

CHINESE STUDENTS IN ENGLAND

A Retrospect and Some Suggestions

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Some days ago there was published the following Reuter's telegram:—

London, Feb. 6.—The "Times," in a leader, draws attention to the importance of recognizing the commercial value of providing educational facilities to foreign students. It points out that the United States is doing its utmost to attract students. The latest figures are that there are in China, seventeen hundred graduates of American universities, against four hundred holding British degrees. It emphasizes that the Chinese student who has been educated in England is the greatest commercial asset we possess in China.

This is a significant expression of opinion, coming as it does from "The Thunderer." And we, for one, are most glad to see it. During our student days in London we had frequent occasions to engage in friendly argument with this redoubtable champion of conservative British opinion, but we have always found it frank and sincere. To be sure, the "Times" has not always been in sympathy with China's aspirations, but very often it has not hesitated to uplift its powerful voice in support of some of this Republic's rightful claims. And we well remember how it also helped to bring about the speedy cessation of the Indian opium traffic in this country. Surely in this advocacy of greater facilities for Chinese to study in the United Kingdom, it is uttering a right word in the right place and in the right time, especially as thanks to the encouragement of the French authorities, five or six thousand Chinese students will be educated in France during the next two years.

Before we proceed to offer a few suggestions as to how to promote a greater educational as well as commercial alliance between Great Britain and China, we will take a retrospect of Chinese students in the United Kingdom.

18TH CENTURY PIONEERS.

It is difficult to say exactly when such Chinese first set foot on English soil. For example, it is surprising to note that as early as the eighties of the 18th century two Chinese students appeared in Paris: they studied under Turgot, the celebrated French economist and statesman, who befriended them and wrote his well-known "Essai sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses" especially for them. However, it seems that about the time of the famous Chefoo Convention between China and Great Britain over the Margary incident—namely, 1876, the beginning of Emperor Kuang

Hsu's reign—48 students began to arrive in Europe from the Foochow Arsenal to study navigation and shipbuilding. Some went to France, two to Germany, but the majority landed in England. Since then, of course, this stream of migration has flowed steadily and, as the above Reuter's message tells us, four hundred have returned holding British degrees.

SOME FAMOUS NAMES.

If one were to name the British-returned students who have made good for themselves and their country, one could easily set down the following:—

(1) Dr. Wu T'ing-fang, the veteran diplomat, formerly Foreign Minister and Acting Premier, now Foreign Minister of the Canton Military Government. He studied law in Lincoln's Inn and became, in 1876, the first Chinese barrister. While in Washington as Chinese Minister for at least three terms, he was lionized everywhere as the witty diplomat, and before he returned to China was prevailed upon to write for an American publisher his "America Through the Eyes of An Oriental Diplomat."

(2) Admiral Sir Sah Chen-ping, the present Minister of Navy in Peking, one of the Japanese Admiral Togo's contemporaries in Greenwich. China's foremost sailor, he was knighted by the British Government when he accompanied Prince Tsai Hsun to attend King George's coronation in 1910.

(3) Sir Chih-ch'en Lo Feng-luh, the Chinese Minister to the Court of St. James's from 1896-1901. No less eminent an authority than Sir Valentine Chirol, formerly Foreign Editor of the London "Times" has said that China's most accomplished Minister in London was perhaps a better Chaucerian scholar than many an Englishman.

(4) Dr. Yen Fuh, the famous translator of Spencer's, Darwin's, Huxley's and other philosophical works.

(5) Dr. Wu Lien-teh (better known in the Straits Settlements as G. L. Tuck). Chairman of the 1910-1911 International Plague Conference (Mukden), and now Chief of the North Manchurian Plague Prevention Service.

(6) Dr. Lim Boon-keng, Chinese member of the Legislative Council in Singapore. When acting as medical advisor to the Ministry of Interior just before the Revolution of 1911, he attended as China's representative both the International Hygienic Exhibition at Dresden

and the first Universal Races Congress, London, 1911.

FROM THE YOUNGER GENERATION.

With the exception of Dr. Wu Lien-teh, the other five, above-mentioned belong to the older generation and Sir Chih-ch'en Lo Feng-luh, for example, died some years ago. Among those of the younger generation we may mention the following:—

(7) Dr. Wang Ch'ung-hui, formerly Minister of Justice in the first Republican Cabinet. A Doctor of Civil Law of Yale University, he is now the Chairman of the Law Codification Commission which recently completed the revised draft of China's New Criminal Code.

(8) Dr. C. C. Wu, the distinguished son of Dr. Wu Ping-fang. The proud winner of the Inns of Court Barristers Examinations' First Prize of Three Hundred Guineas, he is assisting his father in Canton and was one of China's delegates at the Paris Peace Conference last year.

(9) Dr. Philip K. C. Tyau, Acting Councillor of the Peking Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Acknowledged as the most popular member of the Waichiaopu among the Foreign Legations in the Capital, he is the tennis champion of all North China, having played as one of the tennis team of Cambridge University.

(10) Dr. S. P. Ch'en, Medical Director of the Peking Central Hospital and Isolation Hospital. He distinguished himself especially in the recent Shansi plague epidemic.

MEN OF MANY AIMS.

Before the War there were over 350 Chinese students in British institutions: since then, of course, the total has fallen to about 200. At the end of 1916 there were 292 students hailing from 15 provinces in China. Of these 78 were supported by the Government and 214 were private students. These were scattered in 16 different centres—London, of course, claimed the most, namely 116; Edinburgh came next with 37; then Glasgow with 25; then Cambridge and Birmingham, each with 18; then Newcastle with 15 and Aberdeen with 12, etc. etc. And as showing the kind of studies Chinese students are taking up, the above 292 may be classified as follows:—

Agriculture	3
Architecture	1
Arts	7
Chemistry	10
Commerce	8
Engineering	42
Flying	4
Geology	1
Law and Economics	47
Leather Industries	1
Medicine	50
Metallurgy	6
Military Science	2
Mining	22
Natural Science	8
Naval Architecture	5
Nursing	4
Preparatory	67
Sociology	2
Wireless Telegraphy	2
Total	292

So much for a retrospect. Now for a few suggestions as to ways and means for the promotion of this Anglo-Chinese educational as well as commercial alliance.

WORKING ONE'S WAY THROUGH.

In the first place, both the American and French "working one's way through college" methods should be encouraged in the British educational system. As is well known, whoever has a pair of willing hands and a clear head can always find opportunities to work his way through an American college, and now there are hundreds of Chinese going to France to study half day and work half day. But in England higher education is primarily for the rich and well-to-do. England is not the United States, where "a man's a man for a' that and a' that"—where men are self-made, not born with a silver spoon in their mouths. Consequently, when a Chinese student's finances suddenly run short—the number of private-support students is always greater than that of Government-support scholars—he is left in the lurch. He may be able to borrow once in a while from other Chinese friends, but more often than not his friends get up a charitable collection and send him home by the first boat. In this way many an otherwise promising student has been stranded and compelled to leave his studies unfinished.

THE NOBILITY OF LABOUR.

Now there would not have been any of such tragedies if either the American or the French system could be invoked. To be sure, the clever ones could write for the papers and periodicals, but not every foreign student in England is fortunate enough to get the necessary introduction and thus be able to earn a few guineas as extra pocket money. Even if occasionally a good article succeeds in getting accepted, the encouragement would generally come after numerous disappointments, and very few students can be persuaded to bank their hopes on such a mainstay.

On the other hand, the nobility of labour should be encouraged, and no doubt such encouragement as well as respect will be accorded, now that the nation is settling down to the great task of reconstruction after the war. If so, there ought to be no difficulty whatsoever in providing the necessary opportunities as helps to the Chinese students. For example, a few Chinese engineering students obtained work and experience during the War in some of the British workshops and munition plants; and on being paid for their services they had also to take out insurance cards. Similarly, many Chinese medics were in great demand when, with the departure of English doctors to the Front, there was a shortage of medical men to carry on the work of the various hospitals. In the case of France those who work half day will be employed in factories and workshops, etc.; so some similar arrangements may also be instituted in Great Britain for the benefit of Chinese students.

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS.

Such financial support being available, more Chinese would be attracted to go to study in the British Isles, for then the chances of being stranded would be proportionately lessened. Secondly, educational scholarships may very well be offered to Chinese students seeking to complete their studies in England, similar to those offered to Chinese boys and girls in American institutions. We do not mean here prizes and exhibitions or fellowships, some of which have already been awarded to Chinese in recognition of their excellent scholarship, etc. But we mean an annual subsidy of £100 to £200 to finance a promising Chinese lad through college for one or two or more years. An investment like this will not actually amount to much, and of course the number of such scholarships can be increased or reduced from time to time, but a Chinese so educated is certainly the best commercial asset Great Britain will ever possess in this country. Such scholarships or grants may come out of the reported waiver of the British share of the Boxer Indemnity or be voted by the British Chambers of Commerce and Government, or else endowed by the British universities themselves.

THE BOXER INDEMNITY.

Thirdly, the British public should take more interest in the Chinese studying in their midst, considering that British commerce still occupies the lion's share of China's foreign trade. To show such genuine interest the reported waiver of the British share of the Boxer indemnity should be officially confirmed, for that fund alone will be tremendously useful in this particular direction. Of course the British Government need or need not suggest the establishment of another Tsing Hua College to prepare students to go to study in England, but to whatever direct educational use the money may be applied, to provide educational facilities for Chinese students will constitute another powerful link in forging the chain of Anglo-Chinese educational as well as commercial alliance.

MORE SYMPATHY NEEDED.

Fourthly and lastly, as another expression of British interest in Chinese students, greater sympathy should be shown towards the lot of Chinese already in the British Isles. As we have attempted to show in our "London Through Chinese Eyes," which will soon be ready for sale in London, and the Far East, etc., and will contain a Preface by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Jordan, the retiring British Minister, the present or rather pre-war agencies for the promotion of friendly relationships between the two peoples are either insufficient or inefficient to accomplish their laudable objects. There is for example, the Anglo-Chinese Friendship Bureau, started in 1913, with Lord Bryce as its president; but owing to inadequate support, financial and otherwise, it was suspended soon after the outbreak of the War. This

commendable agency should at once be put on its feet again and its sphere of usefulness considerably extended, so as to put all similar organizations on a more co-operative and therefore more efficient basis.

THE STAND-OFF MANNER.

Above all, the alleged English spirit of superior patronage and snobbishness should be banished once and for all from all intercourse with Chinese students. The Chinese, despite their nonchalant, immobile exterior, are extremely sensitive, and although those of us who know the peculiar characteristics of John Bull may be wiser in the matter, yet many will rebel against what they mistake as British snobbishness. For they say: "If you consider such sympathy in the form of social parties, teas and dinners, etc., as charity for the friendless Chinese, then please keep your charity for your own folks." What they want is genuine not lip-service sympathy, and accustomed as are the Chinese to show strangers disinterested hospitality with no thought whatsoever of being requited, they will soon distinguish the false from the true. And once such sincerity and friendliness have been cemented, the educational as well as commercial alliance of the two peoples will soon become an accomplished fact. Thus, as has been well said by a British returned student, "through the comradeship of their students the two countries—one a Republic and the other a crowned one—working hand in hand with harmony and concord, will bring in an entirely new chapter in Far Eastern politics."