



Title

Technical education at the door of the Republic of China - The Chinese Vocational school

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This work has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

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Abstract

Vocational education holds increasing significance as the economy expands and educational structures undergo upgrades. This paper focuses on the historical context and influence of the founding of the first vocational school in China, *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*, established in Shanghai in June 1918. Employing documentary analysis and historical research, the paper examines the factors that led to the establishment of the school, including historical and economic aspects. It particularly explores the connection between Huang Yanpei's travels to the United States and Japan and the establishment of the vocational school, utilizing the concept of educational borrowing. The study also analyzes the impact of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* on vocational education in China and its economic implications. Moreover, the paper presents insights and discussions on the shortcomings of vocational education in 20th-century China and the current challenges and countermeasures facing vocational education. By examining the motivations and consequences of establishing the first vocational school in modern Chinese history, this research offers a theoretical foundation for future studies and encourages reflection on the historical context of vocational education in China, contributing to the development of a vocational and technical education system tailored to China's national conditions. This research aims to shed light on the historical context and social significance of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* as a pioneering institution in the development of technical education in China.

Introduction

In 2010-2012, Chinese policymakers launched a reform initiative to innovate vocational education, adapt it to current changes and needs, and align it with the Ten-Year Plan for Education Development 2010-2020. China's State Council stated that it "will implement the scientific concept of development and make the development of vocational education an important foundation for economic and social development and a strategic priority for education."¹ Vocational education has become increasingly important as the economy continues to grow and the educational structure is upgraded. The first vocational school in China (*Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*) was founded in Shanghai in June 1918 and played a pivotal role in the history of vocational education in China. This paper address the following research questions: How did historical and economic factors contribute to the establishment of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*? Were Huang Yanpei's 1915 trip to the United States and 1917 trip to Japan the indirect factors that promoted the establishment of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*? Did Huang Yanpei follow the example of Japan and the United States to establish this vocational school?

The research of this paper depends on the help of the following literature. First of all, this paper briefly introduces some relevant First-hand literature. The first volume of the educator Huang Yanpei's diary, recorded what he saw, heard, and thought from 1911 to 1918, including what he felt and saw during his visit to the United States in 1915 and when he participated in the Japanese education in 1917. This is a precious resource, and many of the arguments in this paper are supported by this first-hand resource. Another equally meaningful and valuable document is Huang Yanpei's education anthology, which records Huang Yanpei's examination of education in different cities in China, his thoughts and suggestions, as well as his reflections

¹ "The decision of the State Council on the vigorous development of vocational education." Last modified

October 28, 2005, http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2005/content_129495.htm

and advocacy after he visited the United States and Japan, which provides a reliable reference value for this paper's study of Huang Yanpei's thoughts on vocational education and his motivation for running schools.

Next, this paper briefly introduces some relevant Second-hand literature. In educator Phillips' article titled “ Processes of policy borrowing in education: some explanatory and analytical devices”, the author discusses by giving examples of British education policy makers' longstanding interest in the German vocational education system, clarifies the concept and framework of borrowing in education,² and this literature provides a strong theoretical basis for introducing Huang Yanpei's thesis of creating Chinese vocational education concepts and establish first vocational school after his study of American and Japanese education. Barbara Schulte's article “Unwelcome Stranger to the System”, is a qualitative paper in which the author critically analyzes what happened to Western vocational education when it was first introduced to China. She discussed why it encountered obstacles and difficulties, which provides rich theoretical evidence for the section of the paper that critically analyzes the impact of foreign ideas on Chinese vocational education.³

Therefore, this paper will use a combination of documentary analysis and historical research to explore the historical and economic background of the founding of Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao, especially the background of educational borrowing and its impact at the time. First, this paper

² Phillips, D., & Ochs, K. “Processes of policy borrowing in education: some explanatory and analytical devices. *Comparative Education*, 39(4), (2003) :451–461. Accessed May 7, 2023. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006032000162020>.

³ Schulte, Barbara. “Unwelcome Stranger to the System: Vocational Education in Early Twentieth-Century China.” *Comparative education* 49, no. 2 (2013): 226–241.

will briefly analyze the historical and economic factors that led to this phenomenon. establishment of the vocational school. Next, and most importantly, the paper will draw on various first-hand sources, including Huang Yanpei's diaries and travelogues, to analyze the connection between Huang's trip to the United States and Japan and the establishment of the vocational school. In this section, I will use the concept of educational borrowing, this concept allows to analyse the process when an educator discovers educational shortcomings in his or her own country, travels and examines related educational systems in other countries, and then uses these ideas as a model to establish a school or a system after returning to China. As the scholar Phillips states, "We investigate what is happening in other systems of education in order to learn by means of example, to make some judgement, and to explore the possibilities for reform at home."⁴ In this educational borrowing, Huang Yanpei belongs to the category of importing communicators, "who try to introduce educational concepts and practices from different cultural backgrounds, such as politicians or educators."⁵ In this section, I will use the concept of educational borrowing, this concept allows to analyse the process when an educator discovers educational shortcomings in his or her own country, travels and examines related educational systems in other countries, and then uses these ideas as a model to establish a school or a system after returning to China. As the scholar Phillips states, "We investigate what is happening in other systems of education in order to learn by means of example, to make some judgements, and to explore the possibilities for reform at

⁴ David. Phillips, & Kimberly. Ochs, "Processes of policy borrowing in education: some explanatory and analytical devices." *Comparative Education*, 39(4), 10, 2003, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006032000162020>

⁵ Abigail. Markwyn, "Economic Partner and Exotic Other: China and Japan at San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition." *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 39(4), (2008):12.

home.”⁶ In this educational borrowing, Huang Yanpei belongs to the category of importing communicators, “who try to introduce educational concepts and practices from different cultural backgrounds, such as politicians or educators.”⁷

Then, this paper will analyze the impact of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*, on vocational education and the economy in China. Finally, this paper will present some of their views and discussions on the shortcomings of vocational education in China in the 20th century and the challenges and countermeasures facing vocational education in China today. Studying the motivation and impact of establishing the first vocational school in modern Chinese history can provide a theoretical and exploratory basis for subsequent related studies and help to reflect on the challenges and countermeasures facing Chinese vocational education in the present through history. Because it is significant to discuss how to establish a vocational and technical education system that fits China's national conditions, it would be helpful to review the history of vocational and technical education development in modern China when discussing this issue. By exploring these questions, this research aims to shed light on the historical context and social significance of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* as a pioneering institution in the development of technical education in China.

⁶ David. Phillips, & Kimberly. Ochs, “Processes of policy borrowing in education: some explanatory and analytical devices.” *Comparative Education*, 39(4), 10, 2003,

⁷ Abigail. Markwyn, “Economic Partner and Exotic Other: China and Japan at San Francisco’s Panama-Pacific International Exposition.” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 39(4), (2008):12.

Historical Context

Background of the Establishment of Chinese Vocational School

Firstly is the historical background. The creation of any form of education has its historical factors. It was during the First World War that the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* was established. Traditional education suffered some impacts, so some people with progressive ideas and ideals of national salvation began to explore the road to salvation, and learning from the West became the trend. It was also in the context of the crisis of national survival since the 19th century that modern Chinese industrial education officially began. The emergence of industrial schools laid an practical foundation for the emergence of vocational education, and historically, these urgent calls for an effective vocational education system were not new, as many intellectuals and politicians believed that China would face the threat of extinction if it would not quickly modernize to meet the challenges posed by Western colonialism. Or, as the famous political reformer Liang Qichao (1873-1929) expressed it, "The struggle for survival is the greatest problem in the world today"⁸ So what kind of changes was China's economy undergoing in the war environment of the early 20th century? Moreover, how did the economic changes lead to the establishment of the Chinese Vocational School?

Next, is the economic factor. China's national economy developed relatively quickly during the First World War from 1914 to 1918. During this time, there was a "golden age" when national industries flourished, which provided great room for the development of Chinese national industry and commerce. According to statistics, from 1913 to 1915, 41.3 industrial and commercial enterprises were registered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce every

⁸ Guilin. Liu , "Zhongguo Jindai Zhiye Jiaoyu Sixiang Yanjiu" [*Research on the Idea of Vocational Education in Modern China*] (Beijing: Gaodengjiaoyu chubenshe, 1997), 71.

year, far exceeding the average annual registration rate of 21.1 enterprises from 1904 to 1908⁹ Because of the increasing number and vigorous development of national industries, more and more enterprises than ever urgently needed talents with the practical ability to improve their production capacity. It was reported that the factories in Shanghai alone accounted for 47% of the total number of factories in the country then. National industry and commerce development require workers, technicians, and managers with the required ideological and business qualities.¹⁰ However, the newly emerged industrial education in China was far from meeting this need. The talents cultivated by industrial education could hardly meet the needs of large industrial production. As a result, a more practical vocational education to provide enterprise management and technical personnel was called for. Therefore, the economic and social environment of Shanghai provided fertile economic ground for the emergence of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*.¹¹ Historical and economic factors accentuated the necessity and importance of developing vocational education. The interplay of historical and economic factors inspired a group of patriotic and aspiring scholars to devote themselves to the cause of education in China, especially vocational education. However, while historical and economic factors did contribute to some extent to the establishment of vocational schools in China, this paper argues that the most critical factor in the founding of the Chinese Vocational Institute was that the founder of

⁹ Xingzhi Tao, *Weixingyi, Taoxingzhi, Huangyanpei, Xuteli, Chenheqin jiaoyuwenxuan* [*Weixingyi, Taoxingzhi, Huangyanpei, Xuteli, Chenheqin jiaoyuwenxuan Selected Education Articles*] (Hefei: Anhuijiaoyu chubenshe, 1992), 165.

¹⁰ Zhengqing Fei and Weikai Fei, *Jianqiao "Zhonghuaminguoshi"* [*The Cambridge History of the "Republic of China"*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 1993).

¹¹ Curran, T. D. "From Educator to Politician: Huang Yanpei and the Third Force." *In Roads Not Taken* (1992): 85–110. Accessed May 1, 2023, doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429304910-4>.

this school, Huang Yanpei, had more ideas about vocational education after he visited the United States and Japan, which triggered his motivation to found this school. With these ideas and thoughts, he had the actions to create the vocational school later, such as making propaganda speeches for vocational education and founding the Chinese Vocational Education Society. Next, this paper will focus on transforming Huang Yanpei's thinking before and after his visit to the United States and Japan to explore whether Huang founded this vocational school based on his educational philosophy, using the United States and Japan as models.

Main Context

Huang Yanpei's trips to the United States and Japan

Before the discussion, this paper introduces Huang Yanpei's life and educational experience, as well as his views on the problems of Chinese education before he visited the United States and Japan. It was because he had some doubts and thoughts about Chinese education that brought about a significant change in his visit to the United States and Japan, because he sought solutions to these doubts that gave him more ideas to find the first vocational school in China. Huang Yanpei (1878 ~ 1965) pioneered modern vocational education in China and devoted his life to developing vocational education. He was born in *Chuansha County, Pudong, Shanghai*, and grew up in an era of great suffering for the Chinese nation. He experienced the Chinese nation's suffering and the country's distress. He was admitted to *Nanyang Public School* (now *Shanghai Jiaotong University*) in 1901. His teacher was the famous revolutionary and educator *Cai Yuanpei* and Peking University's¹² president. Huang was deeply influenced by *Cai Yuanpei's* philosophy of education for national salvation during his studies at *Nanyang Public School*. Before and after the *Xinhai* Revolution, he served as an adjudicator of the General Association of School Affairs of Jiangsu Province, Director of the Department of Education of Jiangsu Province, and Vice President of the Jiangsu Education Association. It was because of his long-time practical work in education that he not only understood the shortcomings of the old education in China but also focused on the practical significance of education, which, together with Huang Yanpei's strong patriotic passion, urged him to constantly search for ways

¹² Cai Yuanpei served as President of Peking University from 1917 to 1927.

to save the country and the people.¹³ As early as 1913, Huang Yanpei published an article entitled "Discussion on the Adoption of Practicalism in School Education," one of his earliest and most comprehensive reflections on education. He argued that, "Moral education is to be a matter of practice; physical education is to be a matter of application. Academic education requires the general knowledge and skills necessary for life."¹⁴ Huang's essay criticized the shortcomings of the old education, which was detached from practice and production. Then, in February 1914, dissatisfied with Yuan's dictatorial rule, Huang Yanpei resigned from his post as director of the Department of Education in Jiangsu Province and conducted a 95-day study tour of China's Anhui, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang provinces as a journalist for the *Shen bao* newspaper.¹⁵ After the study tour, he lamented that "School training is difficult to describe in one sentence, and most professors use the indoctrination method to teach.", "there is no other way for graduates of various schools except to go on to higher education, and this is a point that needs to be studied in education today, especially if secondary schools are."¹⁶ The two domestic education expeditions gave Huang Yanpei a clearer understanding of the problem of Chinese education, which is that Chinese education is detached from reality. The knowledge learned is not adapted to the needs of society. He believed that the root of the severe problem

¹³ Yiping. Huo and Zhengping. Tian, "Shilun zhongguojindai zhiyejishujiaoyu de fazhan [A Pilot Study on the Development of Vocational and Technical Education in Modern China] *Huadongshifandaxue xuebao* 03 (1986):67-77.

¹⁴ *Jiaoyu zazhi*, "Jiaoyu zazhi" [Education Magazine] Volume Five 07(1913), doi:<http://p8090-cnbsky.eduhk.hk.ezproxy.eduhk.hk/literature/literature/c49c3ce46d071f146d0846cfb60f1ea3>

¹⁵ This newspaper was founded in Shanghai in 1872. It is the longest-running newspaper in modern China, with vast social influence, and symbolizes the beginning of modern Chinese newspapers.

¹⁶ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei kaocha jiaoyu riji [Huang Yanpei's diary of his visit to education (Episode 2)]* (Shanghai:Shangwu yinshuguan, 1915), 149-158.

of livelihood in China lay in the inadequacy of the Chinese education system, which was reflected in the following: Both general and practical education is only textual education, and all subjects are taught in textual terms", and the teaching contents are seriously detached from the reality. The Chinese school system has only one way to go on to higher education. In this way, students are unemployed upon graduation, and education is becoming more and more jobless, which leads to the problem of livelihood. (Huo& Tian, 1986).¹⁷ At that time, Huang discovered the problems of Chinese education and was initially motivated ideologically.

However, what motivated him to transform vocational education as an educational approach and the creation of vocational schools into practical action began with his visits to the United States and Japan. In 1915, the Panama Canal was opened to traffic, and the San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition was held here. On April 9, 1915, Huang Yanpei was invited to attend the World's Fair as a journalist and arrived in New York in early June 1915. During this period, Huang Yanpei visited 52 prestigious schools of different levels in 25 cities in the United States (including 19 high schools and six industrial schools). In Pasadena, Huang Yanpei visited Pasadena City High School, which adopted "a division system, allowing students to choose one subject, but not everyone must complete all subjects." Huang Yanpei thought, "Nowadays, we ignore all the purposes of the future and use all the subjects with the same workforce, hoping that they will be equally developed. In Memphis, during a visit to the city's high school, Huang Yanpei was impressed by the models and drawings that the students had made of the St. Louis improvement and expansion plan and by the fact that the school had developed a love of the countryside and a capacity for municipal planning, not only in terms

¹⁷ Yiping Huo, and Zhengping Tian, "Shilun zhongguojindai zhiyejishujiaoyu de fazhan [A Pilot Study on the Development of Vocational and Technical Education in Modern China] *Huadongshifandaxue xuebao* 03 (1986):67-77.

of knowledge, art, or practical utility. If we teach young people in such a way, they will not be able to be active in society and valuable in their hometowns after graduation.¹⁸ In Chicago, Huang Yanpei visited the William W. Carter Public School. He saw that there were many blackboards in the classrooms and that the teachers had little time to speak and were ready to give guidance when the students needed it, and the teachers are very lively, and those who visit them feel like sitting in the spring breeze, like drinking wine. During his visit to Washington, D.C., Huang Yanpei visited Clark Claxton, director of the Washington Bureau of Education, to learn more about the American secondary school system; in the early days of the system, the division of subjects varied greatly from place to place, "there were those who divided each subject and listened to the student's choice, and those who did not divide each subject but listed each subject and listened to the student's choice, depending on local conditions. " ¹⁹

In June, in New York, Huang met with Jeremiah W. Jenks , an American vocational educator, he introduced Huang Yanpei to the talking points of professional educator Lee Galloway and learned that problem of vocational education was that “When students are not in school, they are not working, and when they are working they are not learning, which has advantages and disadvantages for both parties.” The key to this problem is to make factory owners understand that workers' learning will help production, and then factory owners will be willing to support it. In addition, the expert suggested that China should move forward in realizing both a political republic and a vocational republic. At the same time, Huang Yanpei felt the expert's advice was meaningful. But from the national situation of China, where "the unemployed are

¹⁸ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 165.

¹⁹ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 200.

everywhere, and the peasants and workers do not know anything," he argued, "I hope that general education and vocational education will go hand in hand so that education can gradually save the poor people's livelihood."²⁰ This talk gave Huang Yanpei a great ideas and was an essential reason for his propaganda of the vocational education system after his return to China. What stressed him most through this conversation was the educational format of vocational education and the concept of pragmatic education. This was one of the greatest motivations for establishing vocational schools in China. Before visiting the United States, Huang Yanpei realized that education in China needed to be on track with reality, so he greatly emphasized pragmatism. Upon his return to China, he pointed out at an educational seminar in Jiangsu Province: "We should let them know that they should be able to apply in practice after learning." For example, the surface of a painting should be sketched, and the flowers and birds should be painted realistically, not in vain. Read in real-time, so there is no disconnect between learning and using. If we continue in this way, teaching students materials and methods that do not work in real life, then what is the use of this education? Is there a need for it to exist?" In addition, he wrote an article entitled "An Argument for the Adoption of Pragmatism in Schools," which was his first systematic presentation of his educational ideas. The entire article was published in the influential Journal of Education and caused a great shock in the educational community.²¹

In Boston, Huang Yanpei interviewed the American vocational education expert, Andrew Proudfoot, to learn about the purpose and methods of vocational education society, and from the actual situation in China, he believed that we should make "jobless people have jobs" and

²⁰ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 200-266.

²¹ Huabin Wang and Yanzi Wang, *Huangyanpei (Di yiban) [Huang Yanpei (1st ed.) ed.]* (Hebei: Huashanwenyi chubanshe, 1997), 82.

then pursue "choosing a job must be determined by its nature to the job. Through this trip to the United States, Huang Yanpei believed that American education could be summarized as "application" and "individual." "Application" means that "The knowledge and skills that will be used in the workplace after graduation should be taught. Those that will not be used should also be taught, so it is not required that all courses be carried out, but that they be suitable for the needs of society and factories. The "individual" requires that "each has its characteristics, but does not strive for uniformity."²² During his visit to the United States in 1915, Huang Yanpei became acutely aware of the significant differences in vocational education between China and the United States. Upon his return to China, Huang Yanpei published an article titled "On the Fundamentals of the Differences between Eastern and Western Education," describing in detail the critical role played by the American vocational education system in promoting the development of American national production, "American education is practical and therefore always suited to utility. In contrast, our education is purely paper-based. What we learn is not what we use, what we use is not what we learn, and we do not seek to improve it. How can we have an improvement?²³ He witnessed the achievements of vocational education in the United States. He astonishedly wrote, "In retrospect, our nation had to realize that vocational education was the most urgent task of the day".²⁴ On June 6 of the same year, Huang Yanpei wrote in his diary, "If in China, the unemployed are all peasants, then these hard-working workers, however, have no value at all, so the state should gradually implement a relief program for the education

²² Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 208.

²³ Yanpei Huang, *Haungyanpei jiaoyu wenji [Huang Yanpei's Collected Works on Education. Chinese Vocational Education Society]* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe,1994), 21.

²⁴ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 197.

of the poor while the people receive general and vocational education.”²⁵ Later, in his diary in December 1916, he wrote: "The only remedy is to promote vocational education with full force, on the one hand, by establishing vocational schools for boys and girls, vocational tutorial classes, and vocational subjects in suitable schools. During Huang Yanpei's travels in the United States, he saw local women creating wealth for society as the main body of labor; they could work as operators, nannies, and teachers, and even set up schools to take up family education and school education to train the future of the country; there were also women business leaders, conducting career surveys on women and promoting the development of women's vocational education; there were also "various offices." There were also women business leaders, women's occupational investigation, and women's vocational education; there were also "women's offices, not only as letter writers, but also as typists, document preparers, and draftsmen.”²⁶ After his return to China, Huang Yanpei gave a public lecture on "the situation of women in America," saying that American women mainly received education in three subjects: "domestic affairs, business, and teacher training," and that "with these three kinds of practical knowledge, there is no danger that they cannot live"²⁷ Huang Yanpei's trip to the United States made him more aware of the need to develop vocational education in China. Secondly, he also realized the importance of using pragmatic teaching in vocational education, not only to learn book knowledge but also to pay more attention to practical application skills. All these ideas brought undeniable significance to the establishment of this vocational school.

²⁵ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 197.

²⁶ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 224.

²⁷ Zixia Yu, *Zhongguojinda sixiangjia wenku, Huangyanpei juan [Modern Chinese Thinkers, Huang Yanpei Volume]* (Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe,2015),54.

Two years later, in early January 1917, Huang Yanpei and Chen Baoquan, president of the Beijing Higher Normal School, took a ship from Shanghai to Japan to study the state of education in Japan. During his visit to Japan, Huang Yanpei visited various teacher training schools and their affiliated elementary schools in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. He believed that Japan's wealth and strength depended on vocational education; "the city is free of vagrants, and the country is free of beggars, and the people are happy to live."²⁸ While visiting Japan, Huang Yanpei and others first visited the Kyoritsu Girls Vocational School²⁹, designed to "teach girls appropriate skills and cultivate the virtues of common sense and sincere diligence. After graduation, they will have the appropriate skills to work as family members, teachers, or employees. During his visit to the Tokyo High School of Technology, Huang Yanpei visited Japanese educators to learn how to promote vocational education. Japanese educators believed that education must be emphasized to cultivate professional talents through education, and the role of the government should be emphasized. This is one of many things. This is a general relationship, but the authorities cannot promote it, not only this. It is essential to include in the textbooks that the professions and material things are valued to cultivate their mentality and pay attention to this point from the family education."³⁰ In the book "Southeastern Ocean's New Education" by Huang Yanpei, he detailed the table of courses offered by each subject at the Kyoritsu Girls' Vocational School in Tokyo, Japan, and the conversation with Japanese educators Suzuki Shigeyuki and Tejima Seiichi

²⁸ Baoquan Chen, *Kaocha riben feilvbin jiaoyujishi [Japan-Philippines Education Mission]* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1917).

²⁹ Kyōritsu Women's University (Kyōritsu joshi daigaku) is a private women's university in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan, founded in 1949. The predecessor of the vocational school was founded in 1886.

³⁰ Yanpei Huang, *Dongnanyang zhi xinjiaoyu qianbian [Pre-edition of Southeast Ocean's New Education]* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1918), 29-98.

about vocational education. After Huang returning to China, the delegation also introduced and publicized the development of vocational education in Japan in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Beijing and emphasized the importance and necessity of implementing vocational education in China. Huang Yanpei's trip to the United States and Japan laid an essential practical foundation for developing vocational education in China. Huang Yanpei believed that the main problem facing Chinese education was the difficulty of schooling to provide the talents society needs, which led to student unemployment, educational decline, and national production stagnation. In order to solve this problem, Huang Yanpei believed that it was necessary to reform the existing schools so that they could meet the dual needs of students for further education and employment.³¹ Therefore, he promoted and advocated vocational education. On May 6, 1917, under the leadership of educator Huang Yanpei, revolutionary and educator Cai Yuanpei, and educator Liang Qichao, a total of 48 people from the education and practical fields, the The National Association of Vocational Education of China (NAVEC) in Shanghai.³² The NAVEC is the organizational foundation upon which the Chinese Vocational Schools were founded. According to the Official Statement of the NAVEC, the mission of NAVEC was threefold: "to promote vocational education, to improve vocational education, to improve liberal education, and to prepare for the professions." With a subjective, ideological, and organizational foundation, the promotion of the opening of vocational education schools would be smoother and more solid. In the second year of the *Zhonghua zhiye jiaoyushe*, Huang Yanpei actively spread the idea of vocational education through lectures, publications, and newsletters and simultaneously carried out experiments on vocational education.

³¹ Yanpei Huang, "Zhonghua zhiyejiaoyushe xuanyanshu" [Declaration of the Chinese Vocational Education Association], *Jiaoyu yu zhiye*, 01,1917.

³² The National Association of Vocational Education of China (NAVEC) is a social organization in China.

With a subjective, ideological, and organizational foundation, promoting the opening of vocational education schools will be smoother and more solid. In the second year of the establishment of the Vocational Education Society, Huang Yanpei actively spread the idea of vocational education through lectures, publications, and newsletters and simultaneously carried out experiments on vocational education. In 1918, the first vocational school in China, the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*, was established. The primary teaching philosophy of the school is pragmatism. In the chapter on Huang Yanpei's visit to the United States, this article mentioned that Huang Yanpei became more determined in his pragmatic teaching philosophy after talking with Galway, a vocational educator. In an article recalling his father's experience in secondary school, Huang Daneng wrote that his father strongly advocated "the hand is all-powerful" and "the hand and the brain work together." Those who learn by practice should learn knowledge and combine study with work. "The teaching method in this school always combines theory and practice. Internships were usually a priority. In addition to classes, two half days a week were devoted to practice. He remembered that in 1933, the class went to the West Lake in Hangzhou under the guidance of our teacher to measure the topography of the Ge Ling and Qixia Ling mountains. The contour topographic map was our result. In construction practice, we had the opportunity to go to the construction sites of high-rise buildings in Shanghai every year. A rare opportunity came in our third year when we all participated in constructing the new three-story "China Hall" school building, including concrete pouring and steel tying. The school teachers also taught us architectural design. The graduation design was a bold medium-sized movie theater. Because of the teacher's appreciation, the design drawings were later included in the school's graduation exhibition.³³ It can be seen that after Huang Yanpei visited

³³ Daneng Huang, "Cong wo shenshoude zhiyejiaoyu lai tantao fuqin Huangyanpei de zhiyejiaoyu sixiang"

[Exploring my father Huang Yanpei's thoughts on vocational education from the vocational education I received], *Jiaoyu yu zhiye*, 05 (1987): 2-3.

the United States, he not only agreed to and propagated practical teaching in his mind but also really valued and used it in practice, which was the main reason the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* could open under the war conditions.

So what impact did the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* have at the time after they were founded and continued to grow? Was vocational education able to save the country in China?

The Impact of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*

It is clear from the historical background of the founding of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* that it sprouted and was founded during a time of war and severe internal and external problems. However, the founding of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* did contribute to a certain extent to the economic progress of China, although it did not play a fundamental role. Since the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* was built in the southwest of Shanghai, which is a relatively poor area characterized by poverty and high unemployment. Initially, the school offered courses corresponding to the professions sought: carpentry, metalwork, enamel, and button production. However, within a few years, through discussions and curriculum changes by school leaders and cooperating scholars, the curriculum was expanded to include mechanical engineering, civil engineering, business, and commerce. This has provided the right students for the growing number of factories and companies, meeting the demand for employment due to the rapid growth of industry and commerce. However, due to the fundamental contradictions of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society at that time, society and organizations hoped that vocational education would enable people to have skills to support themselves and develop the economy. Society and organizations hoped that through vocational education, people could have a skill to support themselves and develop the economy, but due to the social environment at that time, it was difficult to establish and develop vocational schools. However, it should be clear that due to historical limitations, it could not fully play the role of promoting China's

economic development. However, *Zhonghua zhieye xuexiao* solved certain employment problems for Chinese and international students.

Of course, it is precise because more and more students coming to *Zhonghua zhieye xuexiao* are able to find a relatively stable job after graduation, stimulating the local economy and so solving the problem of employment for Chinese students, that vocational schools should give some unemployed people the opportunity to learn skills and give them a skill. Also, as Schulte argues, the reason for this is not so much due to the sudden improvement in the socio-economic situation of the region but to the fact that more and more middle-class and even higher-class families are sending their children to this school because of the high reputation its teachers and curriculum had earned both in and out of Shanghai.³⁴

³⁴ Barbara. Schulte, “Unwelcome Stranger to the System: Vocational Education in Early Twentieth-Century China.” *Comparative education* 49, no. 2 (2013): 226–241.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of this paper, it can be found that three factors led to the establishment of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The first was historical, as the First World War at that time forced China into a pattern of internal and external troubles that changed the original nature of Chinese society, and traditional education was impacted, and historically, these urgent calls for an effective vocational education system became clearer and more important ;The second is the economic factor. Since China's national economy developed relatively quickly during the period from 1914 to 1918, the increasing number and vigorous development of national industries made it more urgent than ever for more and more enterprises to have talents with the practical ability to improve their production capacity, so vocational education, which is more practical in providing management and technical talents for enterprises, was thus pushed to an important position.

Third, this was the focus of this paper, is that the establishment and development of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* are inextricably linked to what Huang Yanpei saw and heard during his travels in the United States and Japan. This paper argues that because Huang Yanpei discovered the problems of Chinese education and had the opportunity to visit the United States and Japan, he received valuable ideas about vocational education. Upon his return to China, he founded this vocational school through lectures, publications, and the establishment of a vocational association. This paper also briefly and critically analyzed the impact of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* at the time, firstly the economic impact, as it is clear from the discussion that it did have some positive impact on the economy of Shanghai and China, but due to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature of China at the time and the constant wars, the Chinese vocational schools were not able to have a stable and lasting impact on the Chinese

economy, and secondly the social impact, as the establishment of the *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao* solved many certain employment problems, allowing children from low-income families to go to school and find a job in an unstable society. These are the contents of this paper's research on the First Vocational School of *Zhonghua zhiye xuexiao*.

Finally, I want briefly discuss the current problems and suggestions for vocational education in China.

Then, I want briefly discuss the problems and suggestions of today's vocational education. The first problem is that in recent years, the size of secondary vocational education students nationwide has been declining yearly, with only 15.77 million students enrolled in 2019.³⁵ China needs to pay more attention to training education legislation and highlight the status of training education, which will increase the status of training education in the national mind. Increasing the status of training education will increase enrollment in vocational schools. In this regard, it is still necessary to learn from Germany, where the law will analyze and consider historical realities and clarify the critical institutions of training education outside of the general compulsory education system, thus ensuring the stable development of modern training education. The high recognition of training education in Germany is inextricably linked to the German law on training education. The second issue is that the selection criteria for vocational school teachers in China are also more lenient than in Germany. Vocational education teachers are trained at an institution of higher education (usually a university) with at least six semesters of a bachelor's degree, two semesters of a master's degree, ten semesters of internship at an educational institution, and at least 12 months of experience in their field of specialization

³⁵ “Development of Vocational Education in China - Review of the Annual Report on the Quality of Vocational Education in China 2020”, *Zhongguo zhiye jishu jiaoyu* (15), (2021): 5-12.

doi: <http://119.45.145.238/kns8/defaultresult/index>

(Galyna, 2022)³⁶. The recommendation to study in Germany was made because during Huang Yanpei's visit to the United States in 1915. In a conversation with Dr. Jeremiah W. Jenks, he mentioned that “vocational education in the world is most developed in Germany, while it is still naive in the United States.”³⁷ Moreover, German vocational education is still the most systematic and perfect today. In summary, if Chinese vocational education is to learn from the German vocational education model and develop to a certain extent, it is necessary to identify problems in time, actively address and improve them, and create a new education model that is suitable for China's national conditions and conducive to the training of highly qualified and skilled professionals.

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- ³⁶ Galyna, Lysenko, “Features of Training of Vocational Education Teachers in Germany.” *ScienceRise. Pedagogical education* (Online), no. 3(48) (2022): 37–43. Accessed April 12, 2023, doi: http://journals.uran.ua/sr_edu/article/view/257349
- ³⁷ Yanpei Huang, *Huangyanpei riji diyijuan 1917-1918 [Huang Yanpei's Diary, 1917-1918] Vol.1* (Beijing:Huawen chubanshe, 2008), 200-300.

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