

University was meant for both sexes, since both men and women should enjoy the same education; however, due to the fact that no women had applied so far, we have not had any female students. . . . At present, we have several female auditors and yet there are still some restrictions. . . . In the future, if there are female applicants, they will be tested and accepted just like male students.

I am deeply sorry that I could not record what he said after that, because my seat was too far from the platform.

Father Liu Fang, who represented all the Christian organizations in Beijing, said in his speech:

The old Chinese saying goes, "If one wants to succeed in doing something, one needs to first sharpen one's tools." If we want to teach young men and women to realize their full potential, we need to first have good schools. Young people are supposed to bring happiness to our society; our schools need to train them to be "true to themselves" as "real human beings." The faculty and staff members in your university are all devout Christians. You not only guide the students academically but also teach them to be "true to themselves" as "real human beings." As a coeducational institution of higher learning, you have set an excellent example for the nation. The nation has become the direct beneficiary and the Church the indirect one.

Unfortunately, Dr. Dewey, the long-awaited distinguished guest, was unable to come to the meeting. When President Stuart apologized on his behalf, we all could not help but feel disappointed.

Speeches by student representatives followed. Mr. Yu Zhenzhou, the male representative, and Ms. Qian Zhonghui, the female representative, gave two marvelous speeches in which they expressed their happiness about the occasion and their best wishes for the future of the university. In the end, the university choir sang the school anthem—with a melodious Chinese tune and lyrics written by Mr. Yang Wenzhou, a student. After the anthem, President Stuart asked the guests to leave some words behind. Mr. Chen Songhua from the Ministry of Education said: "As a matter of fact, coeducation should not have to be celebrated. This should have been a very normal thing. This merger has become an epoch-making event only because men and women have been strictly segregated for the past several thousand years in China. . . . Christianity has advocated that one can strengthen oneself by learning from the strengths of others. . . .

When Christianity spreads its roots throughout China, China will have hope."

Our music teacher Ms. Su played the organ. Afterward, President Stuart thanked all the guests for coming and then announced the conclusion of the event. All the guests, faculty, and staff members and all the students withdrew from the auditorium to attend the reception. After the group photos, this big event came to a close.

I have written a report on the celebration of the beginning of coeducation at Yanjing University, which is indeed a red-letter day for Yanjing. I have recorded it with nostalgic feelings toward the former "Union Women's College" and with my best wishes for the new Yanjing University. Long live Yanjing University!

### Notes

1. Yanjing University was first founded in 1919 in Beijing by American missionaries, when Union College at North Tongzhou (Tong County) and Huiwen College in Beijing merged, and was joined in 1920 by North China Union Female College. Like many colleges and universities during World War II, Yenching University was moved in 1942 to Chengdu, Sichuan, and moved back to Beijing in 1946. American missionary Leighton Stuart served as its president for many years and later became American ambassador to China under Chang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. In 1951, Yenching University, together with many other missionary schools in China, was taken over by the Chinese Communist government (*Ci Hai* 1979, 1243).

2. Gong Zizhen, alias Gong Ding'an, (1792–1841), a native of Renhe, Zhejiang (Hangzhou), was a thinker, scholar, and poet (*Ci Hai* 1979, 1661).

3. Cai Jiemin was also known as Cai Yuanpei. His speech appears as essay 19 in this book.

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### The Condition of Female Education in Jinan

Deng Enming (January 15, 1921)

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When it comes to female education, China ranks lowest of all nations in the world, and Shandong ranks lowest in all of China. Ever since the

new tide of thought swept over China, the woman question has received a great deal of attention everywhere, and all kinds of publications concerning the condition of female education have come out. How is female education in Jinan, the cultural center of Shandong? It is truly surprising that, up till today, no one has written about this. This kind of essay should normally be written by female students themselves. But Shandong does not have the kind of female education other places do, so there is really no way we can ask female students to write about this. Therefore, I have to be the one to make a haphazard attempt at writing about this. But I am a male student, and I am likely to get some things wrong. I hope that someone from a girls' <sup>1</sup> school will emerge to correct me or to make an even more detailed investigation; that would be much better.

Female education is not very well developed in Shandong. Though Jinan is the cultural center of Shandong, Jinan's relatively good schools for female education consist only of a normal school, a vocational school, a sericulture school, and four elementary schools. There are fewer than a thousand people in these schools. When education is available to so few girls even in a city as big as Jinan, it is clear that Shandong's female education is flawed indeed.

With over three hundred students, the Girls' Normal School is Jinan's most populous girls' school. Next is Jingjin Elementary School. The vocational school, the sericulture school, the Chongshi Elementary School, and the Shangbu elementary school each has about the same number of students. Even though the Girls' Normal School is the best in Shandong, it has very few high-quality students. So after graduation, few can go on to higher education. Nor are there many who can become teachers. Most of the rest have to go on to a hellish life. I think they are unable to get higher educations primarily because of bad grades, the low quality of their work, and restrictions placed on them by their families.<sup>2</sup>

Yet these problems must also be attributed to the teachers in charge of female education. If one were to ask these teachers why girls should be educated, or what the purpose of girls' education is, it seems they would not have an answer. I am not being sarcastic; this is just how it is. For instance, in three pieces of female education news recently published in *Democracy Newspaper*, the author wrote about a teacher who did not approve of doing away with the idea that girls should continue to be educated to become virtuous

wives and good mothers. In response, a letter from the autonomous student government refuted this teacher, and Ms. Zhou, a lecturer, also wrote a letter to challenge this teacher. Judging from this, we would think that the Girls' Normal School is not too bad. But how is it in reality? It is just the opposite. Why? I think it is because of problems in the curriculum (which I detail in section B) and problems in the schoolwork. Aren't these problems the fault of the teachers in charge of female education?

The Normal School's Auxiliary Elementary School and Jingjin, Chongshi, and Shangbu elementary schools are all public schools. Jingjin has over three hundred students, and the other schools have a hundred students each. These schools are run fairly well, so many of their graduates can advance to the normal school or the sericulture school. Some graduates also go on to normal schools and vocational schools in other places.

The administrators of the recently established sericulture school are not very dedicated, and it can be said that society has not benefited from them at all.

The vocational school admits anyone who can read a few characters. They do this because the training of very advanced personnel is not their goal. However, the principal said that, in general, none of this school's graduates have been unable to live independently in society. Though the principal was exaggerating, the school is actually pretty good.

I have limned the general conditions of these famous schools. Now I will discuss these schools more specifically, from several perspectives.

## A. The School

### 1. Faculty

The school should be like a big family, with parents and children.<sup>3</sup> The students should be like the children, and the faculty should be like the parents. They should live in harmony and support each other. Yet this is not true in Shandong schools, especially in girls' schools. Here, the faculty are faculty and the students are students; they don't care about each other at all. This is exacerbated by gender segregation rules. Some say that "teachers are there for the salary, and students are there

for the diploma." This saying may sound a bit too sarcastic, but close examination reveals that there is some truth to it. Teachers do not care about students, so they are either totally laissez-faire or despotically coercive when they look at students' work. They do not care about students' work; all they care about is getting a few dozen *yuan* each month. And no matter how poor a student's work is, she will remain baffled because no one will inquire about her work or try to supervise her. After going through a few years of muddle-headed schooling, she graduates without having learned a thing. What is the reason for this? We cannot avoid blaming the teachers. Teachers fancy themselves untouchable sages. Students are both angered and intimidated by them and certainly do not dare to ask questions. Even if they do ask questions, the teacher is not very patient. Thus, the more intimidated students are, the more formidable teachers feel. But do students really fear teachers? Even though students do not dare to say anything in front of their teachers, they curse their teachers to no end behind their backs. In light of these conditions, should we say that Shandong's lack of development in female education is the fault of the teachers? What attitude should female students have toward their teachers? What should be our attitude toward those teachers? What attitude should the teachers themselves have?

## 2. Curriculum

On the surface, the curricula of postelementary Jinan schools such as the normal school and the sericulture school appear very complete. But actually they are just as bad. Today, every school claims to promote academics, moral cultivation, and physical education. But what do these schools really do? When it comes to academics, very few students are good at Chinese. Those who are relatively good at English can only compose a few very simple sentences, and the rest only know a few letters. To be frank, some students graduate without knowing anything about arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc. As for moral cultivation, I will save that discussion for my section on "students." And then we have physical education. Every school has physical education classes, but students do not get enough extracurricular exercise. A few hours of calisthenics really cannot produce good results. At this point, I would like to address the teachers who run girls' schools. Students come to school to learn. When a school has

this kind of curriculum, it is incumbent on the teachers to teach sincerely. If not, their schools end up with a fame that belies their lack of substance. Such schools might as well close down, to avoid wasting other people's valuable time and money.

## 3. Administration

Just about all Jinan girls' schools use despotic methods to control their students. Thus, a female student's freedom is completely under her school's control. She has to get her school's permission for every single move she makes. No matter how close a man's relationship with a female student is, he must first get through the demeaning paperwork and the despotic bureaucracy to get the principal's approval before he can visit her. I have never tried to do this, but I hear from others that it is really difficult for a man to see a female student. It's even more difficult than it is for subordinates to see the emperor! I will give another example. The examination of female students' mail is of course a means to "nip things in the bud." But I think this is truly demeaning to female students. How so? Well, if boys and girls are the same as persons, with equal status, then why is it that boys' schools do not examine students' mail, while girls' schools do? If boys' schools examined students' mail, I believe their students would certainly rise up in opposition. Therefore, I hope that Jinan's female students will see the examination of their mail as a gross insult, and rise up to oppose it. If they adopt the spirit of "Give me liberty or give me death," I think that they will eventually accomplish their goal. I also think that teachers themselves should think about why it is that boys' mail need not be examined, while girls' mail must be examined, even though girls, like boys, are persons. Teachers must ask their own consciences about how unequal and unfree this is!

## B. Students

Even though Jinan has over a thousand female students, it seems that very few of them understand why they are getting an education, or what the purpose of an education is. Even if they were sent by their parents to get an education, they still do not understand what the purpose of an education is. The best of these kinds of girls can go on to Beijing Women's College, but they still do not realize why they are getting

educated or what the purpose of an education is. Because of this and because of their oppressive environment and the restrictions placed on them by their families, none of them contributes anything to society even after they graduate. Can this be called receiving an education?

We should examine the article on "The Characteristics of the Female Student" published by W.P. in the *Democratic Daily*.

### C. Female Students and Social Movements

The political activities of male and female Chinese students seem to have begun only after last year's May Fourth Movement. In other places, most of the female students started their movements together with male students. Only in Jinan is this not the case; here, female students have not dared to unite with male students to engage in movements for any issue. Those who worry that Jinan is lagging behind others organized a women's federation. But, not long afterward, it disappeared without a trace. At this point, I am starting to wonder why female students are like this. Could it be that they really cannot participate in social movements? I think that it can only be due to the following reasons:

1. Bad education
2. The injustice of society
3. An oppressive environment
4. Their inability to help each other

Because of the above reasons, we have the situation I have described. But we really cannot blame them; we can only pity them. We should think of how we can help them gain victory over all kinds of demons.

### D. Female Students and the New Tide of Thought

Jinan's girls' schools are based on high-handed control. As long as female students bow their heads in study by a window, and spend their lives from morning till night in a pile of musty old books, their teachers are very happy. No matter how the new tide of thought surges forward outside, these students will not hear of it. Even if a few students want to go get a taste of this new tide of thought, they

will arouse the indignant condemnation of teachers and administrators. If their family finds out, it will say that she has committed the greatest outrage. Her classmates will mock and scorn her behind her back, and some will even curse her to her face. Alas! You teachers who run girls' schools, you do not mind when students read base novels, but you come down like a scourge on the new tide of thought. I think that if you students can read base novels, you can certainly read the newest publications; but why do you not read them? If you want to know about all kinds of things such as women's equality and women's emancipation, it is up to you to work for them; who in society will help you? Who will be your allies? You cannot just hope that others will help you. I have to put it bluntly: Most people in our society want to oppress and toy with you. So you must arise, quickly arise!

### Notes:

1. The original *nüxiao* could be translated either as "girls' school" or as "women's school", since *nü* just means "female" and does not specify age. Throughout this essay, we translate *nü* as "female" whenever possible. In sentences like this, where it is not possible to use the age-neutral "female," we use "girl" because the subjects of the essay seem to be children and adolescents.

2. In the early 1920s, women's colleges were even scarcer than girls' schools, and coeducation at any level was extremely rare. Thus, only a few of the most outstanding girls' school graduates could get a higher education (Gilmartin 1995, 54).

3. A more literal translation of *you fuxiong, you zidi* would be "with fathers and older brothers, with sons and younger brothers."

## 26 Thoughts on Women

Wang Jingwei (January 1924).

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It is most delightful for me to have the opportunity to join you today. I particularly admire all of you, teachers and students alike, for your fighting spirit.