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Education and Politics in China: Civic Education in Times of Reform, 1901-1937

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Propositions

Accompanying the thesis

Education and Politics in China:

Civic Education in Times of Reform, 1901-1937

by **Ying Zhou**

1. The institutional reforms of education in modern China, which were entangled with the concurrent political reforms, essentially aimed at setting up a state system of education and stipulating a national school system, a national curriculum, and a set of national educational aims (this thesis).
2. Notwithstanding the constant changes in the aim, content, and form of education in China during 1901-1937, all these changes strived for the building of a strong and united nation-state (this thesis).
3. The gap between democratic ideals and political reality and their dynamic interactions in modern China not only gave rise to the variability and diversity of education for democracy but also complicated the actualisation of such education in primary and secondary schooling (this thesis).
4. Modern civics textbooks for primary and secondary schooling delineated a more comprehensive and diverse picture of the interrelationship between education, citizenship, and democracy in the course of the transformation of knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge about democracy in modern China (this thesis).
5. If democracy is indeed an irreversible historical tide, as many actors in Chinese history thought, the advocates of educational reform in modern China were occupied with digging up a river to contain the surging democratic tide from the outside world (this thesis).
6. Education can change society and politics.
7. “When I was young,” the historian Zhang Pengyuan wrote in 2002, “I always admired radicalism.

But I unconsciously became sympathetic to the modest intellectuals' advocacy of gradualism while studying their thoughts. With the evidence provided by the developments in China in the past two decades or so, [I] realised those modest intellectuals were far-sighted and rather rational. I cannot help thinking that everyone was eager to catch up with [the developed countries] in the past hundred years and that they actually made a long detour."

8. "It takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred to cultivate the people." (A Chinese proverb)

9. "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." (George Orwell)