets. Indeed, an ultimate aim of the poetry club in the Jia Garden was perhaps aristocratic entertainment, and not reputation. This was a limitation of Cao's ideas on women regarding female talent. Cai was less receptive to this. Maybe influenced by Yuan Mei who published his students'poems, Cai also encouraged poetry publications by writing a preface to a female poet's works in 1899 (Cai, 1995, vol. 8, p. 206; Cao & Gao, 1999, vol. 5, p. 2917). The late Qing society then was much different from that of the early Qing.

Concerning radical views on women, Yu Zhengxie's extant works, *Guisi leigao* (collection of classified notes) and *Guisi cungao* (Collection of remaining notes) (Yu, 1957, pp. 1-5), particularly impressed Cai who wrote:

> ...From the period of *Yijing* {The book of change} to the era

> of Qing Confucianism, [scholars] tended to discriminate against females. They respected males only. Occasionally, there were one or two scholars who were seemingly sympathetic about female inequality. However, they took a playful attitude. Mr Yu's...several essays tried to prove from different angles his idea of equality of the sexes... (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 6, pp. 549-550).

Cai admitted that Yu's writings had become one of his favorites at that time. His fondness for Yu's works even survived to the 1930s (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 101-107; vol. 6, pp. 404-410, 572).

Really, Yu was unique on two main grounds. It was extraordinary for a Confucian scholar like Yu to defend women from inferiority in *several* aspects. It was even rarer for him to place himself in the *women's* position and to show sympathy towards their plight. Broadly, he frequently expressed his ideas on women in writing from many different angles, namely female names, footbinding, marriages, women's chastity, prostitution, rites, and religion. These ideas are radical when compared with the ideas of Zhang, Yuan, and Cao. With all these ideas, Cai seems to have been especially impressed by Yu's severe attacks on conventional marriages, traditional perspectives on women's chastity, and Chinese footbinding (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, p. 106; Yu, 1956, pp. 105-107, 384-392; Yu, 1957, pp. 89, 494-495). These attacks on Chinese tradition are most conducive to the making of Cai as a Chinese progressive in his formative years.

One feature of ancient marriage customs was polygamy. Under this system a husband possessed many concubines at a time, so jealousy among his women would be inevitable. In traditional China, a virtuous woman was trained to be obedient and she was not meant to express jealous feelings in the family arising from unequal treatment meted out by her husband. Otherwise, her jealousy would be regarded as an evil virtue. Her husband would therefore have the right to divorce her. The rules of moral conduct for a good housewife were laid out by Song Neo-Confucianists and reprinted in *Neize* (Instructions for the inner quarters) in the Ming-Qing periods: "Refrain from gossip, concentrate on cooking, stay clear of external matters, and respectfully distinguish the inner from the outer." As Dorothy Ko (1992, pp. 15, 18) indicates, the

Song Neo-Confucian doctrine of separate spheres "taught a woman to stay within bounds of domesticity and keep her mouth shut." Actually, a woman was not allowed to gossip or be resentful of her husband's keeping concubines because that was a way to ensure polygamy functioned effectively. Her inability to challenge her husband's disloyalty also implied her inferiority in the family.

Regarding this, Yu argued that it was a natural reaction for a woman to become jealous if her husband turned his love to other women. Therefore, he concluded that jealousy was "not a woman's evil virtue". The wife even had the right to divorce her husband (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 106; Yu, 1957, pp. 495-497). Yu was very sympathetic about the feelings of the unequally treated women. His defense of women definitely demonstrated his idea of equality of the sexes.

A chaste woman's traditional image was that she served only one husband for life; she did not expect to remarry, thereby permanently keeping her good moral standing. This attitude was particularly powerful in Song China (960-1279). Two influential Song philosophers, Cheng Yi (1033-1107) and Zhu Xi (1130-1200), were well known for their *Lixue* (School of principles) or the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism (Chan, 1973, pp. 544-571, 588-653; Fung, 1960, pp. 281-306). Cheng highly valued the importance of women's chastity. That belief was subsequently reinforced and developed by Zhu. Indeed, the two thinkers shared similar views on women's chastity. According to Cai, Cheng claimed that "it was unchaste for a widow to remarry" and that "it was more important for her to die of hunger than be unchaste" (Cai, 1995, vol. 5, p. 226). A study by Howard Levy (1966, p. 44) also writes: Zhu Xi "…strongly supported the view that a woman should preserve chastity after her husband's death, that it was better for her to starve than remarry..."

Yu vigorously challenged these Song philosophers because their perspectives on women signaled inequality of the sexes. In Yu's mind, if women were forbidden to remarry, then men should be too. He argued that women should not be insulted about their second marriages. It is clear that he was again sympathetic about female inequality. As Cai believed, Cheng's attitudes towards women's chastity had downgraded their family position (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 106; Cai, 1995, vol.

5, pp. 226; Yu, 1956, pp. 105-106; Yu, 1957, pp. 493-494).

Yu also found Chinese footbinding unacceptable, a traditional custom originating in the Song dynasty. As Levy explains, Zhu Xi noted that women in Fujian "…tended to be unchaste and to indulge in lewdness. He therefore ordered that all women's feet be bounded to an excessive degree, causing them to be hampered in moving about…" In Zhu's views, one advantage of footbinding was "…to ensure that a woman remain in her proper place - at home. It was so inconvenient for the bound-footed to get about that her chances for indulging sexually as did the Chinese male were greatly lessened" (Levy, 1966, pp. 44, 46). Seemingly, Zhu reinforced and implemented Cheng's views on women's chastity. Gradually, footbinding developed and flourished in Song China.

In Yu's opinion, the custom seriously damaged women's bodies, and worse still, they might lose their lives (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 106; Yu, 1956, pp. 106-107). This shows that he was in defense of women's health. His ideas on marriage, women's chastity, and footbinding did not contradict Cai's. Actually, Cai found Yu's writings very useful to his understanding of "human rights" and "women's rights", concepts that were quite influential in nineteenth century China. Cai's conditions for a second marriage in 1900 greatly reflected his receptiveness to Yu's ideas on women. In particular, on the issue of divorce, Cai claimed that a woman may request a divorce if she had problems in relationship with her husband. This was the most unusual condition for a marriage in Confucian China because only a man may request a divorce. The condition even scared off many "go-betweens" prior to Cai's second marriage. This case shows that he was prepared to formulate the nineteenth-century concept, *nüquan* (women's rights), and borrow its elements from Yu (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 6, pp. 549-550; Huang, 1967, p. 63).

Despite Yu supporting equality of the sexes, he did not develop his ideas on women's education. This is the difference between Yu and Cai. Cai wrote that he learned a crucial lesson from Yu by reading his writings, that is *renshi renquan* (understand human rights). In Cai's words, "males and females are human beings", hence they should have "human rights" (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 304; vol. 6, pp. 405-406; Yu, 1956, pp. 104-105; Yu, 1957, pp. 597-611). One important human right is

the right to schooling. In the nineteenth century, Chinese women from non-gentry families did not have a right to schooling; their potential could not therefore be maximized. They lacked knowledge and relied on knowledgeable males. During Yu's lifetime, women's emancipation had not yet begun; thus Yu may not have developed the concept of "women's rights". Yu exaggerated the extremely low position of Chinese women so as to arouse more scholars' sympathy. He was different from Yuan Mei and Cao Xueqin in that he defended women from inferiority in several aspects. It is evident that Cai especially favored Yu's ideas on women and was fascinated by them. Cai was very different from these predecessors because he lived in a society that was ready for women's emancipation. Firstly, China was opened to the West in the mid-nineteenth century. Secondly, some foreigners introduced Western thoughts to China, which were conducive to the promotion of women's rights. Thirdly, some reform-minded Chinese including Cai were awaken to these changes. Cai began to sympathize with the inferiority of Chinese women and perhaps identified that the lack of female schooling was a cause of the problem. He advocated the idea of equal education for women, not only because they were human beings but also because China needed to offer mass education (including to both sexes) to make the nation strong. Development of female schooling was a first step.

Late Qing Reformers

The idea of equal education for women was further planted in Cai's mind when he studied translations of Western works and writings of progressive reformers after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, and devoted himself to education. The War made a strong impact on Cai. He was extremely depressed by Japan's victory over China in the War. He even condemned the Qing government for its corruption and incompetence. Cai realized that China's defeat was mainly because of the backwardness of its educational system. He was determined to reform Chinese education to save his country (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 320; Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 30-37). Since females constituted one-half of China's entire population, strengthening the country also required the

reform of girls' education.

Before he pursued an educational career, Cai formulated his ideas from various sources by reading extensively, particularly Chinese-translated Western works (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, p. 320; "Renwu zhuanji", n. y. & n. p.). His reading materials included translations by late Qing reformers, translations about the histories of Japan, Russia, and other countries, and finally, publications on natural sciences (Jin, 1994, p. 20; Tai, 1952, p. 26). Nevertheless, the impact of late Qing reformers on Cai's ideas on women has been totally ignored. We will soon argue that he derived ideas on female schooling mainly from Yan Fu (1854-1921), Kang Youwei (1858-1927), and Liang Qichao (1873-1929). Evidence to support this includes Cai's appreciation of those reformers' works as well as similarities between his and their ideas concerning female education.

Cai's admiration for the reformers'works is witnessed in his actions of reading, writing post-reading comments, and compiling their publications. For example, he consulted Yan's translation of Thomas Huxley's (1825-1895) *Evolution and ethics* (1893); acknowledged Kang's *Datongshu* (An ideal world system) (1900-1903); and read Liang's *Bianfa tongyi* (General discussions on reform) (1896); *Shiwubao* (Current affairs) (1896-1898) (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 1, p. 84; Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 56, 75) among others. Afterwards, Cai expressed his opinions of the reformers' thinking in short articles and in diaries. He wrote a short article in 1899 on Yan's translation to show his appreciation of Huxley's principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest. He presented his views on Liang's reformist ideas in his 1896 diary, saying that he believed Liang was greatly affected by Kang (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 1, p. 84; Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 56, 156). In 1902, Cai compiled a book, entitled *Wenbian* (On current essays), which contained essays by Yu Zhengxie, Yan and Liang, and some Japanese writers. Its preface indicated that the ideas of these scholars were progressive and that Cai compiled their essays to spread progressivism (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 1, pp. 163-166; Gao, 1996-1998, vol. 1, pp. 241-242). Through Cai's compilation, we learn that the formulation of his ideas on women came from three sources: mid-Qing scholars, late Qing reformers, and the Japanese.

Strictly speaking, there are similarities between Cai's and the

reformers'educational thoughts on women. Yan, Kang, and Liang were particularly influential in shaping his thinking. Yan Fu was famous for his translations of Western writings by Huxley, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Adam Smith (1723-1790), and Montesquieu (1689-1755) (Cai, 1995, vol. 5, pp. 376-378; Schwartz, 1964).

By studying his "Yuanqiang" (Original strength) (1895), we observe that Yan's ideas on China's national strengthening were mostly derived from Huxley's and Darwin's principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Guided by those principles, Yan maintained that the survival of the Western Powers in the nineteenth century owed very much to their emphases on *minzhi* (people's intelligence), *minli* (people's physical strength), and *minde* (people's morality). Therefore, China needed to stress those three principles in order to survive. *Minzhi*, *minli*, and *minde* were the most important elements contributing to the making of Cai as a progressive educator through his practice of *wanquan renge jiaoyu* (integrative character education) in female schools. Yan's methods were: to abolish women's footbinding and ban men's opium smoking in order to improve people's physical strength; to promote education for the two sexes to enhance their intelligence; and finally, to require them to follow "The Way" and behave co-operatively to promote their morality. He insisted that the three principles were fundamental elements of national strengthening (Yan, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 15-19, 27-32).

Later, in 1906, Yan contributed an article about the relationship between education and the nation. It clearly reflected the development of his thoughts on *tiyu* (physical education), *zhiyu* (intellectual education), and *deyu* (moral education) as a means to strengthen China. In his mind, *sanyu* (three educations) were equally important for national strengthening (Yan, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 166-170). However, Yan did not attack inequality of the sexes in general. He condemned the evil custom of Chinese footbinding for its deterioration of women's physical health. He wrote: "Only healthy mothers can bear healthy babies; if our babies are born healthy, then our race can be improved." (Yan, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 28; Pao, 1974, pp. 160) Thus, he promoted physical education for Chinese women. The way he transformed Social Darwinists' principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest into his own analyses of the

three educations was quite novel at the time.

Social Darwinism and Yan's perspectives on three educations soon attracted Cai, because these new currents arrived at a time when Cai was determined to resolve China's problems. Yan's principles of physical education, intellectual education, and moral education later became crucial components of Cai's integrative character education for girls and women. He first put forward his integrative character education when he was Minister of Education during 1912.

Cai regarded "physical exercises" as an essential part of female physical education. For instance, boys and girls enjoyed the same right to training in running, swimming, martial arts, gymnastics, and others. He also thought that the aim of physical exercises was to strengthen the learners' bodies, not to win school trophies and obtain reputation. He rejected the idea of winning sports events merely for personal fame rather than for good health (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 8, 474-475; vol. 5, pp. 475-476).

Intellectual education for girls was also crucial in Cai's thinking. According to Cai, there were several ways to cultivate the delicate minds of girls. He proposed the study of "science" a term that had first impressed itself on Cai through his reading Yan's translations of Western works. In Cai's view, one feature of science was that it demanded good brain power. Mathematics, for example, enriched learners'knowledge in calculation and encouraged them to think regularly. Science experts, in his view, normally had extraordinary intelligence and delicate brain power (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 8).The thought that he recommended girls to study science indicated his basic assumption of an equal intellectual capability of the two sexes.

Cai treated moral education as the most fundamental part of integrativecharacter education for girls. In 1916, he completed thirty essays for his lectures on moral education for boys and girls. A number of virtues were actually taught by him in schools, such as, co-operation, consideration, public hygiene, love, charity, reciprocity, self-reflection, faithfulness, trust, patience, liberty, prudence, enthusiasm, mutual assistance, and such like. Specifically, he placed emphasis on "responsibility" and explained that everyone, males and females alike, should have responsibility for one's own studies, for the community, and

furthermore for the nation (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 420-448; vol. 5, pp. 479-480).

Kang Youwei, a leading Hundred Day reformer, produced his most influential *Datongshu* in the 1890s. Although the actual date of Cai's first access to Kang's *Datongshu* was uncertain, his admiration for Kang's works had its origins in 1893, when both reformers were in Guangzhou. Cai learnt about Kang's ideas and works from Cai's friends in Guangzhou, who may have had those ideas from Kang's drafts. Indeed, Cai kept some of Kang's publications at that time (Cai, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 27; Xu, Cai & Zhou, 1991, p. 869 Cui, 1998, p. 24).

Unlike Yan, Kang vigorously attacked in his writings inequality of the sexes from the spheres ofeducation, career, citizenry, independence, and freedom. He observed that inequality emerged because traditional Chinese women were unable to enjoy those rights. For Kang, the main cause of women's suffering from being unequally treated was "complete male chauvinism", which assumed that "men were the most powerful and superior group". They "treated women as slaves, not human beings" (Kang, 1956, pp. 126-146, 152). He wrote: "...People are born of Nature, and endowed with this body, they have its rights... Although men and women are differently formed, they are one in being 'Nature's people' and in all having natural rights" (Kang, 1956, pp. 130; Rong, 1983, pp. 162). On this basis, he urged Chinese women to regain their natural rights to achieve equality, especially in intelligence, personality, morality, physical appearance, and social behavior. He finally created a *datong shijie* (an ideal world system) for women where they were entitled to acquire education, seek jobs, be citizens, and enjoy other rights equal to men's (Kang, 1956, pp. 126, 162-164).

It is clear that Kang's ideas on women were similar to Yu Zhengxie's since both intellectuals were sympathetic towards women. But there are two fundamental differences in their thoughts. Firstly, unlike Yu, Kangstrongly believed that it was totally the fault of men that inequality in traditional Confucian society had been created. Perhaps, because of this, Cai was inspired by Kang's views as Cai understood his thoughts from a male perspective. If Cai did not advocate equality, he may have felt guilty given that he was also a reformer. On the other hand, Yu's ideas on women influenced Cai long before Kang's. Cai admitted that he

learned to understand the nineteenth-century concept of human rights and borrowed elements of that concept from Yu. Seemingly, a main reason that Kang's thinking impressed Cai was that Kang was able to link human rights and equality to female schooling. *Datongshu* stated: "it was appropriate to establish female schools so that regulations and curriculum in both boys' and girls' schools were the same" (Kang, 1956, pp. 162). This would seem to be a modern element of Kang's thinking because female schooling was undeveloped in ancient China.

The second difference between Yu's and Kang's perspectives on women was that Kang related girls'schooling closely to national strengthening and to the preservation of the Chinese race. That was stimulated by the West and by Japan's successful modernization. Apart from attempting to achieve equality of the sexes, Kang considered women's schooling a necessity in China so as to strengthen the country. Cai lived in a country where modernization was demanded. His subsequent notion that "women were as equally important as men to national strengthening" was borrowed from Kang's. For example, in 1902, Cai established the Patriotic Girls'School in Shanghai to cultivate in girls and women a sense of responsibility for China's revolution.He perceived the two sexes as "equal contributors" to the 1911 Chinese Revolution. Later, in 1917, Cai wrote: "To enrich national wealth and strength, it is necessary that everyone should receive education. If everyone has to be educated, it is important that we emphasize women's education…". In other words, he believed that both sexes "should advocate the idea of revolutionary spirit and thereby it should be based on education" (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 7). This would seem to be a modern aspect of Cai's thinking.

Liang Qichao, Kang's disciple, held similar views to his master. In his *Bianfa tongyi*: "Lunnüxue" (On female education) (Liang, 1897, pp. 1-4; "Xuebu dang'an", 1907-1911, n. p.), Liang analyzed four main disadvantages of the lack of female schooling in China. The first was that women relied on men to survive, for women were uneducated and could not seek paid employment. Granting them an education would enable them to obtain earning power and be self-sufficient, and reduce the risk of their merely consuming men's economic profits. Therefore, in Liang's words, China would become strong if everyone had a career. Secondly,

he believed the notion that "lack of education is a woman's virtue" endangered the world. Since many women from non-gentry families were denied education, they lacked knowledge and inevitably became very narrow-minded. Perhaps, in his thinking, female schooling was a solution to this problem. Thirdly, he claimed that children required *mujiao* (maternal education). If mothers were uneducated, then they would tremendously affect their children's behavior. He argued that girls and women should be entitled to schooling. Finally, he noted that pregnant women should also learn to keep their offspring healthy. He regarded *taijiao* (pre-natal training) highly for women, especially physical exercises, because they would ensure the next generation would be strong and healthy (Liang, 1932, vol. 1, pp. 38-41).

Actually, Liang put forward his idea on cultivating *xianqi liangmu* (good wives and virtuous mothers) in 1897, saying that a good wife could make her husband good, and a virtuous mother could educate her children properly. He borrowed this idea from Japan. The idea dominated the aim of female schooling in his educational philosophy. As argued by Shu Xincheng in 1929, maternal education and pre-natal training were essential requirements for all virtuous mothers, ideas which had their origins in Liang's thinking (Liang, 1932, vol. 1, pp. 19-20; Shu, 1932, pp. 391-392). Influenced by Liang, Cai began to take notice of female schooling in Japan; and subsequently, he proclaimed this notion in 1913. To Cai, there were two opposing views dealing with the aim of girls' schooling in China: for and against the notion of "good wives and virtuous mothers". He admitted that he supported this notion. In the 1910s, many Chinese radicals were ahead of Cai in the promotion of women's political participation. This notion would be a conventional view of Cai because it regarded highly women's domestic roles, not their political endeavors. Cai's ideas on family education for girls originated from this notion of Liang's and from Japan (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 305-306; vol. 5, pp. 115-116; Cai 1920-1937, n. p.). How did Cai arouse girls' interest in attending schools, given that late Qing society was still traditional to some extent? Spreading progressivism in schools with his like-minded colleagues was one method of awakening girls to schooling. Cai looked to Japan as a model.

Japanese Intellectuals

After China's defeat by Japan in 1895, some Chinese reformers recognized the remarkable success in modernization of Japanese education since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The reformers proposed developing Chinese education on the model of Japan, for they believed that it was vital for national strengthening. Indeed, there were several channels of Sino-Japanese educational exchanges during the period 1895-1912. Firstly Chinese schools were modeled on Japanese ones in many aspects, including the system, school aims, educational contents, and pedagogy (Education in China, 1904, p. 2; "Gongzhong zhupi", 1868-1911, n. p.; Cai, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 204). Secondly, Japanese professors and educational advisors were invited to China to help reform Chinese schooling (Chinese Education, 1903, p. 7; Abe, 1987, pp. 67-73). Thirdly, the Qing government sent Chinese students of both sexes to study in Japan (Lanxin, 1907, pp. 1-2).

Under these beneficial circumstances, Cai was amongst those who planned to reform Chinese education. He developed a strong link with Japan through many activities. Cai observed Japan's political development from 1894 to 1905. Next, he read, edited, and translated publications concerning Japan and its education. Thirdly, he made acquaintances among the Japanese and learned their language (Cai, 1995, vol. 5, pp. 40; vol. 6, pp. 49-50; vol. 13; Cai, 1902, vol. 2, pp. 15-16). Most importantly, through these networks, it is evident that he learned about Japan's female schooling, as well as thoughts and actions of some Japanese intellectuals and female educators (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 202, 238-293, 425). His ideas on educational aims, curricula, and activities for Chinese women were partly borrowed from the Japanese.

The position of women in Tokugawa Japan (1600-1868), as in Qing China, was considered to be inferior. This was owing to Japan's cultural borrowings from Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, and Buddhism from China. The three spheres discouraged women's advanced education. That meant that elementary home-based education was given to upper class Japanese girls. During this period, some wealthy Japanese women were sent to *shijuku* (private academy) and *terakoya* (temple school) for an education (Shuyama, 1996, pp. 5-24, 38-44; Wang, 1937, pp. 160-161).

Chinese women were denied schooling during most of the Qing period. Despite this difference, women in neither country enjoyed an educational right to schooling equal to that of their male counterparts. Both countries in almost the same era insisted on women's domesticity. Indeed, the central philosophy of Tokugawa women's education contained elements that subsequently evolved into the Meiji notion of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wives and virtuous mothers). Joan Judge's recent monograph indicates that this term was first introduced by the prominent Japanese educator Yoshimura Torataro (1848-1917) in his treatise (Judge, 2008, p. 111).

The notion of *ryōsai kenbo* was developed and flourished in Meiji Japan (1868-1912). Meanwhile, it was challenged by liberal-minded Japanese intellectuals, whose thinking had been developing since 1868 during Westernization. They introduced American and European ideals of womanhood into Japan (Rose, 1992, pp. 49-57; Jin, 1930, pp. 108-113). The influential scholar and educator, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901), advocated gender equality in education. His experiences in the West hadclearly shaped his progressive thinking towards women. One female educator, Tsuda Umeko (1864-1929), received an education in America. Upon returning to Japan, she incorporated the American ideal of womanhood into that of Japan. Another female educator, Shimoda Utako (1856-1936), was enthusiastic about the education of Chinese women. When the Qing government sent women students to Tokyo, she enrolled most of them in her school (Bao, 1988, p. 281; Fukuzawa, 1988, p. 245-248; "Nüjie jinshi", 1903, p. 27).

Although the Meiji bureaucrats were generally tolerant to the intellectuals' views and educational activities for women, this did not preclude the state's emphasis on the cultivation of *ryōsai kenbo*. Particularly in the 1890s, the Meiji government looked to German education as a model of modernization. This affected the Meiji state's policy towards women's schooling. Japanese women received official support in elementary, secondary, and limited higher education during the period of 1870-1900. The further development of women's university education remained the task of individual Japanese educators (Nolte & Hastings, 1991, pp. 163-174; Tocco, 1995, pp. 88-138). Unlike the Meiji government, the Qing government did not offer official support for female schooling in the 1890s. This was one reason that perhaps

motivated some Chinese educators to learn from the progressive Japanese system.

Fukuzawa, Shimoda, and Tsuda encouraged advanced education for women and even established their own female schools in Japan. Cai knew about their educational achievements through reading and translations of Japanese works in China. While teaching in Chinese schools during the period 1897-1901, Cai enjoyed reading and learning from Japanese textbooks and publications by Fukuzawa (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 238-293). Actually, there are some similarities between Cai and Fukuzawa in the context of women's educational thoughts. Firstly, both educators perceived economic independence as an ultimate goal of female education. Secondly, both recommended three educations for women. Thirdly, they both argued for the father's participation in family education. Finally, besides home education, they suggested women take an interest in affairs concerning the outside world. Nevertheless, Fukuzawa discouraged women's military training, whereas Cai encouraged it. This reflected Cai's intention of training female assassins in his school for girls (Fukuzawa, 1988, p. 220-244).

Shortly before the founding of a female school in 1902, Cai met Shimoda briefly in Tokyo. That visit was vital because it offered an opportunity for the two educators to exchange teaching experiences. Shimoda had been trained in Chinese learning and had studied in England. Her approaches to female education contained characteristicsof both cultures. We cannot say that she was a radical educator but her ideas on women had moved beyond the traditional sphere. This less traditional inclination had influenced Cai before he pursued an education in Germany. Evidence does exist in Cai's writings that he expected to imitate Japan's normal higher school curricula for girls (Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 236, 290). Since Shimoda was experienced in running female schools in Japan and was enthusiastic in granting Chinese women an education (Ono, 1989, p. 56), it is not surprising that Cai's Patriotic Girls' School curriculum was partly modeled on Shimoda's Girls' Practical School curriculum for Chinese women.

Both Cai and Shimoda believed that female education was the foundation of national strengthening, and that women should be trained to be patriotic. These were less traditional views on women. Next, they

both articulated the significance of family education (Chen, 1980, p. 139; McElroy, 2001, pp. 351-352). Therefore, Shimoda's school in Tokyo aimed to cultivate good mothers and qualified teachers, and Cai's school in Shanghai offered the same educational goals. Concerning teaching subjects, both schools prescribed almost the same curriculum. The schools' teaching schedules show that Cai and Shimoda considered the moral, intellectual, and physical aspects of training ("Riben Shijian", 1905, pp. 149-156). Both educators welcomed the services of Western trained women teachers. For example, Tsuda was an English teacher in a small élite Japanese school, run by Shimoda in the late nineteenth century. The former established Tsuda College for Japanese women in 1900 (Rose, 1992, pp. 62-63; Tocco, 1995, pp. 234-286). Probably through Shimoda, Cai appreciated Tsuda's educational ambition in offering Meiji women a higher education. His later admission of women students and employment of Western trained women professors in the 1920s Beijing University were, to some extent, inspired by these progressive Japanese educators.

From 1897 to 1905, Cai strengthened his ideas through discussion of the rights of women with his radical-minded colleagues in Chinese schools, namely the Sino-Western School (Shaoxing), the Nanyang Public School (Shanghai), the Patriotic Girls'School, and the Patriotic Study Society (Shanghai). During that period, Jiang Guanyun, Ma Yongxi, Du Yaquan, and other colleagues shared ideas on women similar to Cai's. They believed in women's rights, human rights, Social Darwinism, and new currents from Japan. These beliefs, of course, reflect Chinese understanding of Western and Japanese thoughts in the nineteenth century; and therefore, they should not be viewed as absolutely the same nature as those of contemporary Western and Japanese thoughts. There were major similarities between Cai and these colleagues in their thinking being of Japanese origin. Their ideas on women found several expressions in various forms, for example, in students'assignments, radical journals, teaching groups, and Cai's resignation from several old-fashioned schools (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 435; vol. 7, pp. 286; Cai, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 289; Huang, 1967, p. 53). Through these activities in China, Cai's concepts of female equality, women's rights, and female schooling were strengthened and these concepts were conducive to women

empowerment.

Comments and Conclusion

The above three concepts on women, however, were not always as progressive as perceived in Cai Yuanpei's ideas and actions. Since he borrowed his ideas on women from a variety of Chinese and Japanese sources, his ideas contained traditional, semi-traditional and modern characteristics, and sometimes a mix of these characteristics. The less modern characteristics, to some extent, counteracted his progressive educational reforms for women. Indeed, there were certain major conflicts within his own thinking and writings.

The first major conflict was between his new ideas on equality of the sexes and his conventional ideas on conjugal relationships. For example, when his wife died in 1900, Cai expected to remarry. Some "go-betweens" came and asked him to specify his conditions for a second marriage. Cai indicated, firstly, that the girl should not have bound feet; secondly, that she had to be literate; thirdly, that he could not take a concubine; fourthly, that if he died, his widow could remarry; and finally, that divorce should be possible if they had problems in their relationship. These conditions for a marriage were extraordinarily radical at that time. They challenged traditional masculine attitudes towards conjugal relationships. Cai appears to be a supporter of women's rights in this case. However, at the same time, he defended Confucian notions of equality of the sexes based on the division of labor. In Cai's view, the wife possessed the natural endowment of reproduction; the husband inevitably committed himself fully to his career. From the economic perspective, the wife was subordinate to her husband due to her lack of economic power (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 1, pp. 103, 120; vol. 3, pp. 321). Was the conjugal relationship equal or unequal?

The second major conflict was between Cai's new ideas on economically independent women and his conventional ideas on "good wives and virtuous mothers". Although he supported female schooling, his educational objectives were sometimes conflicting. For example, in the 1910s, Cai maintained that women should develop their own specialities

for better careers, as such careers were equivalent to those of men. Accordingly, he founded some specialized training colleges and vocational schools for Chinese women in order to make them economically independent. Meanwhile, Cai insisted on women's domestic roles, claiming that children's education in the family was the main obligation of the mother. He noted that "a good wife can make a good husband, and a virtuous mother, a virtuous child" (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 2, pp. 302, 305; vol. 5, pp. 115; Cai, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 231-233; vol. 3, pp. 116). Which should come first in Cai's thinking: women's societal roles or domestic roles?

The third major conflict was between his new ideas on the provision of girls'physical training and his conventional ideas on the cultivation of female virtues. During the 1900s to 1910s, Cai included physical exercise in the school curriculum for girls. He proposed the abolition of footbinding in order to make girls physically strong. He believed that physically strong mothers would bear and rear physically strong offspring (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 1, p. 103; vol. 5, p. 475; Hong & Mangan, 1995, p. 82). These were modern aspects of Cai's thinking because physical education for girls was not emphasized in traditional China. Nevertheless, Cai did not exclude traditional textbooks from the girls' school curriculum. For instance, the textbooks for the First Young Girls' School in Shanghai propagated ideas on male superiority and female obedience ("Fushe diyi", 1904, pp. 3-4; Mann, 1992, pp. 40-62; Mou, 2004, pp. 26-75; Swann, 2001, pp. 82-99). Was the content of female schooling intended to emphasize patriotism or traditional femininity?

The fourth major conflict was between Cai's new ideas on co-education and his conventional ideas on single-sex education. Co-education would seem to have been more progressive than single-sex education. In 1912, Cai implemented elementary co-education in the Republic, a policy that was considered to be a breakthrough. Since both sexes were allowed to study in the same primary schools, the traditional gender segregation disappeared at that level (Cai, 1984-1989, vol. 3, pp. 478-479). However, late Qing society was not receptive to the policy of co-education. Cai established separate schools for boys and girls in Shanghai. This was to defend gender segregation in learning in order to appeal to traditional Chinese parents. Cai believed that it would be

appropriate to "accept and implement women's rights by adopting a moderate approach" (Cai, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 62). Such an approach reflected Cai's intention of incorporating his conflicting ideas into the changing historical circumstances in China. This, nevertheless, is evidence of slowness of his progressive educational reforms for women. The slowness was partly caused by the variety of Chinese and Japanese origins of Cai's ideas, which included both indigenous predecessors and Westernized contemporaries.

Despite such slowness in Cai's educational reforms for women, it is evident that the development of female education had made some progress in the first two decades of the twentieth century. For example, in 1907, approximately 77 male schools existed for every female school. In 1923, the percentage of university women was 2.54. These figures partly reflected a gradual growth of schooling for Chinese women. As Sarah McElroy has put it, by 1901, an elite woman could only attend a missionary school. By 1911, a privileged woman would be able to receive an education at a Chinese-run school. By 1921, a few women with some educational background could attend university (McElroy, 2001, pp. 358, 368; Yu, 1969, pp. 199).

Cai's contribution to women empowerment can be perceived in two ways: the provision of university education and the founding of vocational schools. The first two decades of the twentieth century saw an evolution of Cai's ideas on female schooling. He developed the school system from single-sex secondary (1902), then primary co-educational (1912), and finally to university co-educational levels (1920). In 1902, Cai established the Patriotic Girls'School in Shanghai. Unlike other educators of his time, Cai aimed to inculcate girls techniques in assassinations and producing explosives at this School (Cai, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 218-219). This was rather innovative at the time when girls were normally expected to receive traditional education. In 1912, Cai implemented co-education in primary schools which was another innovation. Although the Qing government officially endorsed female schooling in 1907, there was strong defense of the single-sex system. Cai was different from the Qing officials in that he was ready to accept elementary co-education, a system which catered to the needs of girls. In 1920, some Chinese women officially enrolled for the first time in Beijing University. This was a major innovation of

Cai's ideas in practice. Although many of his well-known contemporaries such as Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichaoshared similarly progressive ideas on women, none of them are regarded as the initiator of the admittance of women to China's national universities. Cai took the lead in this endeavor.

Cai's second contribution to women empowerment was to make them economically independent. For example, in 1917, Cai and other educators formed the National Association of Vocational Education in China. This Association aimed to promote professional training and improve vocational education. In particular, it supported the establishment of vocational training schools and professional colleges for women in the hope of preparing them for economic independence (Cai, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 368-373; vol. 3, pp. 467-468). Despite Cai's conventional views on women and his slowness in implementing educational reforms, we cannot deny that he was a supporter of women's education.

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