

**Teaching *Guomin*:
Meanings of Citizenship and (un)Popular Education in Late Qing China**

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ABSTRACT

ZACHARY SMITH: Teaching *Guomin*: Meanings of Citizenship and (un)Popular Education
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Following the Qing government's decision to abolish the civil-service examination system in 1905, education reformers writing for *Jiaoyu zazhi* [The Chinese Educational Review] set about establishing a new system of public education under the banner of educating "citizens," or *guomin*. This essay looks critically at various reform proposals expressed in *Jiaoyu zazhi* during its first year of publication (1909) in an effort to better characterize the possibilities and tensions inherent in late Qing notions of *guomin*. While almost all of the contributors professed the need to popularize education for *guomin*, this shared vocabulary obscures key differences among the visions of citizenship each reformer espoused, as well as among potential students targeted by reform. These differences indicate that while notions of citizenship would become more uniform throughout the Republican period, the final years of the Qing dynasty were a time in which multiple meanings of citizenship were still possible.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although *guomin* 国民, or “citizens,” was still a relatively new term in the final few years of the Qing dynasty, it occupied a prominent place in the realm of public policy, and specifically education reform. In discussing the proposed expansion of public lecturing in the inaugural 1909 issue of *Jiaoyu zazhi* 教育杂志 [The Chinese Educational Review], Lu Erkui 陆尔奎 (1862-1935) refers to the project as “citizen’s education” (*guomin jiaoyu*), the goal of which is “to train the people so that they can unite as one and so constitute the spirit of the nation!”¹ In the wake of the Qing court’s decision to abolish the civil-service examination system in 1905, *guomin* was also used as a means of defining the scope of China’s new education system, as when fellow contributor Zhuang Yu 庄俞 (1876-1938) states, “education for *guomin* indicates that everyone should receive an education.”² *Guomin* emerges repeatedly throughout discussions of educational policy, so much so that future Minister of Education Zhang Shizhao 章士钊 (1881-1973) claimed, “the grandest term that has the greatest attraction and impact on the country is none other than *guomin*.”³ Yet even as

¹ *Jiaoyu zazhi* 教育杂志 [The Chinese educational review] 1:1 (1909; repr., Taipei: Taiwan Shang wu yin shu guan 台湾商務印書館, 1975), 1. Hereafter, *Jiaoyu zazhi* shall be abbreviated in the footnotes as JYZZ.

² JYZZ 1:2, 25.

³ This quote originally appeared in an issue of *Shubao* (Jiangsu Journal) from 1903, and is quoted here from Sung-chiao Shen and Sechin Y.S. Chien, “Turning Slaves into Citizens: Discourses of *Guomin* and the

many reformers stressed the fundamental importance of *guomin* and seemed to assume a shared understanding of its meaning, a precise definition of *guomin* remained ambiguous.

Guo 国 (“state” or “polity”) and *min* 民 (“people”) were both common characters in the late Qing lexicon, and the compound term *guomin* had even appeared some two thousand years earlier in pre-Qin texts to refer to the inhabitants of small, rival states.⁴ When intellectual leaders of the late Qing began to discuss issues regarding “citizens” and “citizenship”, they did so using the word *guomin*. This term was itself the translation of the Japanese term *kukomin*, which had been coined in Meiji Japan in order to reflect new ideas about citizenship imported from the West.⁵ Among leading intellectual figures of the time such as Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-1929), *guomin* took on a diversity of meanings, including that of a cultural community defined by shared values and knowledge, or in Liang’s case, that of a political community defined by its shared responsibility to the state.⁶ Over the course of the Republican period, politicians and intellectuals would continue to develop new vocabularies for discussing different forms of citizenship, including the notion of *gongmin* 公民 (“public people”), which emphasized political participation, and *shimin* 市民 (“city people”), which referenced the emerging public

Construction of Chinese National Identity in the Late Qing Period,” in *The Dignity of Nations: Equality, Competition, and Honor in East Asian Nationalism*, eds. Sechin Y.S. Chien and John Fitzgerald (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 50.

⁴ Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry, “Introduction: Political Citizenship in Modern China,” in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, ed. Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 4.

⁵ The translation from *kukomin* to *guomin* was but one of many such transitions, whereby Japan acted as a linguistic mediator between Western ideas and Chinese discourse. For more on the translated vocabulary of the Chinese nationalist movement, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁶ For an insightful discussion of the differing meanings of *guomin* adopted by Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, and Zhang Binglin, see Sung-chiao Shen and Sechin Y.S. Chien, “Turning Slaves into Citizens,” 56-68.

sphere in urban areas.⁷ In the waning years of the Qing dynasty, however, *gongmin* and *shimin* had yet to come into wide usage and *guomin* was itself a word whose meaning(s) had to straddle multiple notions of “citizens” or “citizenship.”

Among the pages of *Jiaoyu zazhi*, *guomin* stood for both the intended content of education and its recipients, yet these dimensions could vary greatly between reformers. While some argued for higher standards designed to prepare China’s young elites to become modern citizens, others pushed for greater educational accessibility for a broader group of Qing subjects presumed to have derived their “citizenship” status from the state. Some reformers explicitly included women within the boundaries of those targeted by the education system, while others focused almost exclusively on young boys. These policy differences speak to the specific period during the waning years of the Qing dynasty in which *guomin* emerged as a key term in discussions about the location and contemporaneousness of the Chinese political subject, but whose meaning had yet to be defined.

The realm of education reform marks a particularly useful lens through which to examine the protean meanings of *guomin* for two reasons. First, education was one direction in which the Qing court had truly begun to take active steps to enact large-scale changes following the adoption of the 1906 Constitution.⁸ Education reform, including new school construction, curriculum development, and textbook publication, also marked an area in

⁷ Robert Culp, *Articulating Citizenship: Civic Education and Student Politics in Southeastern China, 1912-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4 and Goldman and Perry, “Introduction,” 4-6.

⁸ For an overview of the educational reform projects undertaken directly by the Qing court during the first decade of the twentieth-century, see Su Yunfeng 苏云峰, *Zhongguo xin jiaoyu de mengya yu chengzhang* 中国新教育的萌芽与成长 [The origins and development of China’s new education system] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社, 2007), 83-100. Su notes that Qing educational reform did not begin in the twentieth century, but was rather the culmination of decades of exploratory educational changes during the later half of the nineteenth century. Still, Su regards the decision to finally abolish the examinations in 1905 was the “foundation of the modern education system in China” after which the most drastic reform could truly begin (85).

which elite intellectual debates began to acquire a broader resonance in ways accessible to ordinary Qing subjects.⁹ Second, and more important for our purposes, an examination of the practical application of ideas about *guomin* reveals something about the inherent tensions within notions of citizenship that political and philosophical debates do not. While Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei talked *about* notions of citizenship in the abstract political sense—each carving out specific meanings of *guomin* within a range of possibilities—educational reformers talked *with* assumedly shared notions of *guomin* to advance a multitude of different policies. Although education reformers did not expressly set out to define citizenship as Liang and others did, their practical attempts to address real-world problems under the guise of “educating *guomin*” nonetheless shaped the meanings of *guomin* available to other reformers and intellectuals. As we shall see, education policy proposals actually suggest several competing notions about who is considered a citizen, how one achieves citizenship, and the relationship between citizens and the state. These key differences, which often occurred both between and within specific educational reform projects, capture the paradox within singular notions of *guomin* at a time in which the Qing empire contained many regional, linguistic, and class differences. Thus, the “practice” of *guomin*, as exemplified in late Qing educational reform projects, provides an important and necessary dimension to understanding the broader discourse on citizenship in late Qing China.

This essay looks critically at various education reform proposals expressed in *Jiaoyu zazhi* during its first year of publication in an effort to better characterize the possibilities and tensions inherent in late Qing notions of *guomin*. Such an examination reveals that while

⁹ For an explanation of the role of textbooks and educational reform in granting a broader significance to late Qing intellectual discourse, see Tze-ki Hon and Robert J. Culp, “Introduction,” in *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, eds. Tze-ki Hon and Robert J. Culp (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 1-20.

almost all of the contributors professed the need to spread or popularize education (*puji jiaoyu* 普及教育) to a new group of educational participants called *guomin*, this shared vocabulary obscures key differences among the visions of citizenship espoused by each reformer. These differences render a precise, singular definition of *guomin* not simply elusive, but impossible. Often the goals, contents, and participants of educational reform projects together constituted the very conception of *guomin* that supposedly shaped their formation, creating a situation whereby ever-shifting notions of *guomin* were used to support a diversity of positions with misleading coherence. Previous historians have often reproduced this masking effect by viewing early twentieth-century education discourse on *guomin* as a precursor to Republican government policy, circumscribing late Qing education reform movements within later, more well-defined meanings of *guomin*, rather than properly contextualizing each reform proposal in this specific moment of transition.¹⁰ Indeed, over the next two decades, the education reform movement would become gradually subsumed within the administrative apparatus of the Republican state, and the increasing influence of the Nationalist Party contributed to an ever-narrowing definition of *guomin*.¹¹ Nonetheless, these

¹⁰ See Paul Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes Towards Popular Education in Early Twentieth-Century China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), especially pp. 263-268. In mapping the fundamental shift in education onto the transition from training bureaucratic men of talent to the reformation of “the people,” Bailey creates a simplified vision of educational reform that selectively highlights those types of citizenship which later found expression during the Republican period.

¹¹ For an overview of the incorporation of the educational reform movement into the Republican government’s own Ministry of Education (including the biographies of individual editors who later took on official government posts) see Thomas D. Curran, *Educational Reform in Republican China: The Failure of Educators to Create a Modern Nation* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2005). For an explanation of the narrowing definitions of political community in Republican China, see John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). Fitzgerald charts this narrowing conception of nationalism through the development of “the awakening of China,” which moves from the idea of nation to a united state, then to the ideal of one party, and finally “to the emergence of the single, definitive voice of the awakened leader.” (6-7). Although Fitzgerald does not focus his discussion on citizenship per se, I propose that the history of citizenship in China conforms to the same basic “shape” established by Fitzgerald’s work, moving from a wide range of possible definitions of *guomin* to an increasingly narrow one.

forces were not yet present during the waning years of the Qing—a period between 1905 and 1911 that was marked by experimentation and even creativity within the realm of public policy.¹² When one examines such policies individually, various educational programs in *Jiaoyu zazhi* reveal contestations whose differences were often elided by the still ambiguous nature of neologisms like *guomin*, but which nonetheless remain indicative of a pre-Republican period during which many differing visions of Chinese citizenship were still possible.

¹² In discussing the development of Peking opera, Joshua Goldstein has characterized the decades preceding the May Fourth Movement as a “period of hybridity” nourished by the influx of new artistic influences from abroad and the absence of Qing regulations. (Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 90-109). I am arguing here for a similar notion of creativity and experimentation in the realm of public policy.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHING *GUOMIN* IN LATE QING CHINA

When Liang Qichao sat down in 1899 to pen an article about the importance of *guomin* to international rivalries in the modern age, he began by saying, “Chinese people do not know about *guomin*,” simultaneously drawing awareness to *guomin* as a neologism and asserting more broadly that the Chinese people were unaware of the standards of citizenship by which *guomin* should be judged.¹³ Liang defines *guomin* as political actors who maintain a close relationship with the state. For him, *guomin* do not simply belong to a country, but actively participate in it, “governing the affairs of the country, establishing the laws of the country, planning the triumphs of the country, guarding the weaknesses of the country” and so on.¹⁴ Beyond this particular article, *guomin* emerged as a common trope in his serial essay, *Xinminshuo* 新民说 [The new people], and he constantly stressed the importance of *guomin* to matters of national security.¹⁵ Liang postulated that modern global conflicts were not between countries (*guojia* 国家), which were governed by the decisions of a few key political

¹³ Liang Qichao 梁启超, “Lun jinshi guomin jingzheng zhi dashi ji Zhongguo zhi qiantu 论近世国民竞争之大势及中国之前途” [The general tendency of *guomin* struggles in the modern age and the future of China], in *Yinbingshi wenji* 饮冰室文集 [Collective essays from the Ice-drinker’s Studio], (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju 中华书局, 1978), IV, 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Peter Zarrow, “Introduction: Citizenship in China and the West,” in *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890-1920*, eds. Joshua A. Fogel and Peter G. Zarrow (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1950), 17-20.

figures, but rather between groups of *guomin*, acting in the collective self-interest of their nation. To Liang, it was clear that in the turn-of-the-century geopolitical climate, China's very survival depended on the combined efforts of Chinese *guomin*. Yet just as clearly, Liang's definition of *guomin* was one that few, if any, Chinese people could claim. Thus, Liang believed strongly that if the Chinese people were to have any hope of surviving as a nation, they must *learn* how to fulfill the roles of *guomin*.

Contemporary scholarship on the emergence of national identity in China has confirmed Liang's claim about the importance of educational projects to issues of *guomin*. Both Robert Culp and Sang Bing have identified modern schools in late Qing and Republican China as key sites in which young students practiced civic engagement and identified as *guomin*.¹⁶ John Fitzgerald has similarly stressed the importance of education, from language reform to textbook publication, in defining increasingly narrow meanings of *guomin* throughout the Republican period, culminating in a narrow definition of citizenship adopted by the Nationalist Party in the late 1920s that required strict adherence to party ideology and was promoted through the notion of a tutelary state.¹⁷ Studies such as Fitzgerald's reveal that not only was education itself important to nation-state building projects and the formation of *guomin* as an identity, but also that debates about the meanings and boundaries of *guomin* extended beyond the intellectual leaders like Liang who were typically associated with the 1911 Revolution. While several studies have explored such debates in the realm of textbook

¹⁶ See Robert Culp, *Articulating Citizenship*, 143-262, and Sang Bing 桑兵, *Wan Qing xuetang xuesheng yu shehui bianqian* 晚清学堂学生与社会变迁 [Late Qing modern school students and social change] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe 广西师范大学出版社, 2007), 309-334, 376-425. Notably, Sang positions the claiming of *guomin* status by public school students much earlier than Culp. For Sang, student activism and civic engagement was a feature of the modern school system in the Late Qing (where students played a central role in the 1911 Revolution), whereas Culp focuses on the emergence of student political groups in the 1910s and 1920s.

¹⁷ Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 18-22, 214-260.

production, they have mostly examined the contents of new textbooks as an extension of pre-existing political debates.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the new mechanisms of schooling and education reform policy itself (particularly during the early stages of the reform movement in the Late Qing) have been largely absent from this discussion.

Histories that do focus on educational reform have acknowledged its importance to the nationalist movement and Qing decline, but have frequently done so at the expense of properly contextualizing the reformers in this crucial moment of transition. In highlighting the nationalist sentiment of late Qing educational reform, Paul Bailey has viewed the movement almost solely in the context of the Republican government that followed.¹⁹ Other scholars such as Marianne Bastid and Sally Borthwick provide social histories of education reform that merely demonstrate the inability of professional educators to break fully from traditional education structures, and do not appreciate how different the goals of the reformers were from those of the civil examinations.²⁰ In addition to these anachronistic projections, nearly all previous work on this topic assumes that a singular notion of citizenship (believed to correspond with that of the May Fourth period) was espoused by all

¹⁸ For the salient work on changing meanings of citizenship and national identity in various late Qing and early Republican textbooks, see May-bo Ching, “Classifying Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Late Qing Native-place Textbooks and Gazetteers,” Tze-ki Hon, “Educating the Citizens: Visions of China in Late Qing History Textbooks,” and Peter Zarrow, “The New Schools and National Identity: Chinese History Textbooks in the Late Qing” in *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, eds. Tze-ki Hon and Robert J. Culp.

¹⁹ Paul Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes Towards Popular Education in Early Twentieth-Century China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), especially p. 263-268. Unlike many other works on late Qing education, Bailey’s book is divided evenly between an account of the reform debates in the late Qing, and a description of the 1912 Education system, inherently viewing the late Qing reformers as precursors to later developments. In his concluding remarks, Bailey draws specific connections between late Qing education reform and the ideals of the May Fourth movement a decade later.

²⁰ See Marianne Bastid, *Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China*, trans. Paul J. Bailey (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1988) and Sally Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China: The Beginnings of the Modern Era* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983). For a more recent work that laments the role of “tradition” in inhibiting educational reform in the Republican period, see Curran, *Educational Reform in Republican China*.

of the contributors to education reform, and thus such work is unable to account for the contestations within the reform movement.²¹

Jiaoyu zazhi, which was published and distributed by the Shanghai Commercial Press (*Shanghai shangwu yinshuguan* 上海商务印书馆), provided the most prominent forum in which debates over education were carried out in the late Qing. In order to avoid the teleological assumptions that link these reform projects to understandings of *guomin* that were established decades later, one must understand educational reformers' usages of *guomin* within the broader political and educational environment of 1909, when the journal was first published. Four years earlier, the Qing court had made the dramatic decision to abolish the civil-service examination and begin dismantling the wide variety of local academies and family-run private schools, called *sishu* 私塾, which had previously trained members of the literati elite to sit for the examinations and attain government positions.²² In the long term, this decision was meant to decouple the education system from dynastic forms of authority and promote a broader array of civic engagement among Chinese political subjects, but its immediate effect was to invoke cataclysmic social and material fallout amongst the literati elite who had been defined and sustained by their status as degree-holders under the

²¹ When Bailey does speak of the educational “debate” during the waning years of the Qing, he still includes all professional educators in a single group, positioned against political reformers and radical students in Japan (Bailey, *Reform the People*, 64-69). Borthwick dichotomizes the social impact of educational reforms into categories of urban success and rural failure, with education professionals serving as universal representatives of the modern, urban elite (Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China*, esp. 152-154).

²² For more on the incredibly close relationship between the traditional private school system and the Qing civil-service examination, see Li Shiyu 李世愉, *Qingdai keju zhidu kaobian* 清代科举制度考辨 [A Diagnosis of Qing-era civil service examinations] (Beijing: Zhongyang guangbo dianshi daxue chubanshe 中央广播电视大学出版社, 1999), 127. Li Shiyu stresses that the traditional Chinese education system was by no means static and that the Qing specifically represented the point during which the contents of the examinations and the school system itself were most closely entwined. Central curricular goals such as “moral education” (*pinde jiaoyu* 品德教育) and cultural education (*wenhua jiaoyu* 文化教育) were deemed the most important elements of education in both official discourse and in popular practice (pp. 145-148).

examination system.²³ At the same time, the abrogation of the examination system created opportunities for some former examination candidates to devote their attention to radical new educational reform goals. In either case, the decision to abolish the examinations marked a profound shift in the social, political, and material conditions of elite society.²⁴ Throughout the final years of the Qing dynasty and into the Republican period, the civil-service examinations hovered as a specter whose continued cultural relevance repeatedly threatened the establishment of a new education system.²⁵

Two years after the monumental decision to abolish the examinations, the newly formed Qing Ministry of Education issued new regulations regarding education policy. Many of these regulations were actually quite specific—going so far as to prescribe a curricular outline for each school day of each school year, emphasizing several new educational foci, such as math, science, and calisthenics, all of which were deemed by the Qing government to be important characteristics of China’s new *guomin*.²⁶ The new guidelines did not, however, specify the use of any specific textbooks for topics such as history or moral cultivation, and

²³ Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 618-619. Elman demonstrates that the examination system not only determined educational structures, it actually *created* an entire elite class defined by their status as degree-holders, all of whom shared a common language, common cultural values, and a common interest in perpetuating the examination system.

²⁴ Even as early as 1932, historians of China have had a sense of the profound shift marked by the collapse of the examination system, as Cyrus H. Peake claimed “[the abolition of the examinations] dealt the death-blow to Confucianism.” While the examinations themselves and Chinese culture more broadly were certainly not coterminous with Confucian learning, and many Confucian values continue to live on even to this day, this statement nonetheless expresses the readily perceptible magnitude of the decision. (Cyrus H. Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China* (New York: New York University Press, 1932), 71.)

²⁵ Curran, *Educational Reform in Republican China*, 83-119.

²⁶ For an example of the regulations issued for primary schools, in which the state lays out which subjects should be taught on which days, see *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyu shi liao hui bian (wan Qing juan)* 中國近代教育史料匯編(晚清卷) [A compilation of modern Chinese education historical materials (late Qing volume)] (Beijing : Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin 全國圖書館文獻縮微復制中心, 2006), 207-253.

as a result, there was still a great diversity in the educational material presented to students.²⁷ *Jiaoyu zazhi* contributor (and eventual editor) Zhuang Yu foregrounds this issue, claiming that “every school, without exception, establishes the cultivation of moral character as part of the curriculum, [but] teachers choose a type of locally available textbook and teach following the line of the book and the material it uses.” The result, he claims, is “pointless and ineffective.”²⁸ Regardless of Zhuang’s judgment that particular textbooks were bad for students, one cannot deny these different kinds of teaching materials reflected diversity that is not apparent in the Qing regulations. This inability of the Department of Education to fully control the content of the new education system, as exemplified by their failure to regulate textbook publication, ultimately established a discursive opening for reformers to debate educational content in the pages of *Jiaoyu zazhi*.

The void left by the abrogation of the civil-service examinations and the fundamental inability of the Qing court to control education reform directly deeply affected the contributors of *Jiaoyu zazhi*, and the journal is uniquely positioned to provide a fruitful perspective on various reformers’ attitudes on education and their notions of *guomin*. While the readership of the journal would have likely still been confined to a relatively small literary elite, the profusion of jobless intellectuals combined with a recent boom in publishing meant that journals such as *Jiaoyu zazhi* were distributed more widely and with more

²⁷ The Qing Department of Education had originally published textbooks itself but was ultimately unable to compete with the commercial publishing houses in Shanghai and elsewhere. In 1906 they established a censorship board to regulate the content of textbooks, and for these reasons, a lot of textbook rhetoric was connected to the political rhetoric of the dynasty. Nonetheless, there was still a great diversity of textbooks being produced for commercial profit, and sly intellectuals often hid alternative ideas about the nation within the pages of the textbooks they wrote, a trend particularly true of “native-place” textbooks and gazetteers (Tzi-ki Hon and Robert Culp, ed. *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing China*, 12-13, 23-25, 55-75).

²⁸ JYZZ 1:2, 22.

contributors than ever before.²⁹ By the time *Jiaoyu zazhi* published its first issue in January of 1909, the educational reform suggestions contained within the Qing New Policy had been in place for several years, allowing the journal's contributors to comment not only on their hopes for China's educational future but also on the effectiveness of those education reforms that had already been implemented.³⁰ Following the 1911 Revolution, the journal continued to remain influential and several of its chief writers and editors obtained prominent positions in the new Department of Education, narrowing the distance between the journal's interests and those of the state. Yet for the first year of its publication, the journal was more distant from and at times even openly critical of the Qing state.³¹ As such, it is this inaugural year in which reformers were most free to engage in debates on various conceptions of "education for *guomin*" that form the basis of this essay.

²⁹ Most of the printed media related to education, including professional journals, textbooks, and other education materials, grew out of a publishing boom in Shanghai at the turn of the twentieth century. Driven by both printing technology innovation and increased literacy rates, publishing houses like the Shanghai Commercial Press became successful businesses (Bailey, *Reform the People*, 64-65). Many elite intellectuals saw textbook writing and journal submissions as both a means of disseminating their ideas to a broad audience and as a way of successfully earning a living (Tze-ki Hon and Robert Culp, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, 5).

³⁰ *Jiaoyu zazhi* was preceded by the journal *Jiaoyu shijie* 教育世界 [Educational world], which began publishing in 1902, but consisted mostly of translated work from Japanese authors. Given that its contributors could not yet discuss the merits of educational reform beyond the examination system, and the journal as a whole contains less original debate, an analysis of *Jiaoyu shijie* lies beyond the scope of this essay. For more information on this particular journal, see Bailey, *Reform the People*, 5, 64-83.

³¹ Despite the revolutionary language through which some educational reformers explained their projects, the overall tone of the journal was decidedly reformist rather than revolutionary. Still, this did not dissuade contributors from being openly critical of the Qing government. In an article on primary education, Zhuang Yu lamented that "those above (*zai shang zhe* 在上者) are not promoting education comprehensively" and established several reform goals, such as standardization of tuition and establishment of school districts, that only government entities could enact (JYZZ 1:2, 19-20). Other articles criticized the current laws for mandating certain levels of education that simply remained out of reach for most people (JYZZ 1:5, 64). Nearly all argued that education was underfunded by the central state, and Zhuang was particularly engaged with budgetary issues (see, for example, JYZZ 1:2, 20-21 and his exhaustive article, "Lun difang xue wu gongkuan 论地方学务公款" [Local public funding of education] in JYZZ 1:7, 83-96).

CHAPTER 3

MEANINGS OF CITIZENSHIP IN *JIAOYU ZAZHI*

There are, of course, certain broad similarities among the notions of *guomin* presented in the pages of *Jiaoyu zazhi*. A full decade after Liang Qichao's original article calling for the need to educate Chinese people about *guomin*, nearly all of the educational reformers writing in *Jiaoyu zazhi* agreed with Liang that *guomin* status derived from a form of nationalism centered on the state. No matter where they located the community of Chinese citizens in space or time, articles in *Jiaoyu zazhi* repeatedly asserted the importance of the state in promoting "education for *guomin*."³² Also, a distinction made by Lu Erkui between "education for *guomin*" and "education for men of talent" (*rencai jiaoyu* 人才教育), speaks to a basic desire shared by all reformers to expand educational opportunities beyond the confines of the literati "men of talent" who had previously sat for the civil-service examinations.³³ In this sense, *guomin* simply represents for all reformers the broader category of participants targeted by the new education system. Elsewhere in the journal, *quanguo* 全国 ("the whole country"), or even simply *renmin* 人民 ("the people"), are substituted for *guomin* when referring to participants in the new education system. Rather than highlight each of these terms individually or translate them all to the English word "citizens," this essay

³² In this regard, *Jiaoyu zazhi* remained a reformist, rather than revolutionary publication, as the authors of the journal never openly questioned the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty (unlike the radical intellectuals who were also involved in debates over *guomin*).

³³ JYZZ 1:1, 1-3.

focuses on *guomin* in an effort to establish a certain degree of coherency within educational debates while also maintaining for English readers some of the unfamiliarity such concepts would have had for the reformers who used them.

Although reformers do not explicitly critique one another's conceptions of *guomin*, this are largely because reformers were simply not concerned with the abstract political issue of *who* might be considered *guomin* or *what* defines them as such, but rather with the practical difficulty of *how* to institute and popularize "education for *guomin*." This issue lay at the very center of debates within *Jiaoyu zazhi*, and reformers were much clearer in establishing their differences regarding how best to popularize education. Within these more explicit distinctions, one nonetheless finds important differences in the implicit assumption each author holds about what it means to be *guomin*. Some authors—most notably Zhuang Yu—stressed the fundamental importance of primary education and the need to establish strict standards by which China's political community could be molded into modern citizens. Others, such as Lu Erkui and the promoters of "Simple and Easy Literacy" (*jianyi shizi* 简易识字), advocated for the simplification of education standards so that the new school system could benefit all of those who were currently belonged to the community of Qing subjects.. Indeed, Zhuang Yu's proposals speak to the idea that *guomin* necessitated a set of behaviors that had to be learned and denoted a status to which the Chinese people did not yet measure up. On the other hand, Lu Erkui's proposals seem to presume that a large group of *guomin* already existed, and that it was merely the responsibility of the state to ensure that education was accessible and affordable to everyone within this community. Despite the contradictory notions of citizenship espoused by each reformer, one finds that the suite of new vocabulary accompanying these reform projects often contained ambiguities sufficient to elide these

differences. As we shall discover in the case of proponents of women's education, such slippery signifiers even allowed reformers to utilize several different conceptions of citizenship at once, imagining women both as one half of a community of *guomin* that already existed and as teachers of an exclusively male community of *guomin* that had yet to emerge. Because "education for *guomin*" served as the overarching goal of various reform projects, reformers were likely able to see themselves as part of a shared national project, even when their specific proposals carried wildly different assumptions about the nature of *guomin* and the Chinese nation. We will now turn to these specific proposals in more detail.

“Correcting Content at the Foundation”: Building Modern Chinese Citizens Through Primary Schooling and Physical Education

The educational goals outlined in the Qing Ministry of Education's recommendations would require restructuring China's entire education system from the bottom up. But where to begin? One answer was articulated most clearly by Zhuang Yu, who stated simply, "if we want to popularize education, then we must first resolve to popularize *primary* education."³⁴ For Zhuang, the best way to popularize primary education ventures was through regulation and normalization. Zhuang believed firmly that the success of the educational project lay in the strength of the institutions responsible for molding young students, and he wrote numerous articles explaining the proper roles and functions of local school administration, teacher-training facilities, and the need for formal Educational Associations (*jiaoyu hui* 教育会) in an attempt to establish common national standards.³⁵ By stressing the exclusive

³⁴ JYZZ 1:2, 19.

³⁵ For local school administration, see "On Local Public Funding of Education" in JYZZ 1:7, 83-96. For teacher training facilities see "On Primary Education" in JYZZ 1:2, 24-25. See also "Lun ge difang yi she jiaoyu huiyi 论各地方宜设教育会议" [Every locality should establish an Educational Association] in JYZZ 1:11, 131-135.

importance of primary education to the broader project of “education for *guomin*,” Zhuang situates *guomin* as a status that implies a set of values and activities not yet familiar to most Chinese. In a lengthy article on the topic of primary schools, Zhuang asks in reference to elementary education, “Now, education is in the process of sprouting, shouldn’t we correct the content at the foundation?”³⁶ Although Zhuang’s arguments were often couched in the shared language of “popularizing education,” his focus on primary schooling accompanied a specific set of goals that reveal key assumptions about the meaning of *guomin*.

One of Zhuang Yu’s foremost goals was the targeted abolishment of the traditional school structure, and the reduction of *sishu* in particular. Zhuang criticized the civil service examinations as being devoid of any real educational content and characterizes the *sishu* as a “malady” whose low tuition rates and “simple pedagogy” created an unfortunate trend whereby teachers were “unable to resist those students who backslide from [new, public] schools into *sishu*.”³⁷ Other articles on “The Absurdity of Reading the Classics in Primary School” reflect Zhuang Yu’s general disdain for the form and substance of traditional education.³⁸ Yet even as Zhuang held that the perpetuation of the examination system stymied efforts to establish a new educational order (and a new type of Chinese political subject), he seemed to recognize the factors that contributed to its continuing popularity. Several of his specific proposals, such as the creation of local testing centers to reward primary school students who perform well under the new curriculum, were designed

³⁶JYZZ 1:2, 23.

³⁷JYZZ 1:2, 23.

³⁸JYZZ 1:4, 58-62 and JYZZ 1:5 67-70.

specifically to replicate the reward system of the civil service examinations in an effort to woo students (and their parents) away from the *sishu*.³⁹

In simultaneously stressing the need to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional school system and appealing to the literati elite who had benefited most directly from that system, Zhuang Yu reveals several key assumptions about the role of the elite in the education system and the relationship between education and *guomin*. Although he clearly wants to expand and popularize (*puji*) education, Zhuang is especially concerned with targeting those who currently participate in the private school system, the majority of whom would have already participated to some degree in the elite society engendered by the examinations. In this sense, his efforts are not so much an expansion of the whole education system so much as they are an effort to get its current participants, the literati, to adopt a new educational structure, thereby transforming themselves into *guomin*. This line of thinking retains the notion upheld by the civil-service examinations that the literati elite formed the center of the Chinese national subject; it also assumes their participation in the new system would serve as the primary means by which new schools could broaden their appeal. In reasserting the centrality of the literate class to which he himself belonged, Zhuang furthered the paternalistic notion that new public schools were responsible for creating a conception of *guomin* primarily among the elite, who could then spread it to the masses of Qing subjects.

While Zhuang Yu's basic educational goals reveal continuities with previous social structures that focus on educational participation by elite, his favored school curriculum

³⁹ Under Zhuang's plan, local educational leaders would create a countywide test, to be held in a public space, in which all of the students from both public schools and private schools would compete, but whose content would reflect the new curricula provided by the public schools. Zhuang argued that those who performed best on the test should be given rewards in the hope that the prestige granted to the public school students would be enough to sway other families to send their children to the new school. In many ways, this system of testing and rewarding the top students was merely an imitation of the civil service examinations that Zhuang hated so much, only with fewer real material benefits for those who took the test (JYZZ 1:2, 24).

represents a subtle but profound shift away from the literary content of the examination system. Zhuang believed that “education for *guomin*” was embodied in proper moral cultivation, a curricular component that for Zhuang was clearly lacking in the current school system. In fact, from a survey of the one hundred or so primary schools in Nanjing and Jiangsu, Zhuang ultimately finds none that train moral character to his liking. He complains that the standards for students in the new educational system remain too lax and as a result, “esteemed schools are denounced by society, and sons or brothers who care about themselves refuse to enter these schools.”⁴⁰ Here we can see that Zhuang identifies moral cultivation as a necessary element for the broader success of the new education system, as well as a key expectation for the participants in that system.⁴¹

Though the goal of moral cultivation would have been familiar to the students who participated in the traditional education system, Zhuang himself contextualized moral cultivation according to fundamentally new standards that stressed practice and engagement over textual knowledge. Zhuang is actually quite vague about the ultimate purpose of moral training within the new curriculum, and only murkily intones that, should proper moral training be lacking, “can we not expect the future trouble that awaits us?”⁴² For Zhuang and his traditionally minded readers, it is almost self-evident that moral training forms the basis of the education system—a notion which complements Zhuang’s stance that schools should be difficult and challenging in order to ensure that China’s *guomin* are strong and well-

⁴⁰ JYZZ 1:2, 23.

⁴¹ There was at this time no formally enforced mandate to send one’s children to school, and many newly established schools had to compete with one another in order to attract students. This being the case, the fact that very few schools placed moral cultivation at the front of their curricula suggests that the promise of a moral education was not quite as useful in attracting students as Zhuang might think, otherwise it may have been featured more prominently by schools competing for students.

⁴² JYZZ 1:2, 22.

developed. At the same time, Zhuang condemns the overly bookish nature that would have characterized moral cultivation within the examination system, and complains that when teachers emphasize moral cultivation “following the line of the book” then “students are unable to put this into practice and forget the material as soon as it is taught to them.”⁴³ Several years later, Zhuang Yu would make his break from the traditional curriculum of Confucian classics more clear, as he established moral cultivation as part of the Pragmatic Education (*shiyong jiaoyu* 使用教育) Movement and eventually played a leading role in founding the Vocational Education (*zhiye jiaoyu* 职业教育) Movement alongside Huang Yanpei 黄炎培 (1878-1965).⁴⁴ As early as 1913, Zhuang Yu wrote an article entitled “Adopt Pragmatism,” which stressed the need to adopt moral cultivation as a subset of necessary, everyday skills for *guomin*.⁴⁵

Zhuang’s repurposing of moral cultivation from textual study to everyday practice reveals that while his reforms might, on the surface, appeal directly to those most familiar with the traditional examination-based curriculum, the emphasis on moral character as a necessary component for building new citizens reveals a strong break from that system. Indeed, it is the application of moral learning to daily practice that separates *guomin* from Qing subjects and distinguishes “education for *guomin*” from previous education systems.

⁴³ JYZZ 1:2, 22. Also, one should note that Zhuang Yu had a commercial interest in criticizing the quality of textbooks used by many local schools as he himself held a position at the Shanghai Commercial Press, which by this time was beginning to publish a wide variety of textbooks on moral cultivation, history, geography, etc., all of which claim to offer more current and “practical” information than the classical primers used to prepare for the examinations (Wang Jianjun 王建军, *Zhongguo jindai jiaokeshu fazhan yanjiu* 中国近代教科书发展研究 [Research on the development of modern Chinese textbooks] (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe) 广东教育出版社, 1996), 117).

⁴⁴ Curran, *Educational Reform in Republican China*, 365, 372-377. When taking into account his entire career as a reformer during the late Qing and early Republican period, it is clear that Zhuang identified with the moral *ends* of the traditional education system, but felt strongly that a mastery of ancient texts, poetry, and prosodic composition was an ineffective *means* of instilling such virtues in the Chinese people.

⁴⁵ JYZZ 5:7, 88.

Even if Zhuang felt that only China's literate elite was ready to become *guomin*, his conception of citizenship was ultimately based on what students did, rather than who students were. In this regard, Zhuang's use of *guomin* appears to mirror those notions of "citizenship" in Europe that stressed the importance of social and political action. Nonetheless, his continued insistence on the importance of moral cultivation reveals some of the limits of European influence on Chinese educational reformers: even though Zhuang was quick to stress the need for a modern education system modeled after those in Japan and Germany, he wanted them for the purpose of teaching a practically oriented version of Confucian morals, rather than Western science or social studies.⁴⁶ Thus, while Zhuang Yu's notion of modern *guomin* may have stressed forms of civic engagement that would have been familiar to Western readers at the time, it clearly did not embody the same notion of an individual, rational actor with specific civic knowledge as embodied in European notions of "citizenship."

One other subset of educational reform projects that closely mirrored Zhuang Yu's focus on the need to train *guomin* through regimented, regulated education was physical education reform. One of the most basic goals for the new education system was the fortification of the social body through class-based (rather than individual-based) schooling and physical education. Looking at late Qing dynasty attitudes on bodies and health, it is clear that the mainstream position of the time held that there was a fundamental cause and effect link between the existence of healthy bodies and the health of the nation-state as a

⁴⁶ Zhuang's position on this issue would change slightly over time, and in his later capacity as editor of *Jiaoyu zazhi* and a member of the Republican Department of Education, he began to place more emphasis on vocational studies and technical skills as a means of improving Chinese citizens (Curran, *Educational Reform in Republican China*, 376-377).

whole.⁴⁷ Though articles on the subject of physical education in *Jiaoyu zazhi* are themselves relatively sparse, the journal nonetheless reflects the primary position of physical education in the new school system through portraits of new school classes. When readers first opened up an issue of *Jiaoyu zazhi* they were often greeted with a series of full-page, staged photographs depicting classes of young students and “sports meets.” These class portraits showed model students, often dressed in uniform, either sitting in an orderly fashion or engaged in elaborate or physically active poses.⁴⁸ Although practical and financial limitations often ensured that each issue of the journal contained only a few such photos, they nonetheless conform to a particular vision of education reform.

In depicting classes of students in physically active poses, the photographs establish two key aspirations for the structure of the new school system and for Chinese *guomin*. First, the photos assert simply that physical education and group discipline, which played no formal role in the examination system, should be key components of modern school curricula. The priority placed on student fitness derived specifically from Liang Qichao’s promotion of the concept of “military citizenship” (*junguomin*军国民), which held that physical education could be used as a tool to literally strengthen China vis-à-vis the West and Japan, one

⁴⁷ Huang Jinlin黄金麟, *Lishi, shenti, guojia: jindai zhongguo de shenti xingcheng, 1895-1937* 历史，身体，国家：近代中国的身体形成 [History, body, nation-state: the formation of the modern Chinese body, 1895-1937] (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi联经出版事业公司, 2000), 85-88. Huang identifies Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu陈独秀 (1879-1942) and Mai Menghua麦孟华 (1875-1915) as the key intellectuals who were most critical of China’s physical health, likening it at times to the body of a slave.

⁴⁸For a typical class photo in uniform see “Suzhou yangyu xuetang Hufu luxing苏州养育学堂虎阜旅行” [A portrait of the Suzhou Daycare School’s trip to Tiger Hill] in JYZZ 1:9, for physical education see the photographs of “Shanghai Zhongguo ticao xuexiao ji xi chunji yundonghui cuoying上海中国体操学校己西春季运动会摄影” [A portrait of the Shanghai Chinese Gymnastics School’s spring sports meet] in JYZZ 1:6.

militarized citizen at a time.⁴⁹ Second, the photos established the public-school peer group, or class of students (*ban*班), as the fundamental unit of education. This shift away from the individual as an educational unit marks a key departure from the *sishu* and other institutions within the traditional school system.⁵⁰ More broadly, it highlights the increasing role of extra-familial, “public” activity within “education for *guomin*.” These goals also point to the ways by which physical education marked a reorganization of time within the school day, whereby the flexibility and diversity of the *sishu* system was replaced by strictly regulated classroom activities which remained consistent among many different public schools.⁵¹ The class photos adorning the opening pages of *Jiaoyu zazhi*’s earliest publications, then, more or less embody Zhuang Yu’s focus on institutional reform and practiced discipline as the best means of training Chinese students to become *guomin*.

The most striking similarity between the photographs of model physical education programs and Zhaung’s primary school reforms is their shared emphasis on children as the most important participants within “education for *guomin*.” For someone like Zhuang, who held that citizenship entailed a set of behaviors that were not yet practiced, the education of children represented the best hope for China’s future. The photographs of sports meets and other model school classes also present students of primary-school age. Although there are

⁴⁹ Liang Qichao played a very prominent role in pushing for the adoption of physical education, most notably through various editorials published in the reform journal *Xinmin shuo*新民说, from 1902 to 1905 (Huang Jinlin, *Lishi, Shenti, Guojia*, 19-20).

⁵⁰ This effort to establish the “class” as the center of school systems, as well as institutional efforts to establish rigidity and control over that system were part of a larger suite of assumptions regarding the structure of modern school systems (Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China*, 30-37).

⁵¹ Most private schools met for instruction in the mornings and gave students the afternoon off, never incorporating any physical activity directly into the curriculum. The movement to create a standardized public school system went hand in hand with longer school days that could more closely regulate how students spent their time, with physical education representing the forefront of new means of discipline and organization (Huang Jinlin, *Lishi, Shenti, Guojia*, 176, 184-185).

often adults in the photographs at the front of each issue, they are typically of teachers, with distinct and separate roles within the educational sphere.⁵² Whereas even the youngest students represent ideals of “military citizenship” and project the future strength of the nation by wearing Western style military hats, their teachers continue to wear traditional clothing.⁵³ When older students appear in the journal, they are more likely to be wearing non-Western forms of dress than younger students whose photos appear in the same issue, and as such appear farther removed from the Western-derived ideals of citizenship that informed notions of *guomin*, and specifically *junguomin*.⁵⁴

In terms of the participants in “education for *guomin*,” Zhuang Yu’s primary school proposals and the photographs of sports meets also share a focus on the relatively affluent. In Zhuang’s case, the nominal focus on moral education, combined with the concentrated efforts to address students of *sishu*, indicates an effort to reach out to relatively affluent members of society. As many contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi* are quick to point out, the modern schools themselves, while considered “public” by virtue of the fact that they were conducted outside of the home and conformed to certain curricular standards dictated by the central government, often charged exceedingly high tuition rates, such that only the most wealthy families could afford to send their children there.⁵⁵ The schools shown in photographs (as

⁵² An adult plays a piano and sits apart from a class of young students in military poses in “Nanjing diyi mofan xiaoxue yundong hui南京第一模范小学运动会” [A portrait of Nanjing’s First Model Elementary School sports meet] In JYZZ 1:4.

⁵³ “Shanghai gongli youzhi she上海公立幼稚舍” [A portrait of the Shanghai Public Youth Academy] in JYZZ 1:1

⁵⁴ JYZZ 1:1. The first issue is a good example of this phenomenon, in which a class of middle school graduates appears dressed in traditional scholarly robes while an elementary class of very young children appear on the next page in military uniform.

⁵⁵ Zhuang Yu himself was not ignorant of this issue. He often acknowledged the financial inaccessibility of the new schools, even as he proposed regulations that inevitably drove up tuition prices. He called on the Qing

well as those few praised by Zhuang Yu) are exactly this kind of new “public” school. The photographed schools are often located in Suzhou, Nanjing, and other wealthy urban areas; the quality of their facilities reflects the typically high tuition rates they charged for admission.

Thus, while increased emphasis on primary schooling and physical education were often presented as specific strategies within the larger context of spreading “education for *guomin*,” these strategies assumed specific boundaries regarding who could be considered *guomin* and how they became one. Fundamentally, proposals in *Jiaoyu zazhi* for physical education and primary school reform reflect the assumption that Chinese *guomin* did not yet exist and thus must be created through education. To the degree that the Qing government was involved in conferring the status of *guomin* onto its subjects, they did so by promoting the educational system, which in turn produced the characteristics of *guomin*, most notably physical and moral fitness. These standards of fitness were crafted from a combination of Chinese and Western values, and, for the time being, they were deemed by Zhuang Yu and others as being accessible only to a small portion of the population: the children of the same affluent social class that had participated most fully in the former education system.

After the fall of the Qing in 1911, Zhuang himself would continue to play a prominent role in the Republican Department of Education, wielding greater control over China’s expanded (albeit still limited) educational infrastructure. Although Zhuang’s own views regarding the proper contents of education gradually shifted away from moral issues to embrace more straightforwardly vocational ones, his belief that it was the responsibility of uniform curricular content to transform the people into *guomin* remained the orthodoxy

central government to send more money on local schools and alleviate the financial burden on local governments and new school students, often to no avail. See, for example, JYZZ 1:2, 21.

throughout the early Republican period.⁵⁶ In some ways, this essential relationship between state and society established in *Jiaoyu zazhi* is similar to the Guomindang's emphasis in the late 1920s on the role of the party in providing the tutelage necessary for Chinese people to become modern citizens.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, while Zhuang Yu's notion of a Chinese nation under construction may have prefigured the vernacular language movement of the May Fourth Period as well as the party discipline of the Nationalist revolution in the late 1920s, it was not the only vision of Chinese citizenship present within the pages of *Jiaoyu zazhi*'s earliest editions.

“Waving the Banner of Simple and Easy”: Literacy and Populist Conceptions of Citizenship

With regards to issues of curricular difficulty and educational standards, Lu Erkui presents a stark contrast to Zhuang Yu. Lu argues that when it comes to educational content, “if you try to popularize education by first increasing its level [of difficulty, sophistication, etc], then this plan will be stifled.” When speaking of the struggling people that make up the majority of the population, Lu refers specifically to them as “fellow countrymen (*tong guoren* 同国人)” and wonders “are we really going to burden them by requiring that they receive five or six years of education?”⁵⁸ Later on, Lu states more passionately, “I wish to

⁵⁶ For the best overview of Republican efforts to instill modes of citizenship through education, see Culp, *Articulating Citizenship*, 163-208.

⁵⁷ For a fuller explanation of the developing relationship between state and society within the Chinese nationalist movement, see Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*. Fitzgerald notes that the early Republican period saw the continued development of the belief that citizenship needed to be “taught” (pp.117-118), and that the nation itself came to represent an ever narrowing political subject whose existence relied on the (moral, political, and educational) leadership of the Guomindang party apparatus (p.235, pp. 274-275).

⁵⁸ JYZZ 1:5, 63-64. To clarify, Lu is not arguing that education itself is burdensome, only that five or six years is too long of a time period for most Qing subjects.

uncover the banner of ‘simple and easy!’” and indeed it was precisely this easy, accessible curriculum that lay at the heart of reforms like Lu’s, the chief concern of which was broadening the number of participants in the education system, specifically with regards to literacy.⁵⁹ Lu’s article on “Simple and Easy Literacy” is followed by a postscript, likely written by then editor-in-chief Lu Feigui 陆费逵 (1886-1941), which states that reformers should go even further in simplifying education, teaching only a few hundred of the most useful characters in order to appeal to the broadest possible audience.⁶⁰ For Lu Erkui and Lu Feigui, the existence of “education for *guomin*” was clearly not dependent upon the quality of educational content. Furthermore, the purpose of education was not to train the Chinese people to become a community of *guomin* through educational ventures. For them, the community of Chinese *guomin* was in fact already established by the Qing constitution, and it was simply their responsibility (and that of the government) to extend literacy to their “fellow countrymen,” even if that meant lowering the “level” of education provided.

One key goal of those reformers who argued for a simpler curriculum was the expansion of literacy. Like the abandonment of the *sishu*, literacy was seen as both a utilitarian end in itself and a necessity for the success of further education reforms. The promotion of universal literacy, although in many ways an unattainable benchmark, was nonetheless depicted as central to national wellbeing and the standard by which “education for *guomin*” could be judged. In an article simply titled “On Literacy,” *Jiaoyu zazhi* contributor Dai Kedun 戴克敦 invoked a fundamental relationship between education and national security, opening with the question, “Where does a nation’s strength come from?”

⁵⁹ Ibid, 66.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 67.

For him, literacy was clearly the answer.⁶¹ In addressing the textual nature of the 1906 Constitution as the basis for Qing law, Lu Erkui claimed directly “literacy is a prerequisite for the constitutional government and an obligation that the people (*renmin*) should fulfill.”⁶² Several reformers also saw literacy in a standardized vernacular language, as opposed to the literary language mastered only by the elites, as one of the primary means by which to achieve a sense of national unity across broad geographic space. Jiang Weiqiao 蒋维乔 (1873-1958), the head of the school textbook department of the Shanghai Commercial Press, wrote a series of articles advocating that “the national language” (*guowen* 国文), not Classical language (*wenyan* 文言), be made the primary language for textbook instruction in all schools.⁶³

Although there were reformers like Jiang who sought specifically to move away from classical texts, the focus on literacy as a central goal of education places such efforts much closer to the spirit of the civil-service examination than other reform projects in *Jiaoyu zazhi*. Lu Erkui himself points out the basic continuity between the traditional school system and current educational projects, noting that aside from having an opportunity to sit for the imperial examinations, literacy was the main goal for students entering traditional schools.⁶⁴

⁶¹ JYZZ 1:2, 26.

⁶² JYZZ 1:5, 66.

⁶³ JYZZ 1:3, 37-40. As head of the school textbook department at the Shanghai Commercial Press, Jiang Weiqiao also had a vested interest in producing new sets of textbooks to be distributed to schools (Bailey, *Reform the People*, 67). Jiang would later serve in the 1912 Ministry of Education and played a key role in the production of modern, vernacular textbooks that “disseminated, standardized, and legitimated a modern, compound lexicon” that increased national unity while making textbooks more accessible to the masses (Robert Culp, “Teaching Baihua: Textbook Publishing and the Production of Vernacular Language and a New Literary Canon in Early Twentieth-Century China,” *Twentieth-Century China* 43.1 (2008), 4-41).

⁶⁴ JYZZ 1:5, 65. An article by Gao Fengqian 高凤谦 (1869-1936), “Lun baocun guocui 论保存国粹” [Preserving national essence] similarly stresses the important role of language and literacy to preserving national essence.

When Lu later distinguishes between the old and new school systems by stating, “the education system of the past extended education to men of talent; today’s basic literacy training extends education to the people,” Lu is clearly proposing that a change in the scope and mechanism—rather than the basic function—of education is what marks it as “education for *guomin*.”⁶⁵ In the first issue of the journal, Lu Erkui addresses the widespread lack of literacy by proposing that popular education (*puji jiaoyu*) would be best served through a massive public lecturing campaign, which could target large groups of the still mostly illiterate population.⁶⁶ Although Lu is very committed to spreading these more accessible forms of education, he does not specify what the contents of such lectures might be, further demonstrating the point that for Lu, the new education system would be marked by new mediums and new participants, rather than fundamentally new content.

Indeed, with regard to new methods of instruction, we see among those reformers who operated under the banner of “simple and easy” a strong shift away from educational quality towards efforts designed to increase the quantity of those engaged in the education system. Whereas Zhuang Yu focused extensively on establishing institutional standards for the new public school students and teachers, supporters of “simple and easy” education called for the creation of night schools, Literacy Training Centers, and other flexible education opportunities.⁶⁷ Lu Erkui’s promotion of public lecturing can in this sense be seen

With regard to education, Gao argues that neologisms and the like can in fact be used to help educational projects promoting (a pre-existing) national essence (JYZZ 1:7, 79-82).

⁶⁵ JYZZ 1:5, 68.

⁶⁶ “Lun puji jiaoyu yi xian zhuzong xuanjiang 论普及教育宜先注重宣讲” [Popular education should focus first on public lecturing] in JYZZ 1:1, 4.

⁶⁷ In a later issue of the journal, reformer Zhou Jiachun 周家纯 argues that Night Schools in particular are vitally important to the nation (*guojia*) because it grants opportunities to those otherwise denied an education. Again, this reflects a change in educational participants rather than curricular content. (JYZZ 1:11, 139).

as an important step in revolutionizing the implementation of public education. Lu notes that Lecture Halls (*xuanjiang suo* 宣讲所) are often cheaper and easier to staff than a traditional school, but have “ten times” the influence, and not just among school-age children.⁶⁸ Again, this conception of “education for *guomin*” is defined not by the specific curricular content or standards of behavior to which *guomin* should be held, but rather by the degree to which the educational system expands to include more people overall.

Thus, unlike the reforms targeting students of *sishu* and other remnants of the traditional education system, advocates of expanding literacy, public lecturing, and “simple and easy” education addressed a much broader population. In simply recognizing a widespread lack of literacy as a fundamental problem for Chinese education, these reformers acknowledged many structural educational inequalities that those pushing for physical education and stricter curricula did not. While the anti-*sishu* programs hoped to redefine the content of “education for *guomin*” for elite society, literacy initiatives sought to truly extend education to a redefined collective of *guomin*—a group whose contents were not determined by their educational achievements, but rather whose qualifications were presumed to derive directly from their status as Qing subjects. This group of *guomin*, more broadly defined, includes adults and lower classes, and Lu Erkui and Lu Feigui address both when advocating for “simple and easy” literacy programs. Lu Erkui repeatedly mentions these lower classes by name, lamenting that “farmers, workers, and merchants were left out of the traditional education system” and asks, “will the ignorant masses in the countryside, the errand boys, and menial servants be counted as part of the country?”⁶⁹ When farmers appear in an article

⁶⁸ JYZZ 1:1, 4.

⁶⁹ JYZZ 1:1, 2 and JYZZ 1:5, 64.

by Zhuang Yu, they do so as objects of mockery from unruly school students, and they remain firmly outside the educational sphere.⁷⁰ Lu's efforts to promote public lecturing, along with similar support for Night Schools and other non-traditional schooling, establishes specific steps to make education more accessible to adults—after all, “popularizing education means spreading it to the people of the entire country, not just those who are of school age.”⁷¹ Although Lu ultimately does not invoke the idea of *guomin* any more or less than the various other contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi*, he consistently defines the term in ways that challenge other reformers to support projects that expand the total number of educated people, regardless of age or status.

In sum, we can say that while all of the contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi* wanted to extend education radically beyond the system constructed under the civil-service examinations, framing their arguments in the shared language of *guomin* and *puji jiaoyu*, there remained crucial differences in the national visions implied by these reforms. For Zhuang Yu and the proponents of strict new educational guidelines, the value and strength of Chinese society lay in the government's ability to “correct the content at the foundation” and transform the people into *guomin* through the new primary school system, through physical education, and through standardization of curricula. Meanwhile, Lu Erkui and the proponents of “simple and easy” education held the Chinese nation itself to be self-evident, and argued forcefully that it was the responsibility of the government to educate all of the people, specifically those fellow countrymen who were left out of the examination system, including farmers and laborers of all ages. Though it might initially appear surprising that this more revolutionary and inclusive conception of citizenship is wedded to a curricular focus on

⁷⁰ JYZZ 1:2, 22.

⁷¹ JYZZ 1:1, 1.

literacy reminiscent of the civil-service examination, Lu's promotion of more traditional curricular content merely reflects his basic beliefs about *guomin* itself. Rather than transform China into something new through revised educational content, those who waved the banner of "simple and easy" sought merely to more fully incorporate all of China's citizens into the political community previously represented only by the gentry elite. Even though Zhuang Yu's conception of the nation as "only just sprouting" would come to dominate official education policy during the Republican period, one can still find artifacts of Lu Erkui's inclusive vision in the form of late Qing literacy dictionaries and the earliest mass-produced textbooks, both of which sought to give a broader audience access to pre-existing cultural knowledge.⁷²

Women as Citizens and Teachers of Citizens: Discursive Discontinuities and Gendered Conceptions of Citizenship

We have seen thus far that the reform programs proposed by contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi* often targeted different participants and emphasized different goals within the new education system. From these differences we have seen that reformers writing in late Qing China's leading educational journal often espoused radically different conceptions of *guomin*. Despite these key differences, it would be a mistake to assume that the reformers themselves identified with or even recognized these divisions. Though reforms that stress physical education or moral cultivation might strike the current reader as "conservative" or "elitist" because they target only those already participating in the traditional school system, all of the

⁷² Many of the earliest mass-produced textbooks were simply dictionaries and verbal primers designed to make classical texts more accessible to a broader audience. Zhong Tianwei, who worked as a translator and editor in Shanghai, published one such dictionary in 1896 (*Ziyi jiaokeshu* 字义教科书). Zhong's textbooks liberally employed vernacular vocabulary and speech patterns in order to explain the meanings and uses of various characters, thus keeping literacy as the goal of popular education, while transforming the methods of education in order to make this goal as accessible as possible (Wang Jianjun, *Zhongguo jindai jiaokeshu fazhan yanjiu* 96-98).

reforms proposed in *Jiaoyu zazhi* were constitutive of a radical shift away from the political community sustained by the imperial examination system. Furthermore, all of the reformers were able to claim that the central goal of the new education system was to popularize education and establish education intended for citizens. Precisely because terms like *guomin* and *puji jiaoyu* were new signifiers for concepts that had yet to be firmly established, these neologisms themselves were able to elide or otherwise obscure many of the key differences present among reformers. To illustrate the degree to which *guomin* was sufficiently ambiguous as to contain multiple competing notions of citizenship, we turn to a subject ignored by both Zhuang Yu and Lu Erkui: women's education.

Previous Qing law forbade women from participating in the civil-service examinations, and thus the establishment of several government-run girls' schools in the late 1890s represented a de facto expansion of those able to participate in education.⁷³ Despite tentative steps to incorporate women into the educational system—particularly following the promulgation of regulations for women's schools by the Qing government in 1907—women still remained largely absent from elite discourse on education.⁷⁴ Although *Jiaoyu zazhi* occasionally featured photographs of girls' school classes to go along with the male dominated sports meets, women were consistently left out of the textual discussion of many reformers. When Zhuang Yu refers to the younger generation on whom he pins his own

⁷³ Du Xueyuan 杜学元, *Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu tongshi* 中国女子教育通史 [A comprehensive history of Chinese Women's Education] (Guiyang Shi: Guizhou jiaoyu chubanshe 贵州教育出版社, 1995), 308-309.

⁷⁴ In the original Zuoding Educational Regulations (drafted by Zhang Zhidong) established in 1903, there was no specific mention of women's education. A special section on the regulation of girls' schools was added to the Qing educational regulations in 1907, though it was still focused almost entirely on normal schools that trained women to become teachers both in and outside the home (Su Yunfeng, *Zhongguo xin jiaoyu*, 99). Still, 1907 was the year in which the Qing Ministry of Education formally integrated women's education into the rest of the education track and began to take control over locally run women's schools to enforce new curriculum standards as they had done for men several years earlier (Du Xueyuan, *Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu tongshi*, 338).

hopes for the future of the Chinese nation, he consistently uses the term *zidi* 子弟, literally meaning “sons and younger brothers.”⁷⁵ While one cannot take the usage of this common word to be a conscious decision to establish men as the exclusive participants in the new education system, it is nonetheless casually and linguistically exclusive of women, and this gendered appellation is supported by an absence of women elsewhere in Zhuang’s writing. Even though Lu Erkui mentions the “wives and children (*nu* 孥)” of servants and messengers as objects of previous educational discrimination, he similarly does not give women an independent status as participants in “simple and easy” education.⁷⁶

To the degree that women’s schools continued to grow during the first decade of the twentieth century, the nature and content of their education was still geared towards pedagogical training designed to help women become better educators for their (male) children. This focus on pedagogical training situated women as both students and teachers within the education system, each role carrying with it a competing implication for women’s role in China’s nationalist project. Joan Judge has fruitfully presented this question in the very same terms so central to educational discourse in *Jiaoyu zazhi*: were women to be citizens, or merely mothers (and teachers) of citizens?⁷⁷ Indeed, these two fundamental categories reflect the basic difference in visions of *guomin* offered by Lu Erkui and Zhuang

⁷⁵ This usage of *zidi* can be found throughout Zhuang’s article on primary education JYZZ 1:2, 19-26.

⁷⁶ JYZZ 1:5, 64.

⁷⁷ Joan Judge, “Citizens or Mothers of Citizens?: Gender and the Meaning of Modern Chinese Citizenship” in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, ed. Merle Goldman and Elizabeth Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 23-43.

Yu—the former as a natural status for Qing subjects and the latter as a set of behaviors that must be taught.⁷⁸

The sixth issue of *Jiaoyu zazhi* contains an article by Shen Yi 沈頤 on women's education, which criticizes the lack of attention paid to this issue by other reformers in the journal. While other contributors argued over the merits of moral cultivation or basic literacy, Shen Yi noted that, “[w]hile today we allow the entire nation's men to receive an education, both the knowledge *and* moral character of women has not been raised from what it was before.”⁷⁹ Indeed the very fact that there was an article specifically addressing “Girls' Elementary Education” indicates that the new education system generically conceived did not inherently include women, and to some extent, the authors and editors of *Jiaoyu zazhi* regarded the issue as somewhat separate from other educational reforms. Because women could represent an expansion of the participants targeted by “education for *guomin*” as well as a pedagogical tool by which the future generation of Chinese people might become modern citizens, women's education forms an important arena in which differing visions of citizenship rested uneasily alongside one another. While we have seen how a shared discourse on *guomin* obscured the conflicts between different articles and authors in *Jiaoyu zazhi*, Shen's discussion of girls' elementary education allows us to explore how such neologisms obscure internal contradictions as well.

⁷⁸ Feminist historians and political scientists have been at the forefront of developing better theoretical frameworks for discussing citizenship and its gendered dimensions. For useful explorations of the differences between citizenship as a status and practice/experience (with a particular focus on the place of women), see Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (1997. Reprint, Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2003) and Linda Kerber, “The Meanings of Citizenship,” in *The Journal of American History* 84.3 (Dec. 1997): 833-854.

⁷⁹ JYZZ 1:6, 71. Emphasis mine.

In justifying why women's education is important Shen tellingly argues that, "Within a nation (*guo*), men and women each form half of the population, and are similarly represented in among the census registration of the countryside."⁸⁰ In this sense he is employing the same rhetorical strategy as Lu Erkui, and takes a similar view of *guomin* as including all of those who are registered by the state, assuming that women's citizenship, like the community of Chinese *guomin* more generally, is self-evident. In fact, by the final years of the Qing state this conceptualization of women's citizenship was not entirely new. In the years following the Sino-Japanese War, female reporter Lu Cui 卢翠 argued that women should be allowed to participate in the civil-service examinations so that they might be able to submit memorials to the emperor and participate in government. Although this argument does not specifically invoke *guomin*, it fundamentally links women's participation in education with a broader assertion about women's political participation. Furthermore, Lu Cui's justification that "women are also called 'the people'" prefigures Shen Yi's own claims about women's inclusion as *guomin*.⁸¹ From this context it would follow that women of all ages should be able to participate in "education for *guomin*" on the grounds that they are also subjects of the Qing empire, and that the new education system has a responsibility to extend education rights to them just as it has to the farmers and workers highlighted by Lu Erkui. Shen complains that as long as the new education system only focuses on men's education

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Du Xueyuan, *Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu tongshi*, 305. Lu Cui's full quote is, "皆得上书,夫民也者,男谓之民,女亦谓之民也 [All should submit memorials to the emperor, and [all] are the people; men are called 'the people;' women are also called 'the people,']" Also like Shen Yi, Lu Cui drew inspiration from overseas policies towards women's education, specifically Japan's. Significantly, the Japanese women's schools and co-ed schools that Shen Yi admires are not exclusively pedagogical training institutions, reinforcing Shen's belief that women should be incorporated into education not just as teachers of boys, but as students themselves.

and “lets [women] rely on vulgarities, [believing that] their forte lies in being ignorant” then there will be no way for Chinese society to advance.⁸²

Despite using an inclusive definition of *guomin* to justify the need for women’s education in its opening lines, the article quickly reverts to standard images of women as mothers and wives of citizens rather than as citizens themselves. When Shen Yi outlines the effects of women being denied an education, he claims, “This has a direct effect on the family, and an indirect effect on society.”⁸³ The conclusion of the article makes the point more explicit: “Today’s young girls will someday all become someone’s wife and someone’s mother. If we want them to influence society and pass on customs, then we must popularize education.”⁸⁴ In elaborating on this claim, Shen argues that women are important to the educational system precisely because early childhood education, which takes places in the home, is a determining factor in the success of future (presumably male) school students.⁸⁵ Ultimately, the article’s focus on women’s education primarily in the context of elementary schools and normal schools mirrors the Qing Ministry of Education’s focus on women as instructors of children, both inside and outside the home.⁸⁶

This conception of women seemingly deems them important to the nationalist project only insofar as they contribute to the strengthening of educational achievement among the male population. This notion of *guomin*, whereby the Qing’s male subjects are to be

⁸² JYZZ 1:6, 72-73.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁶ Shen Yi’s article specifically requests increased government funding for the establishment of women’s normal schools (*nüzi shifan* 女子师范), which were at this time a central feature of the Qing government’s efforts to expand women’s education. Historian Du Xueyuan heavily criticizes this focus on women’s roles in “assisting their husbands and educating their children” as representing the continuing patriarchal nature of the early Republican education system (Du Xueyuan, *Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu tongshi*, 346).

measured by the quality of their female-led instruction, suggests the notion of emergent citizenship espoused by Zhuang Yu. Because the burden of transforming Qing subjects into modern *guomin* rested with the contents of education itself, Zhuang Yu placed particular emphasis on pedagogical instruction, and Shen Yi's focus on this topic seems to confirm the basic notion that women have a role to play in creating *guomin* rather than being (or becoming) *guomin* themselves. That a single article can simultaneously define new types of students in such remarkably different ways—both as representatives of a pre-existing body of *guomin* and as essential tools for constructing a community of *guomin* that does not yet exist—speaks to the way by which concepts like *guomin*, “the people,” and *puji jiaoyu* came to define many different conceptions of citizenship all at once.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUCCESS AND POPULARITY OF EDUCATION REFORMS

Before offering a final consideration of the various notions of citizenship put forth by the contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi*, we should examine briefly the effectiveness of the modern education system in 1909, and perhaps the degree to which these understandings of *guomin* were shared by “the people” themselves. A consideration of the state of education in 1909, at least according to the description provided by Zhuang Yu, Lu Erkui and others, reveals that “popular education” in the form of new, public schools with a Western-oriented curriculum and a broad student base was in actuality not very popular at all.

There were of course many practical obstacles to implementing a modern education system, which had only been legally established three years prior. Foremost among these was the cost of education, as even Zhuang Yu noted that tuition rates for new schools were often out of reach for most families who preferred to send their children to the cheaper, less regulated *sishu*.⁸⁷ Unlike the traditional *sishu*, which were often located in the home, the new system often required new buildings, facilities, and teaching materials that forced local governments to draw money away from religious processions, festivals, and the like in order

⁸⁷ JYZZ 1:2, 21. As Zhuang Yu explains, the Qing Department of Education actually established a fixed tuition rate of a modest number of jiao per month for lower and senior primary schools. However, these tuition rates were not enough to sustain the expensive new facilities, and the Qing government made no effort to supplement the schools with additional funds. Zhuang thus sees the problem as a larger administrative one, in which schools are structurally underfunded and are thus forced to charge high tuition rates.

to properly fund new schools. Local governments were often forced to take the unpopular step of appropriating temples and other public structures in order to house the new schools necessitated by the Qing regulations.⁸⁸ Moreover, there was not a functioning universal school registration system. Reformers continually criticized the Qing education regulations as being “a law that proscribes an obligation which the people are unable to fulfill.”⁸⁹ Other government aspirations, such as the goal that literacy would increase five-fold within nine years of the new regulations, seemed hopelessly out of reach given the current school infrastructure.

In addition to these practical concerns, there were also many deeper sociocultural obstacles, which have often been ignored both by historians of the late Qing education system and by the reformers themselves. Zhuang Yu captures the mood when he says, “The likes of those who are resistant to change claim that the [old-style] civil service examination will soon be reinstated, and that it is much more expedient to enroll in the *sishu* than to deal with the diverse and demanding content of Western-style schools.”⁹⁰ Indeed, the aura and prestige associated with a mastery of the content of the civil service examinations had not disappeared for a substantial portion of the population, and the thought of sending one’s children to a public school building to learn an unfamiliar curriculum with strangers was

⁸⁸ Ibid. In his own budget proposals, Zhuang Yu suggests that the scope of education reform exceeds even these funds and that if the government were truly serious about education, it would use revenue from sales and income taxes to fund the new schools. There had been a tradition of housing classrooms in the spare rooms of temples, but the Qing regulations forced many temples to be converted to schools on a broader scale than before (Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China*, 93-100).

⁸⁹ JYZZ 1:5, 64.

⁹⁰ JYZZ 1:2 24.

simply not appealing to many parents in the late Qing.⁹¹ While some reformers suggested implementing rewards in order to make public education more appealing for students and families, they were ultimately unable to replicate the reward structure of the examination system. A comfortable government job and social prestige had served as goals for participants in the examination system, but the new school system offered no such guarantee. No wonder then, that so many of “those who are resistant to change” held out hope that the civil-service examinations might return.⁹² The appropriation of religious buildings and festival funding for the support of the new schools also proved extremely unpopular and in some cases sparked active resistance and even school-directed violence within peasant communities.⁹³ “Education for *guomin*,” whether designed as a form of civic training or as a right of the people, was simply not relevant to most Chinese.

Although the reformers were optimistic that popular literacy, physical fitness, and moral cultivation might help engender a feeling of national identity and civic engagement among the newly specified *guomin*, these educational programs were still largely nonexistent.⁹⁴ If we examine attitudes toward the people, most reformers still thought of the “masses” as ignorant and uncultured. Those signs of common cultural knowledge which the

⁹¹ For a series of very interesting accounts of what it was like to attend a public school for the first time, as remembered by some of the foremost intellectuals of the Republican period, see Tzi-ki Hon and Robert J. Culp, ed, *The Politics of Historical Production*, 1-3. Although this sample represents a diversity of opinions, it is clear that many found the schools to be a frightening and bewildering place.

⁹² JYZZ 1:2, 24.

⁹³ For examples of local resistance to the new schools, including a print of peasants actually ransacking one of the new school buildings, see Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China*, 100-103. The reformers themselves seemed largely dismissive of religious practice, which they saw as having no place in the new school system. (See “*Jiaoyu yu zongjiao bu ke hun er wei yi*教育与宗教不可混而为一” [Education and religion cannot be mixed together] in JYZZ 1:10, 117-120.)

⁹⁴ Taking physical fitness education as an example, Huang Jinlin has shown that comprehensive physical education reform did not really take place on a wide scale until the Guomindang assumed control over the national government in the late 1920s (Huang Jinlin, *Lishi, shenti, guojia*, 86).

masses do exhibit, such as being able to recite certain widely known classical verses, are often dismissed specifically because otherwise ignorant peasants are able to produce them.⁹⁵ Even Lu Erkui and Lu Feigui, who focused much more directly on training and educating the lower classes, were not optimistic about their prospects for education, as evidenced by Lu Feigui's comment that "their minds have already been ignorant for a long time...[and] they could not bear to learn the exaggerated goal of [Lu Erkui's "simple and easy" literacy]." ⁹⁶ Although many educational issues were obviously considered relevant to the broad mass of people, none of the articles in the journal were actually written in a vernacular style that would have been accessible to a mass readership. Thus, while the reformers continually spoke of a community of *guomin* to which they themselves belonged, it is clear even for Lu Erkui that the ignorant masses remain largely separate from this discussion.⁹⁷

Certainly, there were some immediate successes in the fields of higher education in adopting a more modern curriculum. In their general agreement about the value of Western-style learning, their emulation of foreign models, and their references to rapidly spreading Educational Societies and Learning Halls (*quanxue suo* 劝学所), the reformers demonstrate that the desire for a new school system had spread rapidly among many former examination

⁹⁵ JYZZ 1:2, 23. Zhuang Yu denigrates the content of the civil service examinations by claiming that you could "gather six or seven ignorant children who could recite the basics of the Classics [lit. *The Thousand-Character Classic* and *The Book of Family Names*]."

⁹⁶ JYZZ 1:5, 67.

⁹⁷ While reforms sponsored by Lu Erkui attempted to spread education to more people than ever before, "students" as a social category in the first decade of the twentieth century constituted a limited social group that existed between the intellectual class and the masses, rather than as a subset of the masses themselves. Though they would play an important role in spreading reformist and revolutionary ideas to a broader audience, their education continued to separate them from the majority of people in rural areas well into the twentieth century (Sang Bing 桑兵, *Wan Qing xuetao xuesheng yu shehui bianqian* 晚清学堂学生与社会变迁 [Late Qing modern school students and social change] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe 广西师范大学出版社, 2007), 381).

candidates. Although mostly confined to Shanghai, Nanjing, and other urban centers, *Jiaoyu zazhi* consistently retained a sustainable readership in these areas and showcased many of the new, modern schools within its pages. Although the overall number of public school graduates remained quite small, these students were often politically active and played key roles as transmitters of revolutionary ideology and as principle agents of social change.⁹⁸ In this sense, assertions by Liang Qichao and Zhuang Yu that Chinese must adopt an active form of citizenship were not entirely hopeless. Indeed, the moderate successes of the educational reform movement, such as the development of teacher training facilities that produced instructors capable of teaching the new curriculum, were quite remarkable given the context of the traditional examination system's collapse.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, even these teachers often found that there were few schools or students to which they could lend their services, and the actual "countrywide" impact of these projects remained disappointingly small when measured against the intentions of the reformers. Thus, the conflicting attitudes about *guomin* shared by contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi* were joined by other much more common attitudes among the broader public—apathy and opposition.

⁹⁸ The absence of effective forms of mass media in the late Qing heightened the importance of students, who were often the first to see and hear new dramas, attend revolutionary lectures and speeches, and pass this information on to their friends and family. Sang Bing has shown that previous accounts, which position the May Fourth Movement as the first instance of student activism, often overlook the decisive role played by student activist groups nearly a decade earlier (Sang Bing, *Wan Qing xuetao xuesheng*, 376-378, 392).

⁹⁹JYZZ 1:2, 24-25.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP ON THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

Upon examination of the first year of *Jiaoyu zazhi* publication, it is clear that the contributors and the professional educational community as a whole represented a diversity of opinions about how best to “educate *guomin*.” Many of these differences were often subsumed under the shared banner of “popularizing education,” a goal whose various meanings were not fixed and thus could be used to represent competing educational projects while simultaneously masking their differences. Although the educational reform movement has previously been depicted as a debate between urban reformers and reluctant rural students or between moderate professional educators and radical political leaders, we have seen that there was often debate within education reform groups themselves.¹⁰⁰ Many of these internal debates boil down to competing notions of *guomin*. In identifying the most fundamental aspects of the new education system, reformers expressed such varying goals as increased physical and moral fitness, broader literacy, and the development of women’s normal schools. Although these projects are not necessarily mutually exclusive, each necessitated a specific type of content and implementation, whether that be a more stringent focus on school standards, a more accessible level of student texts, or the abandonment of

¹⁰⁰ Again, I refer here to the studies by Borthwick and Bastid, which discuss the failure of education reforms to have any real impact outside of urban areas, and those by Bailey, who depicts professional educators as one group within a broader debate about the structure of education in late Qing China.

texts altogether in favor of public lecturing. These various types of educational content ultimately targeted overlapping but different groups of *guomin*, including literate elites who had been left behind by the abolishment of the examinations or, alternatively, those who had never been part of the traditional school system in the first place, such as farmers, workers, and women.

Thus while all of the reformers spoke of the necessity of education for the “entire country,” the category of *guomin* ultimately came to embody many different groups and meanings. Ultimately, the same diversity among the ideas of citizenship expressed in late Qing radical newspapers and presented in school textbooks is also reflected in late Qing educational reform projects. Whereas the advocates of fixed regulations, physical education, and primary schools ultimately envisioned a nation-state that could only be established after the proper development of its people into modern *guomin*, the proponents of “simple and easy” literacy envisioned a community of *guomin* that was truly self-evident, and required education only to be more accessible and to fulfill the government’s obligation to its citizens.

To whatever extent shared visions of *guomin* did exist in the imaginations of late Qing reformers, whether it was enacted or merely strengthened through education, the lack of participation in the new education system on the part of the people indicates that this vision of *guomin* was likely not shared by many outside of the reform community. Within the discourse produced by contributors to *Jiaoyu zazhi*, it is difficult to know the nature and extent of the failure to reform, and indeed a fuller account of competing ideas of *guomin* as they appear in local school histories, diaries, and other sources is deserving of further study. Even from the reporting done by the reformers themselves, we know that many so-called citizens were, at best, indifferent to the community of *guomin* embodied by the modern

education system and, at worst, actively resistant to what they saw as foreign, irrelevant, or destructive. One cannot really blame the reformers, as Borthwick and Bastid have done, for failing to adequately take advantage of the traditional education system, for many of the educational goals of *guomin jiaoyu* simply could not have been served by the old system of small, family-based, private schools. At the same time, given the widespread failure of the reforms and the fundamental disagreements among *Jiaoyu zazhi*'s contributors about how best to proceed, this was clearly a time in which a national community of citizens had not yet taken shape on a discursive or social level.

Notions of citizenship within Republican China would increasingly come to emphasize the importance of political participation and learned behaviors whereby the party-state acted as principle educator, but this narrower conception of the *guomin* was by no means a foregone conclusion in 1909.¹⁰¹ Certainly, the first two decades of the twentieth century were a time when many Chinese were becoming increasingly involved in politics, culminating in the notions of national community expressed during the May Fourth Movement and later by the Nationalist Party. Yet in order to avoid a teleological narrative that positions late Qing notions of citizenship (or *guomin*, *gongmin*, *shimin*, etc) as prefigurations of these later transformative events, we must problematize our discussion of citizenship, rendering it as the product of particular historical circumstances rather than as a container for a universal set of assumptions about belonging to a political community. While many scholars have highlighted competing notions of citizenship within political rhetoric,

¹⁰¹ For more on this subject, see Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China* and Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of The Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Harrison's analysis of popular participation in local festivals and national memorial services illustrates that even by the 1920s, the definition of citizenship espoused by the party state was not always congruous with the meanings attached to forms of civic engagement within any particular locality.

Jiaoyu zazhi provides us with an example of the ways in which institutions, governance, and education policy in particular also marked a contested ground for the debate over a citizenry that had not yet been truly defined.¹⁰² Within this particular debate, *guomin* remains a fundamentally unstable category whose internal tension manifests itself in the disjuncture between and within specific education reform projects. Although reformers like Liang Qichao worked persistently to define the guiding principles of *guomin* that would shape educational policy in the waning years of the Qing, he was ultimately unsuccessful. It was not, after all, any singular definition of citizenship that gave new meaning to the scope and intent of Chinese education; rather, it was precisely the practical dimensions of individual reform projects that gave new meaning to *guomin*.

¹⁰² For a helpful discussion on the ways in which institutions and forms of government played a decisive role in shaping the nation as a cohesive entity in China, see Michael Tsin, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China: Canton 1900-1927* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), esp. 51-114.

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