塾 (SHU: JUKU) - ITS ROLE AND PATTERNS IN PRE-MODERN CHINA

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I.

When we speak about modernization of any country, we cannot neglect the important role of education. I think educated manpower is an essential element in modernization of any society.

In dealing with this question, I would first of all like to make a short historical survey on this matter in Japan, because after World War II, many foreign scholars have given much attention to this subject, particularly in the case of Japan. They wanted to know some reasons why Japan modernized so quickly compared to other Asian countries. In answer to this question, they point out several important elements in which they emphasize the role of education. I might mention some examples:

Several academic essays on the modernization of Japan by Professor Edwin O. Reischauer of Harvard University. *Education in Tokugawa Period* by Professor Ralph P. Dore of Sussex University. *Society and Education in Japan, an example on the role of education in Edo period* by Professor Herbert Passin of Columbia University. In this book, Professor Passin explains about the penetration of education to all levels of people, giving a solid background in adopting new European civilization into Japan. As you know from Japanese history, the introduction of Western civilization was rather sudden, and it was entirely new and different from the Eastern. Therefore, we call this phenomenon the Western Impact. Imagine a samurai wearing a kimono, sitting on tatami and learning Dutch medicine in a small Japanese house! Pro-

fessor Passin emphasizes the role of the educational institutions called JUKU. JUKU were the schools for samurais and also for the commoners. Since the 18th century JUKU had started to spread in Japan rapidly. Of course schools for samurais started earlier, but those for farmers and merchants also were established later. They were often called TERA KOYA, where the common people learned reading, writing, and arithmetic of primary education. TERA KOYA spread from town to villages, and increased in number in late Edo period. There were quite a number of JUKU for samurais, where not only higher-class samurais, but also lower-class samurais gathered and studied, together with oriental philosophy, various European sciences very eagerly in their academic atmosphere. This type of education made a solid foundation to understand and receive Western civilization and paved the way to modern Japan.

II.

JUKU—in Chinese called Shu—is the same terminology for educational system in China. However, as you know, the history of education in China is much longer and older than that of Japan. Already in the 5th century B.C., Chinese philosophy had flourished splendidly. Each school, such as Confucius, Mencius, Tao and so on, naturally wanted to spread its own school of thought. However, it took a rather long time before education penetrated to the common people. If we review Chinese history roughly, we would see that up to the 8th century almost all of the political and cultural affairs had been monopolized by the aristocracy. Records of common people were hardly found in this period of history. Since the late Tang dynasty, aristocracy and its social structure had been destroyed by wars and battles, and so a new society, Sung, was born. However, this new society invited another type of hierarchy again. As you well know, the bureaucrats had come as the new privileged class to govern and administer people since the 11th century. They were mostly selected by state examinations called k'o-chü 科舉. K'o-chü were the exams to be government officials and as it is said, were accessible to all people of all classes. But, of course, it took years to learn and master the required classics and essays necessary for the pre-

Figure 1. The prefectural office, schools, and temples in the walled city. Taken from 'The Records of Shang Chang Prefecture', vol. 1.

paration of the exams. Therefore, the poor could hardly afford the luxury of time and money to prepare and apply for such examinations. But once a person passed such exams and became a government official, he automatically became a member of a privileged class of his society and a wealthy gentleman. This enabled his son to engage a private tutor and to go to school called Shu-yuan 書院, facilitating the way for fulfilling the requirements for the exams. Thus you find that government official families enjoyed the privilege of the gentry class. Here, one should keep in mind that this class was not only privileged and rich, but also intelligent compared to the common people of the time, so they were sometimes called the Literary Class. This social structure lasted for a very long time—as a matter of fact, until the end of the Ching Dynasty—or the beginning of this century.

Now to the problem of education for the common people and how it blossomed and planted its root in the soil of such a traditionally rigid society.

In China, I think, there existed quite a number of educational institutions for common people. Nevertheless, as common man's life had not been paid any attention to, their records were seldom kept, but I managed to find an educational institution for poor pupils called I-shu barely recorded as a small part of regional history. If a commoner could not afford the expense of a tutor or of a school, Shu-yuan, he could study at the I-shu free of charge. Therefore, these small educational institutions were helpful for children of commoners, particularly poor children in the village in learning primary education.

III.

The origin of this school, I-shu, can be traced back long ago in Chinese history. I consider that the development of this school system should be divided into two stages. In the history of China, I-shu had its start and development in the 11th century, the early Sung dynasty. As I said before, the Sung government needed bureaucrats and therefore the examination system was in effect, thereby resulting in the demand for schools. Schools for higher classics, called Shu-yuan, started to give lectures to fulfill these requirements. I found that I-shu were also established during the same period by the big families or clan in some districts. Compared with Shu-yuan, the I-shu were mostly smaller-size institutions, but they were of great help to the students, who could not afford the expenses for lectures and for the dormitory in the Shu-yuan. So, I-shu had spread since the Sung era as the supplementary institution to Shu-yuan. Shu-yuan continuously increased in number and flourished through Yuan and Ming periods. The famous Sung and Ming philosophies were developed at these Shu-yuan. However, during the late Ming dynasty most of these schools were either abolished or suspended, because students as well as scholars in Shu-yuan often criticized the policies of the government. When the next dynasty, the Ching, commenced, its government also carried out the policy of strict control of the Shu-yuan until 1733. This meant that during the first ninety years of

the Ching era, Shu-yuan were continuously suspended. Contrary to Shu-yuan, I-shu were established with the encouragement and under the protection of the government; I-shu were also an effective means of subjugating the aliens of the bordering tributary states. Therefore, this small school spread very widely from the central area up to the borderland. So, we have to keep in mind that the second stage of development of I-shu was in the early Ching period. Consequent on this policy of encouragement and protection during the Ching dynasty, large numbers of I-shu were established by willing volunteers, and developed various types of I-shu in this period.

Emergence of various types of I-shu meant that necessity for knowledge gradually increased among the common people, and also that elevation of their economic background obviously supported this tendency.

IV.

I have classified the various I-shu into 3 groups:

1) The first group is one founded by a clan or big family. I have placed this group first, because of its long history and because it flourished until the late Ching period. An example is seen in Figure 2. I want you to keep in mind that in China kinship, ancestral stock, or blood relation play a significant role in motivating close ties or relationship. These schools usually attached their family name at the top of the school name. (See nos 16 to 42 in Figure 2).

We call these schools Tsu-shu 族塾 meaning clan school.

I counted 27 clan schools in the illustration of the Yin prefecture. Yin is the central prefecture in Ning-po, the famous prosperous harbour in the Ching era. There were many rich clans in that area, so many clan schools were established. There were other similar areas in Central China such as Kiangsu and Chekiang Provinces and also some in the coastal areas in South China. There, rich clans competed to build clan schools. Some of them still existed until the Republic period and survived as modern elementary schools. The scholarship system was also popular in clan circles. I remember reading in some clan records that there were overseas scholarships for students in their clan.

	Name of school	Year established	Founder
1	鄧縣縣學	A.D. 952	〔王安石〕
2	月湖書院	1653	海澄知府王爾祿
3	育文書院	1697	知府高啓祿
4	育文書院	1871	知府高啓祿
5	育文書院	1713	知縣楊景
6	育文書院	?	邑人張景
7	黃柳書院	1831	邑人江
8	黃柳書院	1831	邑人徐
9	黃柳書院	1831	邑人林
10	月湖書院	1870	邑人蔡
11	月湖書院	1870	邑人蔡
12	月湖書院	1823	邑人蔡
13	月湖書院	1825	邑人蔡
14	月湖書院	1827	邑人蔡
15	月湖書院	?	邑人蔡
16	月湖書院	?	邑人蔡
17	月湖書院	1758	邑人蔡
18	月湖書院	1736-	邑人蔡
19	月湖書院	1736-	邑人蔡
20	月湖書院	1808	邑人蔡
21	月湖書院	1818	邑人蔡
22	月湖書院	1820	邑人蔡
23	月湖書院	1833	邑人蔡
24	月湖書院	1825	邑人蔡
25	月湖書院	1838	邑人蔡
26	月湖書院	1821-	邑人蔡
27	月湖書院	1821-	邑人蔡
28	月湖書院	1852	邑人蔡
29	月湖書院	1851-	邑人蔡
30	月湖書院	1855	邑人蔡
31	月湖書院	1856	邑人蔡
32	月湖書院	1856	邑人蔡
33	月湖書院	1867	邑人蔡
34	月湖書院	1863	邑人蔡
35	月湖書院	1866	邑人蔡
36	月湖書院	1867	邑人蔡
37	月湖書院	1867	邑人蔡
38	月湖書院	1868	邑人蔡
39	月湖書院	1869	邑人蔡
40	月湖書院	1862	邑人蔡
41	月湖書院	1870	邑人蔡
42	月湖書院	1872	邑人蔡

Figure 2. Schools in Yin Prefecture

(光緒鄧縣志 edited 1876).

2) The second type of I-shu in my classification is one founded by guilds or organizations of people representing the same prefecture or native country. In the same way as the clan group, this group having mutual interest, had strong feelings of solidarity and fellowship. Their I-shu steadily increased in the late Ching era and up to modern times. They were often established in the cities and in the harbour areas, as was also true of the first group. You might be interested to hear that I have seen some of these schools in Macao and in Hong Kong.

3) The third group, which interests me particularly, is established on quite a different foundation. Contrary to the first group, which was based upon kinship or clan, and the second group, which was based on guilds, mutual cause and mutual origin, the third group was founded on the basis of communal relationship, or people of common dwelling. These particular I-shu were often built by prefectural governors and local volunteers of the villages. This type of I-shu flourished almost everywhere in China. They were significant in inland China, where the first and the second group were not so popular. I was very curious to find out who these local volunteers were, who were so interested in promoting the common people's education. My paper 'A Study of the Foundation of I-shu in the Ching era'¹ is an analysis on this particular problem. I selected a district called Shang Chang prefecture in Central China for my research. According to the provincial records, the physical surroundings of this district were very poor. There were mountains and valleys rendering difficulties for communication and trade. There, the residents were predominantly peasants and hirelings. Therefore, it was not until the early 19th century (1802) that they could build schools for themselves. But the desire for education was very strong. A representative family, Hsiung 熊, persuaded the local people to establish I-shu in each village. So successful was the project or the idea that about 100 contributors joined in the plan and as many as 42 schools were established in villages. I checked on the vocations of all these contributors. After some procedures, I was able to check all of their vocations

¹ 近世中国教育史研究 *Study on Educational History in Pre-modern China* March 1958, published by Kokudo-sha.

in the local records. Thus, I found that most of these people belonged to the lower-class gentry, such as the students of the state school, the candidates of the state exams, and the clerks of the local government. Furthermore, I wanted to check upon those who practically managed the affairs of I-shu in Hsi Pin prefecture in the same province, and I found that they also belonged to the lower-class gentry.

Under the K'o-chü examination system in pre-modern China, there was tremendous number of candidates for exams in every district. Students who had passed lower stages of K'o-chü and the clerks of the local government were the intelligentsia of the villages. In establishing I-shu they were quite helpful. They were neither very rich nor powerful, but privileged, as lower-class samurais were in Japan. I think it is important to note that it was this lower-class gentry in China that promoted the education for the poor students.

Investigation and analysis on this third group are not completed yet. Recently in some inland district of China, I found that there was another interesting type of promoters for village schools. They had some connection with cultural movements based on Taoism, mixed with Buddhism and Confucianism. This movement was very similar to the Shin-gaku (心學) movement in the Edo period in Japan. I think this group was important in influencing I-shu, not only for the establishment of village schools, but also for the thought in education, because its instruction in moral and ethical values gradually became a part of the curriculum in I-shu.

I am at present engaged in analysing the relationship between this movement and education in I-shu. Anyway, many of the I-shu were transformed into modern elementary schools under new educational system in Modern China. As I said before, in pre-modern China, while there were many official documents, the common peoples' records were very poor. It took me quite some years to collect and search historical records of them. So, my study is still incomplete, and there are many important problems to clarify. I hope some day in the future I can fulfil my achievements on I-shu—the schools for the poor and common people in pre-modern China.