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“I can conceive no higher ideal,” wrote the Rev. Arthur Bonsey in 1909, “than to seek to lead the Chinese church to inherit the wealth of hymns, psalms, and chants which already exist with all the treasures of music which the West possesses.”\(^1\) There should be little doubt that the ultimate goal of the missionary involvement in music was to use music as a tool to propagate the Christian faith. For some, “building up a church of those who can sing Western tunes as truly and as sweetly as Christians do in the West” was the purpose of church-sponsored music teaching.\(^2\) For others, “Western tunes in all their variety and beauty,” declared one missionary, “are what we should aim at.”\(^3\)

Yet in reality the process of cross-cultural musical transmission was not as straightforward as it may seem. On the one hand the missionaries were neither unanimous in their agreement on the type of Western music to be introduced to China, nor were they all Euro-centric in their attitude toward indigenous musical traditions. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in endeavouring to teach the Chinese to sing the praise of God more effectively, China missionaries experimented with a variety of strategies and put a great deal of thought into selecting suitable musical repertoires for the Chinese. As a result, the Western music they introduced in China was not a stable, unvarying, undifferentiated musical culture but a divided one, replete with national and denominational distinctions. Chinese Christians, on the other hand, were not all passive recipients of Western music even though most of those who were


\(^{2}\) Bitton, p. 207.

\(^{3}\) Bitton, p. 198.
taught in the Western schools accepted the music for what it was. They may have been silent travellers in the initial stages of Christian expansion in China, but by the turn of the twentieth century they were no longer content to be told what to do and began to voice their concerns and their musical preferences. Their voices were not necessarily a mere echoing of their missionary teachers.

In this chapter I shall begin with a descriptive analysis of missionary discussions of problems associated with the introduction of Western music to Chinese Christians and the missionary strategies to deal with them. This is followed by an analysis of the ways in which Chinese Christians responded to the types of Western music they were introduced to. And finally I shall study how changes in missionary philosophy and Chinese demand for Western music of a higher order influenced the missionary choice of Western classical tradition as a tool of evangelism.

Problems with Western Music and Missionary Strategies

When Protestant missionaries arrived on the China scene in any number in the mid-nineteenth century, the Western music they brought with them consisted of hymns of late eighteenth-century strophic hymn and psalm tunes of either British or American origins. “Nearly all the hymns were translations and the tunes those in use in the Occident.” As in the case of the Pacific Islands, American evangelical and gospel hymn tunes in verse-chorus alternation were not introduced until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

From the very outset, China missionaries noted significant difficulties in teaching their converts, especially adults, to sing Western tunes. However, earlier missionaries were too preoccupied with the difficulties of textual translation to pay

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4 Latourette, p. 419.
5 For a study of the case in the Pacific Islands, see Stillman, p. 91.
sufficient attention to music. Unlike their predecessors, later comers were attentive to matters both textual and musical. “It is only with the greatest difficulty,” complained one missionary in 1887, “that that the average Chinaman can learn even one of our tunes.”

This kind of complaint was by no means rare. It was voiced again and again by missionaries all over China. So bad was the Chinese congregational singing that some missionaries even went so far as to describe “congregational singing” as “congregational torture.” Well into the twentieth century, similar frustrations were still uttered by foreign missionaries driven to despair by the difficulties of congregational singing. “For a long time,” wrote Mary Gamewell in 1924, “Church music, especially in the country, was little short of atrocious.”

Chinese had difficulty with European music owing to their being unaccustomed to diatonic scales, functional harmony and to the novelty of group singing. This was not unique to China. Maori, for example, had difficulty learning European music when first introduced. Problems of singing Western tempered scales can also be found in Hawaii where “not a native that can rise or fall the eight notes without assistance.”

Just like missionaries in New Zealand who had to compromise by allowing hymn-singing to traditional waiata tunes, missionaries in China were forced to work out strategies to combat problems in hymn-singing. Writing of Protestant hymnody in Polynesia but in a statement just as true of China, Amy Stillman observes:

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8 Mary Ninde Gamewell, Ming-kwong: City of the Morning Light (West Medford, Mass.: The Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions, 1924), pp. 111-12.
9 The missionary Richard Taylor wrote in 1839: “…the [Maori] lads are very fond of singing but certainly they have no notion of music. Their native airs embrace no more than three or four notes and they carry no more into the hymns they sing, indeed it is the most discordant singing I have ever heard, no country choir in England being worse.” Cited in Mervyn McLean, “An Analysis of 651 Maori Scales”, Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council, No. 1 (1969), p. 156.
Musical strategies varied among missionaries and even mission stations. To some extent, islanders’ exposure to introduced hymnody depended on the musical interests and talents of individual missionaries. More generally, British missionaries used different musical strategies from their American counterparts, which resulted in variety in the repertory and competence in hymn-sing.¹²

To most of the China missionaries, the biggest problem accounting for the Chinese inability to sing Christian hymns effectively stemmed from the Western diatonic scale. The British missionary William E. Soothill observed in 1890:

The Chinese in every-day life …make use solely of the pentatonic or pentatonic scale, a scale consisting of five notes to the octave. This scale is represented by the black keys of the piano; it consists of the key-note major, a major second, third, fifth and sixth, as say, in the natural key, C, D, E, G and A. Thus it is the diatonic scale minus the ⁴th and ⁷th degrees, i.e., F and B.¹³

Rather than helping the Chinese to master Western diatonic tunes and part-singing techniques, his prescription for cure was to choose pentatonic tunes “that are suited to the native voice” and avoid using the problematic F and B. So for the sake of singing the praise of God, the “grand principle” in congregational singing was, according to Soothill, to “make use only of the pentatonic scale, viz., that represented by the black keys of the piano or harmonium, commencing with F sharp; or, if in any other key, always omitting the fourth and seventh notes, counting from the key-note.”¹⁴ This missionary pragmatism, clearly indicative of the utilitarian underlining of the missionary attitude toward music, shows that for the sake of evangelism missionaries were more than willing to compromise artistic standards.

Soothill’s musical pragmatism and his idea of avoiding the use of the major fourth and seventh were fairly representative of missionary opinion at the time. Some

¹² Stillman, p. 91.
fifteen years later, Charles S. Champness of the American Methodist Episcopal
Mission wrote: “In choosing tunes which are not pentatonic it is a good rule to avoid such as abound in accidentals and semitones and particularly such as have fah or te on an accented syllable, or upon the last syllable in the line.” For the sake of easy attainment, Champness recommended such popular American melodies as “Iowa,” or “Kentucky,” “Forest,” and “Harmony Grove,” as “excellent tunes for Chinese use.” He also mentioned Scottish airs like “Auld Lang Syne” and “Ye Banks and Braes” as suitable pentatonic tunes for Chinese congregation singing. Concurring with this notion, the Rev. Arthur Bonsey of the Central China Religious Tract Society stated in 1909 that “in the church services the bulk of the tunes sung shall be easy, while occasionally allowing a more difficult measure in order to gratify and encourage the younger part of the congregation.” By “easy” he meant “any tune which contains no half-notes, or only one or two unaccented half-notes.” Bonsey further asserted:

The more a tune conforms to the diatonic scale the more disastrous will be the failure of the congregation to render it correctly. The true method is at first, and for a considerable time, to stick faithfully to pentatonic, or nearly pentatonic tunes. Such tunes as “Kentucky,” “Balerma,” “Evan,” “Ortonville,” “Soldau,” “Amesbury,” and others can all be easily learned and intelligently and correctly sung by Chinese congregation.

In fact, selecting simple tunes of short tonal range based on the pentatonic scale became such a focal point of missionary discourse on church music in China that starting from 1890 a series of articles on the subject began to appear in The Chinese Recorder. Even as late as 1912, the Rev. William Munn of the Church Missionary Society was still complaining about the difficulties of teaching Chinese boys to sing semitones. “The only reward one gets,” wrote a frustrated Munn, “is excruciating

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agony resultant on hearing a loved melody in ruins.”

Like his colleagues, he too attributed the failure to the pentatonic scale, which, according to him, “seems to foster quite a different method of musical thinking.” One of his ways of overcoming the difficulty was to produce tune-books “to meet Chinese capabilities by a provision of pentatonic tunes.”

As far as can be ascertained, the earliest missionary experiment with the pentatonic scale began in the early 1880s, as evidenced by the publication of Timothy Richard’s Xiao shipu in 1883, discussed in the previous chapter. The Richards, Mary in particular, were acutely aware of the difficulty that the Chinese faced in singing tempered scales and semitones and tried their best to find songs that were based on pentatonic scale. Mary Richard, like their missionaries contemporaries, suggested the use of such songs as “Auld Lang Syne”, “Ye Banks and Braes” and Psalm tunes like “Balerma” and “Morven” because these melodies were based on the pentatonic scale. She also recommended the use of such African American Jubilee airs as “Swing Low,” “In Bright Mansions Above,” “The Gospel Train” and “Steal Away to Jesus” and cautioned the avoidance of “Old Hundred” “because it has a semitone in each line.”

Other missionaries who experimented with writing, selecting, composing or adapting hymns according to the pentatonic principle included Joseph E. Walker of the American Board Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Fuzhou, the English Baptist Mrs Couling, and the American Methodist C. S. Champness. The Rev. Joseph

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19 Munn, p. 534.
20 Munn, p. 535.
E. Walker had been an active promoter of Christian music in China. His experiments with indigenising Christian music included the publication of a hymnal in the Fuzhou dialect in 1889 and of the *Sacred Songs* by the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Fuzhou in 1890.\(^\text{24}\) According to Walker’s own account in 1906, he made his “first attempt at a pentatonic tune for the Chinese …over thirty years ago.” Although he did not “think much of it as a tune…it is much sung by our Christians.”\(^\text{25}\) Mrs. Couling (?- 1922), wife of the more famous English Baptist minister Samuel Couling, was also a veteran in church music. In addition to her musical work at the Qingzhou High School,\(^\text{26}\) in 1895 she published her *Pentatonic Tune Book*\(^\text{27}\) in which she included pentatonic tunes “contributed by English church musicians of standing, such as Mr. C. E. Smith, organist of Regents Park Baptist Chapel, London; Mr. Josiah Booth, Rev. Carey Bonner, and others.”\(^\text{28}\) One feature of the book “is the adaptation of a number of familiar Western tunes to the Chinese scale, by taking out the semi-tones.”\(^\text{29}\)

Using the pentatonic scale certainly helped the English Baptist Mission in its congregational singing in Qingzhou, Shandong province. Soliciting opinions on the “advisability of keeping for ordinary congregational purposes, to the pentatonic scale,” the Rev. Frederick J. Shipway wrote in late 1901: “So far as I have been able to test the singing, either here, or in a few other places, the pentatonic tunes are sung with much greater correctness and heartiness and are more conducive to the spirit of true praise and worship than tunes in the full scale.”\(^\text{30}\) He further expressed his wish to “compile a new tune book” but was hoping to get more pentatonic tunes. Unlike Mrs. Couling, Shipway did not “feel right to alter existing full-scale tunes, as used in

\(^{29}\) Sheng, p. 396.
the home lands, to make them pentatonic.” So he was hoping to “receive any
pentatonic tunes which may be kindly sent to us, or to be afforded information as to
where or in what books they may be procured.” He specifically stated that:

Tunes to all metres will be welcome, but specially to hymns like “At the Name
of Jesus,” “I love to tell the Story,” “When Morning gilds the Skies,” “How
Firm a Foundation,” “Art Thou Weary,” “I gave My Life for Thee,” “Christian
Seek not yet Repose,” “Forward be our Watchword,” “By Christ redeemed, in
Christ restored,” “When Mothers of Salem,” and others of more or less
uncommon metre.  

While some missionaries endeavoured to select pentatonic tunes from Western
sources, others advocated the composition of new tunes based on the pentatonic scale.
Contrary to the opinion “the old is better” held by some missionaries, Champness, for
example, found “it best to write a new tune to a well-known hymn wherever possible
in a new rhythm and key.”  Even Shipway who favoured selecting old tunes from
Western church repertoire conceded that:

In some of these [old tunes] it almost seems sacrilege to wrest the words from
their familiar tunes, but if the position of adopting pentatonic tunes be the right
one, the wrestling has to be done, or the singing of beautiful hymns will inspire
feelings very remote from that of worship. Although some of the old tunes have
sacred associations for us, our Chinese Christians know little of this; and it may
be that by getting or making suitable tunes we may create like sacred
associations for them which would be impossible by keeping to the old, good,
and loved, but impossible tunes.

Clearly, the missionaries were more than willing to compromise the integrity of
original Western tunes for the sake of accommodating the needs of their Chinese
converts. To Soothill, tunes that do not accord with pentatonic scale ought “to be
discarded, or used only when absolutely necessary.” He even went as far as

31 Shipway, p. 626. Apparently Shipway died before the planned tune book was completed. The
following information tells us that the book was eventually published: “The appearance of the tune-
book has been retarded by the lamented death of the secretary, Rev. T[sic]. J. Shipway, and by the
general pressure of work; but it is no expected that it will be ready in a few months. It will consist
mainly – though not wholly- of Pentatonic tunes, many of which have been composed specially for use
in China by experts. The whole is being well edited by a competent musician, and it is hoped that the
33 Shipway, p. 626.
suggesting the wholesale adoption of Chinese tunes in church services.\textsuperscript{34} As someone who in the summer of 1889 “spent an hour every day with a couple of Chinese musicians and attained some proficiency on the native fiddle, besides adding to my stock of music a score or more of pleasing native melodies translated into our notation,”\textsuperscript{35} Soothill was perhaps in a better position to judge the suitability of Chinese tunes in church services. He suggested four ways of adopting “native airs”: “the adoption of the whole air and the composition of hymns of the same metre as the original song;” “the adoption of the whole air and the composition of hymns to fit smoothly to it;” “the adaptation of the air itself to hymns already composed;” and “the adaptation or altering of a portion of the tune to suit hymns already composed.”\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{34} Soothill, pp. 226-27.
\textsuperscript{35} Soothill, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{36} Soothill, p. 227.
Fig. 4:1. Some of the tunes used by Soothill in his mission work. Source: CR, Vol. 21 (July 1890).

Soothill’s advocacy of making use of indigenous musical traditions did not stop at recommending the adoption of native airs.

If trumpets, harps and cymbals were used with such effect in the Jewish temple service; if in our churches in England and America fifty years ago violins, flutes, clarinets and basses lent such an effect to the singing that many people now-a-days think the old style better than the new; and if in our own day we think so much of our choirs and spend so much on our organs then why should we not in our Chinese services use the instruments THEY TAKE DELIGHT IN to make our unattractive services more enjoyable?  

Although we are yet to find evidence as to whether Soothill actually put his ideas into practice, documented cases of hymn-singing to native tunes show the practice was neither of a limited scope nor of a short duration. Writing in 1920, Louise S. Hammond of the American Protestant Episcopal Mission had this to say:

Experiments have been made in different parts of China...with varying degrees of success, in building up a native hymnology by adding Christian words to

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37 Soothill, p. 227.
ancient Chinese melodies or by making or finding out other simple tunes which could be readily assimilated by a Chinese congregation.\textsuperscript{39}

Timothy and Mary Richard certainly made use of Chinese tunes in their missionary work. In Mrs. Richard’s own words, the following airs (see Fig.4:2) “have been effectively used in Christian work in Shantung and Shansi, the Chinese of course being fond of them, and as they are mostly free of semitones, they sing them well.”\textsuperscript{40}

Fig. 4:2: Chinese tunes used in the Richards’ mission work. Source: \textit{CR}, Vol. 20 (1889), p. 581.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{CR}, Vol. 20 (1889), p. 580.
According to Li Shizhao 李士釗, a Catholic church in Liaocheng, Shandong province frequently used a small ensemble of Chinese instruments to play Chinese music and Western music during its services.⁴¹

![Example of missionary use of Chinese gongche notation](image)

Fig. 4:3: An example of missionary use of Chinese gongche notation. From CR, Vol. 22 (1891), p. 313

**Teaching Chinese to Sing the Praise of the Lord**

Differences in musical scales were not the only problem that prevented the Chinese from singing Western tunes. Western melodies also posed difficulties with their varieties of time, movement, metre, and compass. The Rev. J. E. Walker, for example, believed that “a tune which exceeds one octave in range of pitch will go either too high or too low for the natural range of the average Chinese voice.” So in order to make their congregation sing imported tunes well, “missionaries ought to make some concession.” He provided the following account to illustrate his point:

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⁴¹ Li Shizhao 李士釗, “Guanyu Zhongguo er san shi niandai yinyue jiaoyu qingkuang de huiyi” 閩於中國二、三十年代音樂教育情況的回憶 (Some Recollections of Music Education in China in the 1920s and 1930s), Qilu yiyuan 齐鲁藝苑 (Arts in Shandong), No. 1 (1981), p. 53.
I once had a Chinese cook who, I thought, had no ear for music, till I overheard him singing a tune correctly but on a very low pitch. The next morning at prayers I pitched the tune about two tones low; and he started in two or three notes lower still, but soon came up to my pitch; and after a few days I had to lower the tune only about one tone below concert pitch to get his voice up to mine.

Based on this observation, Walker concluded:

There is now and then a Chinese voice that must be met by raising the pitch; but it is easier to get them down than it is to get heavy voices up; and many of our tunes are pitched about one tone too high for the best results with the average Chinese congregation. They are pitched to secure the best results with Western voices that have had some culture; and a lower pitch than this suits neither the voice nor the ear of Western singers; but we might in many cases concede a tone or a half tone to the Chinese with benefit.\(^2\)

For Laura M. White (1867-?), an American missionary educator with years of experience in teaching music to Chinese girls, however, the voice range of the Chinese was not the problem hindering the perfect execution of Western sacred music.\(^3\) “The Chinese sing the highest notes of Western hymns in the ordinary falsetto of their street songs.”\(^4\) What she was concerned with was a lack of singing technique on the part of Chinese Christians. “Below these hollowhead tones, what we know as the ‘medium register’ of the voice seems to be entirely ignored, and the chest tones are forced up far above their proper limits. Straining up the voice produces that coarse, strident quality of tone heard in chapel services.” To correct “this universal fault,” she suggested “the soft singing of scale passages, especially downwards, to the syllables koo, mä, or the combination of koo-o hwa.” To prevent Chinese voices from vibrating “in the back of the head, the throat, and nasal cavities,” she recommended the exercise of “humming with chin muscles relaxed… for increasing resonance and

\(^3\) Arriving in China in 1887, White was renowned for her role in China’s modern education for women and for her translations of William Shakespeare. For a study of White’s views on Chinese women’s education, see Zhu Jing 朱静, “Laura M. White and The Merchant of Venice: Feminist Thought of A Western Missionary in China”, unpublished paper presented at “Missionaries and Translation: Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges in Early Modern China, 1840-1950” jointly organized by Peking University and Ouachita Baptist University, USA (May 23-25, 2004, Beijing).
bringing the voice forward to the front of the mouth.” To correct the “serious fault” of pronouncing in the throat and back of the mouth instead of articulating with the lips, she offered the following advice: “Holding back the breath, and making no sound, except perhaps an occasional whisper, have your class repeat the words about to be sung with the idea of making someone at a distance understand.”

Speaking of her own experience in teaching Western music at the Dengzhou Boys’ School and Girls’ High School, Julia Mateer admitted that it was “a great task” to teach the Chinese to sing. But “there are labour-saving ways” of doing it. She believed firmly that “the ability to sing well is acquired only by much practice.” And “the exercises for practice should be such as will cultivate the voice and ear, and must be often repeated to get their benefit.” Unlike the majority of missionaries, Mateer believed “[t]he Chinese take very kindly to our Western tunes” and “the young people with sufficient practice learn to sing them well, mastering even the half tones and accidentals.” More specifically, she believed that:

It is a principle with the best teachers not to do for the pupil that which he can do for himself, but to encourage and direct his efforts. This holds good in singing as truly as in other things. If the teacher gives attention to the private practice of his pupils making criticisms and suggestions as needed he may save himself much of the wearing drudgery of teaching.

Reminiscing on her early experience in teaching “about forty boys and thirty girls” to sing part-song in Ningbo in 1854, Helen S. C. Nevius recounted the methods she used to great effect:

[We] assembled twice a week in the chapel. I had a blackboard made with lines for writing music…. The first step in this formidable undertaking was to get them to make one sound in unison. After explaining the matter, I said to them, “Now listen attentively to me, and then make the same sound precisely.” They

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45 These quotes are from White, “Christian Music in China”, p. 25.
46 Mateer, “What School Songs and Songs for Recreation and Amusement Should We Teach and Encourage in Our Schools? Have Such Songs Been Tried, and If so with What Result?”, p. 108.
47 Mateer, p. 105.
48 Mateer, p. 107.
49 Mateer, p. 108.
tried to obey; but some were one, some three, and some four or five notes astray; probably every tone and half-tone in the octave had its representative. “Very well,” said I; “but I think you can improve on that.” Then I made a high tone and a low one, to show them the difference, and again explained that what I wished was that they should as nearly as possible imitate me. Again I sounded, “Do,” prolonging the sound that they might more easily catch it. Again they essayed, and this time with much better success; for I do not think the voices ranged over more than five or six tones. Nearly the whole two hours were spent in the attempt to make one sound in unison. At our next meeting we succeeded in making one sound quite accurately, and then added a second, - do-re, do-re, re-do, re-do, we said or sang till our patience was exhausted; and then added a third. When they had gained an idea of what was meant by tones and intervals, I wrote the notes on the black-board.50

Laura White also detailed the methods she used in teaching Chinese girls to sing Western polyphonic songs:

In our schools we devote a half hour daily to vocal music. The girls sing in four parts -- first and second soprano, first and second contralto--and use anthems, choruses from Smart, Brahms, Gounod, Mendelssohn, Mozart, selections from oratorios, etc... I endeavour to commence every music lesson by a short exercise in respiration. Standing erect, with shoulders down, the pupils slowly, evenly, gradually, inhale the air through the mouth, which is to be kept slightly open. When the lungs are filled to the full, the air is to be retained a few seconds, then just as quietly and gradually expelled. The body must be so relaxed and buoyant that a slight touch is sufficient to “topple over” a pupil. Insist that the children breathe in this manner, and while keeping the lungs very full of air, use economy in its expenditure. The Chinese waste breath and the impulse to let the air escape must be resisted.51

Based on her observation that “Chinese voices are lower than ours,” White suggested, “a good plan is to take out from the organ (harmonium) the highest or even the two highest reeds. Then regularly move all the others up.”52

C. S. Champness, a man who in his own words, “possessed of the gift of melody and had composed hymn tunes which were found acceptable by certain friends in England who had made use of them,”53 also focused on proper training. He explained the ways he approached the problem thus:

50 Nevius, Our Life in China, pp. 40-41.
52 White, p. 591.
In the earlier lessons it is better to keep the voluntaries sung in the pentatonic scale, as there is less liability to error in doing this, but after the children begin to get some confidence the two difficult sounds, \textit{Fah} and \textit{Te}, should be taught. …. In teaching the singing of the notes \textit{Te} and \textit{Fah}, it is necessary to give plenty of patterns of singing the semitones \textit{Me Fah} and \textit{Te Doh}, also the difference between the major intervals \textit{Do Me} and the minor interval \textit{Ray Fah}. The children should be trained to listen for these intervals.\textsuperscript{54}

Champness was well aware of the range of problems involved in delivering such musical lessons, not least of the importance of language competence. He pointed out specifically “that the work of teaching singing is best undertaken by those who have a fairly good acquaintance with Chinese, [as] a beginner in the language is hampered by not being able to point out mistakes made.” He indicated that he was hoping to “write out a model lesson with the Chinese phrases employed in teaching a single tune.”\textsuperscript{55}

In their efforts to train Chinese to sing the praise of the Lord, some missionaries also emphasised the importance of note reading rather than oral transmission. C. S. Champness’ disagreement with Ohlinger’s method of imitation, as illustrated by the following passage, is a good example:

It is better to adopt a plan which is far more educational, namely to use the tonic \textit{sol-fa} method, teaching the children to find how to produce these difficult sounds by remembering their place in the scale and their relationship to the other notes of the scale. For instance, they should learn to produce \textit{te} by remembering that it is separated from \textit{soh} by a major third, the same interval as that between \textit{doh} and \textit{me}. More difficult still to teach is that \textit{fah} is a major third below \textit{lah} and fourth above \textit{doh}.\textsuperscript{56}

In his opinion:

The children must be taught something about intervals and the difference between major and minor intervals, especially in the case of thirds. It must be pointed out that while the intervals \textit{Doh Me} and \textit{Ray Fah} are both thirds, there is a great difference between them; one being a major interval and the other a minor. Show that \textit{Me Soh} is a minor interval, and that to get the seemingly difficult interval \textit{Ray Fah}, one must think of the similar interval \textit{Me Soh}.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} Champness, pp. 193-94.
\textsuperscript{56} Champness, “Pentatonic Music and Kindred Matters”, p. 560.
Helen Nevius also emphasised the importance of musical literacy. But her approach differed markedly from that of Champness:

I am persuaded that the most practicable method for teaching them [Chinese boys and girls] a foreign system of music is that which I was led to adopt. For the first three months we did little else but practise the scale, which they at length so completely mastered as to be able to strike accurately, and without assistance. Not only the natural intervals, but every other; as, for instance, from one to four, one to seven, and \textit{vice versa}. I gave them simple exercises written on the blackboard…. I did not confine them to singing the usual do-re-me, etc., but early substituted a single syllable, and from that again we easily slid into words. I divided the class into different sets for the different parts, so soon as I had discovered to which the voices were naturally adapted; and in the course of six or eight months had a good choir, capable of carrying all four part, soprano, alto, tenor and bass; and the accuracy with which they sang, considering, of course, all the circumstances, was most remarkable. From the first, I taught them to “beat time,” and they became so accustomed to the practice, that even when singing by themselves, just for their own amusement, I used to notice them going through the motions; not as I had intended, with a slight movement of the hand, but with the whole arm below the elbow, down, up; down, left, right, up, as the measure happened to be.\footnote{Nevius, pp. 41-42.}

Laura White, also a strong advocate of teaching the Chinese what she had herself learned in her home country, believed that since “a student of the English language can learn to read some of our classics just as easily as light sensational literature, it is a mistake to consider that good music must of necessity be difficult.” She backed up her assertion by saying her students “learned the hymns with absolutely no difficulty.”\footnote{White, pp. 591-92.}

The Western System as the Ultimate Goal

Most missionaries were not content with the adoption of Chinese melodic patterns or of Western airs founded on the pentatonic scale at the expense of authentic Western tunes. The use of pentatonic melodies in early hymnals, as David Sheng has pointed out, was “purely a matter of expediency”.\footnote{Sheng, p. 395.} For the Protestant missionaries,
the ultimate goal “remained the transmission of ‘good sacred music.’” J. E. Walker, after sending to the editor of the Chinese Recorder an original pentatonic tune, made it clear that:

If I thought there was any necessary rivalry between pentatonic tunes and heptatonic ones, I would hardly wish to encourage the use of the former; but it seems to me that the difference between Chinese music and Western music is not limited to this difference in scales; and I look upon pentatonic tunes, constructed on Western models, as helpful in the introduction of Western music.

To him,

The pentatonic scale can afford only imperfect harmony; and if we are going to give our pupils and students thorough instruction in music, of course we must have the full scale. Playing the air, only, with both hands in unison, is good for tackling a raw audience; but playing the full harmony certainly helps to educate the ear of pupils to appreciate the half tones.

While some missionaries found fault with China’s pentatonic scale on the ground of simplicity, others rejected the use of indigenous melodies on moral and ethical grounds. Indeed, few missionaries truly believed that “Chinese music can be sung by the Chinese – even Christians – to the glory of God.” Even the broad-minded William E. Soothill was mindful of the pitfalls associated with the practice of incorporating indigenous elements into Chinese Christian hymnody. But rather than finding fault with Chinese music, Soothill was mainly concerned with the contents of some of the Chinese tunes, pointing out, “the words associated with the music are not always of the best.” Believing that “Many of the native melodies are really pretty,” he asked “Why not unwed some of these tunes from their garbage and appropriate them in our services?” For the same reason, the culturally more sensitive Julia Mateer took a dim view of “the great body both of kü-tsê [quzi] and shiao kü-tsê [xiao quzi],” dismissing them as something that “the world would have been

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63 Bitton, p. 196.
64 Soothill, p. 226.
65 Soothill, pp. 226-27.
better had they never been written.” In this respect, they shared their Chinese converts’ concerns.

In their efforts to use music to evangelise the Chinese, missionaries were divided on issues of whether to use indigenous traditions and adapt to Chinese needs. They also differed in their opinions on the type of Western music to be introduced. While some were content with using simple melodies of limited tonal range, others were aiming at importing Western music of a higher order so as to pave the way for the future Christianisation of China. In the following letter to the editor of the *Chinese Recorder* Mary J. Farnham wrote in April 1906:

> I would like to ask if it would not be better to broaden the standard of music in China rather than compose tunes which would keep them down to their pentatonic style? The popular idea of Westerners is to elevate the Chinese in religion and civilization, which would certainly include music. It will take time, the same as anything else, but it can be done as I can testify.

In response to the 1909 survey of opinions upon Church music, one missionary remarked:

> Too little attention has been paid to the quality of the music. Too much to the popularity of the tune in a country and among people who knew little and cared less what the quality of their music was. The result has been the introduction to China of a number of bad tunes, with some sort of catchy air, which has already done much to debase the standard expected by our Chinese Christians. But it is not too late to remedy this if we would only realize that we want tunes which God will care to hear instead of simply those which we care to sing.

In the same survey, another missionary wrote:

> In our Western hymnbooks many of the finest hymns we possess are the heritage of the church, and I could wish that a greater use had been made of the fine old liturgical hymns handed down from the Fathers and of the classical songs of the church, both Catholic and Reformed.

Concerning the use of Western tunes, except on the part of a few who have studied the subject, probably the vast body of missionary workers have no option but to use tunes already in existence. The necessary use of a tune which we in the West have associated with a certain hymn is not a good practice since the act of translation may, and usually does, change the place of emphasis, and

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66 Mateer, p. 107.
68 Bitton, p. 198.
so destroy the efficacy of the tune which fits a hymn admirably in its Western
dress. The constant use of jig tunes, such as are too frequently heard in Christian
called churches today, must be very distasteful to thoughtful Chinese who have a
worshipful sense of reverence.69

It seems true that some missionaries were indeed “deeply committed to instilling
in the Chinese an appreciation for full Western tonality and harmony, and ultimately
for the music of the Western musical canon.”70 One missionary, for example, called
for the “use in schools of the higher grades our Western music and Western hymns.”71
And another “heartily endorse[d] the translation of foreign hymns and the use of
Western tunes,” believing “it ought to be a part of the work of the church everywhere
to teach the men and women of the congregation to sing.”72 Echoing this view, one
missionary raised the issue of professionalism in teaching the Chinese to sing. He
stated explicitly that “greater attention might be paid to the whole subject of music by
foreign missionaries who are capable of the work, and they should not rest content
with teaching the mere art of singing, but should encourage Chinese to go on with
definite study of music for the benefit of the Christian church.” For this reason he
gave his full endorsement to the “proposal to inaugurate regular competitions” and
“musical gatherings of those interested in the subject along the lines of the Welsh
Eisteddfod.”73

The fact that this commitment to introducing Western music to the Chinese was
primarily driven by their Christian conviction, as opposed to a love of music for its
own sake, not only determined the kind of music to be introduced but also heightened
the need for training in music. Writing of her music teaching in Ningbo in the mid-
1850s Helen Nevius was quick to add:

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69 Bitton, p. 199.
70 Charter and Debernardi, p. 96.
71 Bitton, p. 199.
72 Bitton, p. 199-200.
Never forgetting that the main object in teaching them [Chinese boys and girls] was to enable them to praise God in the sanctuary, as soon as I thought they were equal to it they learned church tunes. One of the first of these was a plaintive old air, which I had always loved, called, in America, “Bartimeus,” and usually sung to the words commencing “Mercy, O thou son of David!” … Another tune was Lenox, which as the four parts come in with a good deal of irregularity, was quite a trial of skill.  

Another missionary echoed:

Much teaching is needed in order to get our Christians to realise just what the singing is for, and time should be taken outside the regular church services both to train the voices and teach them the meaning of the hymns as well as to follow the tunes. They need to be taught that it is part of a spiritual service.

### Chinese Responses to Missionaries’ Music

While some foreign missionaries looked for ways to incorporate indigenous elements into church music, Chinese Christians expressed their strong disapproval of using native tunes. “I do not like to see the adoption of other tunes in place of the Western tunes,” an anonymous Chinese convert declared in response to a survey of opinions on church music in China conducted in early 1909. The reason for his objection was based not so much on musical as on moral ground. Chinese tunes, he argued, “have been composed by low class people and are not suitable for singing in decent families.” In a Confucian fashion he looked at China’s high antiquity for inspiration but dismissed “Chinese music of the present day” as having “a great tendency to influence people to evil thoughts.” In the similar vein another Chinese convert believed “that the use of Western tunes is necessary, as the Chinese airs are too light for church music.” One Chinese respondent even went as far as to assert:

I do not believe the time has come for those original Chinese tunes to be adopted for the use of the church. I can safely pronounce that all the Chinese

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74 Nevius, p. 42.
75 Bitton, p. 208.
76 Bitton, p. 200.
77 Britton, p. 200.
tunes in existence are not worthy to be used in the church. The best Chinese musics[sic] are not to be found anywhere no, and the popular ones are devoid of moral integrity.\textsuperscript{78}

While some Chinese Christians singled out the “deteriorated” state of “vocal music in China” as reason for sticking to “the Western tunes” for the time being,\textsuperscript{79} others expressed their unreserved love for “the hymns and chants that have been handed over to” them, believing that “there is something sublime in the old church music.”\textsuperscript{80} After admitting Chinese music was not as agreeable as Western music due to his missionary education, a certain Yau Tsih-lam from Canton asked indignantly “How could the church abandon the existing foreign music and take up the cast-off Chinese music?”\textsuperscript{81} Clearly of the view that Chinese music was inferior to Western music, Yau further pointed out what he considered to be an indisputable fact:

Improvement of music can be found in churches where schools are attached to them, as in the case of missionary schools all students must take up music or singing, an opportunity is offered for training young men or girls to improve music and to show their musical talent.\textsuperscript{82}

In the case of churches which had no connection with any schools, his suggestion was that “students from other schools should be asked to assist them as leaders in singing.” In conclusion, he expressed his wish to “see more Christians take more pains in church music by studying hard to read music and to play either a harmonium, organ or piano.”\textsuperscript{83}

Of the various criticisms directed at church music in China, the harshest came from the pen of a Chinese Christian named Wang Chung-yu. In a lengthy article in \textit{The Chinese Recorder} in 1901, Wang roundly denounced “the music as used in Chinese churches now throughout this empire” as “not only dry and factitious, but it

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{78}] Britton, p. 202
\item[\textsuperscript{79}] Britton, p. 201, 202.
\item[\textsuperscript{80}] Britton, p. 197.
\item[\textsuperscript{81}] Yau Tsih-lam, “Letter to the Editor”, \textit{CR}, Vol. 40 (Jun., 1909), pp. 343-44.
\item[\textsuperscript{82}] Yau Tsih-lam, p. 344.
\item[\textsuperscript{83}] Yau Tsih-lam, p. 344.
\end{itemize}
simply dwarfs the musical tastes of many and renders the worship unspiritual.”\textsuperscript{84} He was particularly critical of the use of Chinese secular music in church worship, as he pointed out:

Some missionaries, thinking they have stricken a new path, have made use of Chinese native songs for religious service, disregarding its sensual character and nature; it is really demoralizing and is unfit for religious purposes when the song sung conjures up by association the many bad and sometimes immoral ideas with which such songs are associated. We must know that the art of Chinese music has been practically lost and the existing songs are never sung by gentlemen, and are, as a rule, used in theatres and sung by the lower classes of people. Even if the songs are not connected with immoral ideas, yet its music drags us down to the sensual and material phase of life. I hope that missionaries will take special note of this.\textsuperscript{85}

Chinese Christians were also vehemently opposed to the idea of using Chinese instruments in the church out of the same moral considerations. One convert wrote: “I am decidedly against the use [of] Chinese instruments of any kind.”\textsuperscript{86} Once again, his objection was based “on account of their low associations,” not on musical grounds.\textsuperscript{87} “With the exception of the mouth organ (笙) all the native musical instruments have irreverent associations.”\textsuperscript{88} Because of their low associations, Chinese musical instruments “are inconsistent with the sense of reverence.”\textsuperscript{89} “The use of instruments would lower the standard of church music, as the Chinese musical instruments do not appear suitable for any such purpose.”\textsuperscript{90} “Chinese music is not only inconsistent with the sense of reverence but would really do more harm than good, as the playing of such instruments can only be heard in low-class rooms and drives people’s minds to think of evil things,” stated another convert.\textsuperscript{91} Instead, they fully endorsed the use of such Western instruments as the organ, the cornet and wind.

\textsuperscript{85} Wang Chung-Yu, p. 339. 
\textsuperscript{86} Bitton, p. 205. 
\textsuperscript{87} Bitton, p. 205. 
\textsuperscript{88} Bitton, p. 205. 
\textsuperscript{89} Bitton, p. 205. 
\textsuperscript{90} Bitton, p. 205. 
\textsuperscript{91} Bitton, p. 205.
and stringed instruments as they “are alike conducive to reverence and would be acceptable to the majority of Christians.”

In spite of their overt advocacy of Western church music, not all Chinese Christians were content with the notion of a wholesale importation of Western church tunes. They either explicitly or implicitly stated the necessity and possibility of a future Chinese hymnody. While some Chinese Christians were optimistic about the future of a Chinese church music, others, however, expressed an internationalist sentiment by questioning the need to have such a hymnody. One convert, for example, was openly sceptical about the necessity of differentiating between China and the rest of the Christian world. “As the hymns used throughout Christendom are sung with practically the same music,” he asserted, “it is not feasible to adopt any music that is peculiar to the Chinese.”

Some Chinese Christians cast doubt on the validity of the missionary assertion that Chinese voice was not suited to sing authentic Christian hymns. “I think the Chinese vocal capacity is quite equal to foreign melodies,” one convert stated. One Chinese Christian, however, showed his agreement with Laura White and other missionaries by stating “[t]he untrained Chinese voices on an average are low and cannot manage the high F with ease and in the proper way. Their sense of half-tones is more or less defective.”

These Chinese voices are significant in that they marked the coming of age of native Christians in the reception of Western music. Up to this point, as David Sheng has pointed out, “native Christians were only silent recipients of whatever hymns the

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92 Bitton, p. 205.
93 Bitton, p. 203.
94 Bitton, p. 201.
95 Bitton, p. 201.
foreign missionaries gave them."\(^{97}\) Now they were no longer content to be the docile and voiceless recipients and demanded their voices heard.

**Missionary Debates on Sensual and Spiritual Music**

Above I have mentioned that when Protestant missionaries first entered China in any number after the Opium War of 1842, the musical repertoire they introduced consisted mainly of late eighteenth-century strophic hymn and psalm tunes. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, American evangelical and gospel hymn tunes in verse-chorus alternation began to enjoy wider popularity in China. This was a cause of some grave concern for some missionaries. The Rev. F. L. Norris of the Church of England Mission Beijing, for example, wrote in 1909:

I have no hesitation in saying that the music which we often venture to offer to Almighty God has no excellence at all unless it is considered that mere popularity is excellence…. The type of music which we find in Moody and Sankey’s Hymnbook was never intended primarily for devotion, but for edification; but its lamentable popularity …. has caused it to be constantly intruded into devotional worship in utter forgetfulness of the need to intrinsically good music.\(^{98}\)

The ideal music for congregational use, according to him, should possess “the two essential qualities”, namely “intrinsic goodness in itself and self-control in its performance.”\(^{99}\) For this sake, he encouraged singing of solemn nature such as singing in unison with octave accompaniment and the use of Gregorian music instead of Chinese tunes.\(^{100}\)

Advocating the introduction of the best kind of Western music to China, Laura White asked:

\(^{97}\) Sheng, p. 173.  
\(^{100}\) Norris, p. 183.
Is our only reason for withholding our best, the sorrowful truth that we missionaries are only familiar with Moody and Sankey music, not knowing the older and better hymns? Then let us send to the homeland for our dust-covered hymnals and learn the many hymns that for centuries have been the solace of God’s singing saints. These are translated into Chinese with better results than the Moody and Sankey collection and the lesser lights – Stainer, Smart, Dykes, Monk, etc. Practically I selected only good composers.  

By “good composers” she meant composers of Western classical tradition, as she explained: “I selected the tunes from the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Church of England hymn books. Many were written by Beethoven, Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn.” Apart from the fact that “Chinese voices seem better adapted to the older, slower standard tunes of our hymnals, especially the stately, measured, rich, warm German chorals”, she argued, “the Chinese show a national characteristic in really preferring the better and more dignified kind of music.”

Timothy and Mary Richard were certainly in favour of selecting the “more dignified kind of music”. In the Xiao shipu, they included several anthems such as “God Save the Emperor[sic]”, “Russian National” and a “Dervish Air” as well as “other pieces for choirs.” Chinese tunes included in the Xiao shupu are mainly religious in character and, musically, slow in tempo. The reason for the inclusion in the Xiao shipu of the following Buddhist tune was due as much to its melodic sweetness as to the fact that “the music strongly reminded me of the Gregorian chants and responsive singing of the ancient Church.”

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101 White, p. 592.
102 White, pp. 591-92.
103 White, p. 592.
105 Richard, Forty-Five Years, p. 171.
Among those who shared Norris and White’s dim view of the Moody and Sankey types of American popular gospel tunes were some Chinese Christians. In fact, the aforementioned Wang Chung-yu was among the earliest to voice his strong disapproval of the type of “sensational” music introduced to the Chinese Church by the missionaries of the late nineteenth century. As early as 1901, he wrote:

Alas! How sad is it to think that this [music], the most precious part of our nature, has oftentimes been blunted by what is called by Marx the Aubergistic music, i.e., music of a sensational character without having a tint of spirituality in it. But still sadder is it to see that the majority of missionaries have introduced this kind of sensational music into the Chinese church, whether from ignorance or indifferentism or some philosophies of their own.\(^{106}\)

Wang particularly abhorred the fact that “the Chinese church, taken as a whole, is now flooded with a kind of sensational music,” which he denounced as “Sankeyism.”\(^{107}\) Like Norris and White, Wang contrasted popular American gospel tunes with the music of Western classical composers:

What is the difference between a Bach and a Sankey? It is at bottom a difference of materialism and spiritualism in their wide unrestricted sense. The music of Sankey is sensational, the music of Bach is spiritual, and calls forth the innermost feeling of our being. American music (I mean sacred music, i.e., church music) as represented by such popular composers as Sankey, Bliss, Booth, McGranahan, etc., of whom Sankey is the typical one, is simply deteriorating in its effects, and by them it is “dragged down to the trivialities and nothingness of common life.” …. Go with me now to what is commonly called a revival meeting in America. Certainly they use Sankey and such American writers who are, of course, their favourites. We notice that they bawl out over some choruses and refrains, and we may be led to cry out with them. What do we find in use after the meeting? Nothing! But only a faint idea that we have sung something. Our spiritual nature is still, alas, as dormant as ever. The music is sensational and superficial and cannot take root in us.\(^{108}\)

After likening “Sankeyism” to “those trashy novels [which] can only be ousted by introducing such masterpieces as Haydn’s Creation, etc”, Wang suggested that “children as well as men must be taught to sing good music,” by which he meant “the

\(^{106}\) Wang Chung-Yu, p. 335.  
\(^{107}\) Wang Chung-Yu, p. 338.  
\(^{108}\) Wang Chung-Yu, p. 337.
music composed by such composers as Sullivan, Dyke, Monk, Bach, Mason, etc., etc..

Besides the issue of “materialism and spiritualism”, Wang was also incensed by the missionary rationale for introducing simple and sensational music to the Chinese church:

To say that we Chinese cannot comprehend music of a higher type is equivalent to saying that the Chinese cannot comprehend the high moral and spiritual teaching of Jesus Christ, which contrary to theory and fact. Musical nature is not a quantity, it is a quality; and this nature only requires proper stimulation to be awakened. It is quite true that the Chinese taste of music is dormant, but this gives us stronger reason to cultivate it by the use of good music. The fact that you are weak, shows that you ought to take good and nutritive food; the fact that you are sinful, impels you to take moral and spiritual lessons; similarly, the fact that your musical taste is moribund, requires proper training in good and spiritual music.\(^\text{109}\)

On a technical level, Wang refuted the missionary assertion that the Chinese simply could not hear or reproduce some of the semitones and phrases that come easily enough to an Englishman and music of the Sankey type, being much more simple, should be the only music into which the Chinese congregation ought to be initiated. Citing a Chinese example where the students of Tongzhou College successfully performed difficult music such as Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” to back up his argument, he concluded:

No one will say that the girls in the Berlin Foundling House and in St Stephen’s Church in Hong Kong cannot execute the proper movements and expressions of the good and even complicated music they use, if he will go there and hear with his own ear. No one will deny them the simple name singer when he heard the excellent rendering of music at Christmas time. These examples serve to show that what the Chinese lack is not musical taste but proper instruction which the missionaries ought to take the trouble – whatever it will cost them – to give.\(^\text{111}\)

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\(^\text{109}\) Wang Chung-Yu, p. 337.

\(^\text{110}\) Wang Chung-Yu, p. 339. Wang Chung-yu was by no means exaggerating the capability of the Chinese in performing Western polyphonic music. As mentioned above, as early as late 1854, Helen S. C. Nevius had already had success in training a choir of Chinese boys and girls “capable of carrying all four parts, soprano, alto, tenor and bass.” See Nevius, Our Life in China, p. 42.

Wang Chung-yu may have been the first Chinese to voice his disapproval of American musical sensationalism in Chinese churches but he was certainly not alone. Other Chinese Christians were also concerned with what they regarded as the low state of church music in China. In the above-mentioned survey of opinions on Church music conducted in 1909, one Chinese respondent held that the music or melodies for use at the Christian church “should be classical.” Another declared emphatically that he did not “believe in sensationalism in the Church of God here in China or elsewhere.” Like Wang eight years earlier, he specifically denounced the use of foreign tunes “of the Sankey [original italic] type,” maintaining that “church music should be solemn and impressive.”

Music for the Privileged: The Case of the McTyeire School for Girls

In her study of sports and physical education in American Protestant mission schools in China, Gael Graham has demonstrated convincingly that the important developments that changed the character of mission schools in the 1870s and 1890s were not brought by “missionaries’ actions alone” but rather “a complex dynamic of initiative, negotiation, and accommodation between Chinese patrons and missionary educators influenced these changes.” This is just as true of music teaching in mission schools. As seen above, calls for the introduction of Western classical music did not come from missionaries alone. Chinese demands for Western music of a higher order from the late 1890s onwards were equally high. Not only were Chinese Christians no longer satisfied with simply and sensual gospel tunes, Chinese of privileged background, sensing the superiority of Western learning, also demanded

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112 Bitton, p. 208.
113 Bitton, p. 209.
instruction in more sophisticated forms of Western music. The teaching of Western music of the classical tradition at the McTyeire School in Shanghai, known in Chinese as Zhong-Xi Nüshu 中西女塾 (Chinese-Western Girls’ College), is a case in point.

Founded by the missionary reformer Young J. Allen in 1892 as a part of a three-tiered educational system to promote Western values and ideals, the McTyeire School for Girls was run from its beginning to 1900 by an American Southern Methodist Laura Askew Haygood (1845-1900). A cultural imperialist at heart, Young J. Allen was convinced that what Chinese needed was “religion to bind him to God; morality to regulate his intercourse with his fellow man; and science to teach him the properties and uses of things.” In his opinion, a liberal education in conjunction with a fundamental knowledge of Christianity was the key to bringing these to fruition. Thus in 1882, barely a year after being appointed superintendent of China mission of the Methodist Church, South, Allen founded in Shanghai the Anglo-Chinese College (Zhong-Xi shuyuan 中西書院). In establishing the Anglo-Chinese School, Allen had actually envisioned a three-tiered educational system, which would encompass at the first level a primary school for boys and one for girls, two high schools at the second level and a college at the third level.

As can be expected, “the Bible is the basis of instruction” of the College. But Allen’s strategic thinking also saw him placing an emphasis on music as a tool not only to propagate God’s messages but to transmit Western values and ideals as well. This is clearly manifested in the curriculum he designed for his students. Apart from teaching English, Chinese Classics, religion, and sciences, the College from the very

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beginning laid a strong emphasis on music, offering formal instruction in both vocal and music (qinyun 琴韵) throughout its required eight-year schooling.\textsuperscript{119} Besides, Allen also took upon himself the task of compiling music textbooks. At the meeting of the School and Textbook Series Committee, convened in May 1886, he “reported that he had a Music and Tune Book ready.”\textsuperscript{120} This book was put to the press in February 1887.\textsuperscript{121}

With the success of the Boys’ School (over 140 students were admitted),\textsuperscript{122} Allen proceeded to establish the McTyeire School for Girls in March 1892. Laura A. Haygood of Women’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church was specially recruited to head the school.

A graduate of Wesleyan Female College in Macon, Georgia, Haygood came from a middle class family background and was well versed in French, Greek, German and English literature.\textsuperscript{123} She began her career as a missionary educator by opening her own high school in Atlanta in 1865. As a devout Methodist, Haygood shared Allen’s belief that Christian ideals as embodied in a person’s moral character and refined breeding could be instilled through a mixture of Christian teaching and a liberal arts education. She saw the McTyeire not only as an instrument for evangelism but also as a vehicle to train her Chinese pupils in the language, value, and manners of the Anglo-American colonialists. This is partially reflected in the

\textsuperscript{119} Lin Lezhi [Young J. Allen], “Zhong-Xi shuyuan kecheng guitiao” 中西書院課程規條 (Curriculum and Regulations of the Anglo-Chinese School) (1880), reprinted in Sun Ji’nan, YYJN, pp. 248-9; Wu Yongyi, YYJY, p. 347.
\textsuperscript{120} A. Williamson, “To the Editor of the Recorder”, \textit{CR}, Vol. 17 (Dec., 1886), p. 477.
\textsuperscript{121} A. Williamson, “Report of School and Text Book Committee”, \textit{CR}, Vol. 18 (Feb., 1887), p. 79.
\textsuperscript{122} Bennett and Liu, “Christianity in the Chinese Idiom”, p. 397, n13.
emphasis on piano music in the school curriculum and the wholesome educational environment she created at the McTyeire Home and School.\textsuperscript{124}

The McTyeire was unique in that it was set up not as a charitable school for children of the humble classes, like previous missionary educational establishments for girls. It was a modern educational institution especially designed for “girls of the better classes who cannot be brought into our day schools or charity schools – whose parents are able and willing to pay for having their daughters taught.”\textsuperscript{125} Like similar schools in the United States and Europe, Western classical music constituted a vital part of the McTyeire curriculum and its extracurricular activity. When the school was formally opened in March 1892, it had the following four stated objects: to furnish a liberal education in both Chinese and English; to give instruction in Western music; to exercise a wholesome influence upon the mental and moral habits of Chinese girls; and to inculcate a knowledge of the truths and principles of the Christian religion.\textsuperscript{126} The fact that “to give instruction in Western music” was second in order is indicative of the importance of music in the pedagogical thinking of Allen and Haygood. Unlike some of her fellow Protestants such as the Mateers and the Richards, Laura Haygood showed no interest whatsoever in China’s indigenous culture. In practice, Haygood adopted “as far as practicable the Western modes of class instruction.”\textsuperscript{127}

Although the attention paid to Western music at the McTyeire School reflected much of Allen’s evangelical thinking, it also reflected his astute response to a growing


\textsuperscript{125} Oswald E. Brown and Anna M. Brown, \textit{Life and Letters of Laura Askew Haygood} (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1904) cited in Ross, p. 212.


Chinese demand for instruction in modern subjects such as English, mathematics, commerce and science. For the Chinese elite residing in littoral China, who toward the end of the nineteenth century began to realise the crucial link between the educational practices of the West and its wealth and power, the Western-oriented curriculum offered at the McTyeire School satisfied their newly-aroused interest in Western modernity. Western music, especially Western instruments such as the piano, appealed to the Chinese of comprador and merchant backgrounds the same way as it had served the pretensions of the rising bourgeoisie in the West.\(^\text{128}\) Emblematic of Western modernity and of wealth and privilege, Western music of the classical type satisfied the pretensions of the rising Chinese middle class to superior social status. For this reason, Western music, despite its lack of practical value, became a subject highly sought after at the McTyeire School.

Instruction in piano was so popular that “about one third or a half of the school students chose to learn the piano.”\(^\text{129}\) As in its European context, studying music for social pretensions was by no means cheap at the McTyeire. In addition to the already expensive school fees, students who chose to study music would have to pay an extra charge of two silver dollars per month.\(^\text{130}\) Despite this stiff fee, “most of the parents insisted that their daughters be taught to play the piano.”\(^\text{131}\)

The emphasis placed on Western classical music at McTyeire also reflected Haygood’s approach to evangelism. Like many American Protestant missionaries who arrived in China at the turn of the twentieth century with a modern educational background, Haygood regarded teaching her students Western values as an important

\(^{128}\) Richard C. Kraus has briefly traced the rise of the piano in its European social and political context. See *Pianos and Politics in China*, pp. 8-15.

\(^{129}\) Xue Zheng, p. 104.


\(^{131}\) Xue Zheng, p. 104.
part of Christian moulding. By teaching her students American values and manners and the gender conventions of white, middle-class America, Haygood represented a new brand of women Christian evangelists who sought to extend “over the world those blessed influences, which are to renovate degraded man, and ‘to clothe all climes with beauty.’”\textsuperscript{132} The teaching of Western music at McTyeire, in the eyes of some of its pupils, certainly falls into this design. In her reminiscences, Xue Zheng 薛正, a graduate and later principal of the McTyeire School from 1936 to 1952, writes:

Haygood very solemnly listed the teaching of Western music as one of her aims of running the McTyeire Home and School. Why did she especially precede the word “music” with an adjective “Western”? This is not at all difficult to understand as she wanted to use music to serve her country. Music, as we all know, is particularly powerful in moving people emotionally. Besides, it is free from the constraints of the written words and therefore is the most effective means to reach the hearts and souls of people. [This is why] none of the mission schools could afford to neglect the importance of music. McTyeire was no exception.\textsuperscript{133}

Given the time (1978) and social and political circumstances under which Xue Zheng wrote her reminiscences, it is not hard to understand Xue’s value-laden phraseology and the usual quotient of nationalistic sentiment. Yet Xue’s main contention that Haygood’s use of Western music resulted from her imperialistic impulse does point to a facet of Sino-Western musical contact in the late Qing period that is usually overlooked by students in the West. Haygood was imperialistic not so much in an economic or political sense but certainly in a cultural sense.

As a pious Christian and a firm believer of the power of education in making the heathen to see the light, Laura Haygood shared many of her mentor’s convictions and emulated many of his educational practices. Allen, who, together with Gilbert Reid, Timothy Richard, and W. A. P. Martin, was to exert important influence on the political reformism of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, especially their advocacy for

\textsuperscript{132} Catharine Beecher, \textit{A Treatise on Domestic Economy}, (1842), cited in Hunter, p. Xiii.
\textsuperscript{133} Xue Zheng, pp. 103-04.
educational reform, was a firm believer in the superiority of Christian education and from very early on he became convinced of the importance of literary work in carrying out missionary work. This was evidenced by his editorship of the hugely influential missionary publication *Wanguo gongbao* (The Globe Magazine). For Allen, Christian ideals as embodied in a person’s moral character and refined breeding can be instilled through a mixture of Christian teaching and a liberal arts education. In his mind, music was one of the effective means by which these goals could be realised. This was why in the curriculum he designed for the Anglo-Chinese College in 1880, he placed such a strong emphasis on the study of music that among the various school subjects he only stipulated music as the subject to be studied throughout the college’s required eight-year schooling.

Above I have mentioned that the establishment of the McTyeire School was an outgrowth of Allen’s conviction that emancipation of women in Chinese society was of paramount importance. As a progressive-minded missionary, Young J. Allen was convinced of the importance of “the presence of a superior civilization on the shores of China.” He believed that one of the chief elements of this Christian civilisation “is woman enthroned in the family, with liberty of entrance and egress, and … a more intimate acquaintance with foreign ideas, manners, and customs, especially on the subject of the family and social relations.” By establishing the McTyeire School

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135 For an account of Allen’s involvement with the publication, see Bennett and Liu, pp. 159-96.


137 Cited in Bennett, “Doing More Than They Intended”, p. 250.
for Girls and putting the like-minded Haygood in charge, Allen effectively moved a
step further toward realizing his grand plan of reforming China through instilling
Western values and manners in the minds of China’s privileged classes.

Haygood proved to be an excellent executioner of Allen’s plans. By running
McTyeire the way she did, she certainly helped the transfer of American values in
China. 138 Her attention to music can perhaps be interpreted as her way of transferring
her beliefs to the Chinese. Music at the McTyeire comprised voice, theory, piano and
other instrumental music. Students began their musical study once they entered the
primary department of the school. In the case of piano, no less than twelve years
were required to complete the course. Clearly the comprehensive course of studies
that Haygood herself had taken as a student in the United States was the model she
espoused for her students. In spite of an overwhelming emphasis on piano, students
were also provided with the options to study other branches of Western music such as
choral singing, string instruments, theory, history, and even composition. Students
who chose to study music could obtain a separate certificate upon completion of their
course. Although few students managed to gain a diploma in music at the time of
their graduation due to the lengthy period required, graduates of McTyeire by and
large had a much better knowledge and skill in Western music than those of other
similar schools. 139

As a cultural imperialist, Haygood showed no interest in China’s indigenous
culture. All teaching materials used were imported from the United States and

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138 The theme of Americanization in the McTyeire is much discussed in Xue Zheng’s article.
139 This can be seen by the following testimony: “Our teacher was a lady by the name of Zhang.
She was invited by Mr. Wu from the McTyeire School for Girls. She was a very good singer and a
good pianist as well. She divided us into four groups and taught us to sing while accompanying us
on the piano. It was through her teaching that I got to know the huge difference between a do in
key of C and a do in the key of G. As far as teaching methods were concerned, she was far superior
to my previous music teachers.” See Li Dongfang 黎東方, Pingfan de wo 平凡的我 (An Ordinary
consisted of works of famous Western composers. As far as music teaching content was concerned, voice and instrumental majors focused exclusively on the repertoires of Western Classical tradition. Chinese music as a rule was excluded entirely from the curriculum. Nor were Chinese works performed at the school concerts. Even in the 1920s when Chinese nationalist feeling ran high, Chinese works were still looked down upon as something inferior. This situation remained unchanged until 1944 when a Chinese music teacher was employed and started to introduce patriotic songs to the students.\footnote{Xue Zheng, p. 104.}

Theoretical subjects at the school were also patterned entirely on Western European models. In a bid to teach her students American-style gentility and manners in addition to imparting them, as discussed in a different context by Gael Graham, “the gender conventions of white, middle-class America that missionaries identified as ‘normal’”,\footnote{Graham, “Exercising Control”, p. 24.} Haygood also encouraged her students to choose “Expression” as their elective whereby they could learn the kind of oratorical skill so prized in American campuses. Alternatively they could practise the fine steps of European and American classical and folk dance.\footnote{Xue Zheng, pp. 103-4.}

The efforts of Haygood and her American successors to import wholesale American norms and Western pedagogical philosophy were also illustrated in the ways in which they encouraged their students to participate in public activities that had been traditionally regarded as inappropriate. For example, to help build up students’ confidence and overcome stage fright, the school stipulated a range of concerts to be given in public. Every fortnight students were required to perform in front of their teachers and fellow students in their departments. Every month a concert was scheduled for the whole school. Every six months the school requested its students to perform in front of their parents in a concert setting for the purpose of
facilitating frequent interactions between the school and its clientele. To expose students to a wide range of repertoires and to accustom them to the demands of public performance the school from very early on also started to organize students and faculty recitals and it was not uncommon for students to give public recitals upon their graduation. In addition, Haygood and her successors also saw to it that the students could have the best possible interaction with the wider public by organising annual gala concerts open to the municipal public. These events quickly became popular with the Shanghai musical public. Writing in 1937, the music educator, historian and critic Chao Mei-pa [Zhao Meibo 趙梅伯] congratulated the school on winning the first prize in the International Music Festival Contest. Benjamin Z. N. Ing [Ying Shangneng 應尚能], professor of voice at the National Conservatory of Music in Shanghai, also wrote of the McTyeire as musically “the most active” school where “compositions of a less serious nature, like *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Spectre’s Bride*, etc., can often be heard there.”

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In this chapter we have followed the same line of enquiry as Chapter Three by providing a critical examination of missionary discourses on the objectives, contents, methods, and problems in teaching Western music to Chinese Christians. But unlike

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145 Benjamin Z. N. Ing, “Music Chronicle”, *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1937), p. 57. The significance of the McTyeire in the history of Western music in China can perhaps best be seen in the impact its graduates had in China’s professional musical education. From very early on the faculty of the National Conservatory in Shanghai, established in 1927, consisted of alumni of the McTyeire. For example, Wang Ruixiang 王瑞娴 was one of the earliest Chinese piano teachers at the conservatory. Zhou Shu’an 周淑安, known as the first Chinese woman conductor who played a key role in the development of the voice department of the Conservatory, was also a McTyeire graduate. Huang Zi, dean of studies at the Conservatory from 1930 to 1937, took piano lessons with another McTyeire graduate Shi Fengzhu 史凤珠 while in Tsinghua College in 1913.
in the previous chapter we have also examined some small samples of the Chinese responses to Western music.

In his study of “the pedagogy of imperialism in nineteenth-century China”, James Hevia points out the shortcomings of “treat[ing] the Western presence in China as a known entity.” This criticism is also relevant to our study of the spread of Western music in China. As has been shown above, missionaries of different nationalities and denominations did not share a uniform strategy in teaching the Chinese to sing. Nor did they speak with one voice with regard to what types of Western music they ought to teach the Chinese. Their choices were often contingent upon such factors as time and locale, as well as their national, denominational, and educational backgrounds. In their responses to native resistance, some missionaries favoured the conciliatory approach of music synthesis while others guarded jealously what they regarded as the gems of the Western church repertoire.

Our discussion of Chinese views on church music in China demonstrates once again that the dissemination of Western music in non-Western societies was not a one-way process with a linear trajectory. While the missionaries were initiators of many of the innovations, their Chinese audience were not entirely passive recipients. By the turn of the twentieth century, a small minority of them had become impatient with being told what to do and begun to voice their concerns and their musical preferences.

CHAPTER FIVE

WESTERN MUSIC IN THE EYES OF CHINESE TRAVELLERS AND
THE ADOPTION OF MILITARY BANDS IN CHINA

Similar to Japan and the rest of the non-Western world, the forms of Western music introduced in China during the last decades of the Qing dynasty were three basic types: church music, military music, and music in the schools.¹ In previous chapters we have examined the initial introduction and early spread of Western music mainly through the work and writings of foreign missionaries. In the first part of this chapter we shall focus our attention on the Chinese points of view by examining early Chinese sources and analyzing the ways in which Western music was referred to and viewed by those who first came into contact with it. The purpose of this examination is to demonstrate that Western music was initially regarded as no more than an object of curiosity before reform-minded Chinese intellectuals and scholar-officials realised the importance of Western learning at the turn of the twentieth century. The second part of this chapter studies the history of the Western-style military band in China from its earliest presence to its adoption by modernisers of Chinese military forces in the last years of the nineteenth century. In following the fortunes of this particular form of Western music I want to demonstrate that Chinese agents of Western military music, like their counterparts in Meiji Japan, were totally utilitarian in their approach to Western music. In other words, the measures taken by Yuan Shikai, Zhang Zhidong and other members of the Chinese ruling classes to incorporate Western-style military bands into China’s military forces had nothing to do with the beauty of

Western music; nor was the ubiquitous use of military bands in Chinese urban centres a result of a Chinese appreciation of the superiority of Western musical culture.

**Western Music in the Eyes of Chinese Travellers, Christian Converts, and Diplomatic Representatives**

Before the Qing court started to send officials and students to study abroad at the turn of the twentieth century, information on things Western, including music, was extremely scarce. The limited amount of information came through the experiences of three groups of Chinese who for various reasons got entangled with foreigners either in China or abroad. The first such group consisted of those who went abroad despite the Chinese law forbidding them doing so. These people usually stood on the periphery of Chinese social and political respectability and their writings are neither plentiful nor detailed. The second group of Chinese included those who had personal contacts with Christian missionaries and lived in such entrepôts of Western culture as Shanghai and Hong Kong and even European countries. The information provided by this group, although not plentiful and often impressionistic, is often varied, depending on the temperament of the person, the extent of his contact with foreign personnel, the social and political landscape through which he moved and the places that he visited or lived. And the third group was composed of official envoys sent to Europe and America by the Qing court from the mid 1860s in response to foreign demands. The information provided by this last group was relatively plentiful in terms of descriptive accounts of various forms of Western music, of musical scenes, and Chinese reaction to Western musical culture. Although occasionally these diplomatic representatives, impressed with the musical scenes they encountered, described various types of Western music in clichéd lines taken from classical Chinese poems, few of them showed any genuine understanding of Western music as an art form.
Early Chinese accounts of Western music are mainly descriptive and generally devoid of any value judgment. The following account of a Dutch banquet scene in Batavia, Indonesia, by Wang Dahai 王大海, a native of Zhangzhou who had been wondering in Southeast Asia since 1709, was typical:

The music played at the banquet consisted of a mixture of stringed and bamboo instruments. Of the various instruments, one had the length of the *se* 瑟 [a large horizontal musical instrument, usually having 25 strings] and the sounds it produced were clear and distinct; another had the height of a human being which had to be played by a person standing tall and the music of this instrument was characterised by its loftiness and a sense of space; still another one had the shape of the *qin* 琴, the sound of which had the jingling of metal and was reminiscent of the great music of the ancient *daya* 大雅 [the Great Elegance]. All these musical instruments were articles of clever workmanship and skilled manufacture and the most expensive of which could each be worth a thousand pieces of gold.\(^2\)

Musical scenes such as theatres, singing and dancing were also mentioned in the writings of early Chinese travellers. One such example is found in a poem published in the December 1833 issue of the missionary periodical *Dong Xi yang kao meiyue tongji zhuan* 東西洋考每月統紀傳 (A General Monthly Record Examining the Eastern and Western Oceans Regions).\(^3\) In this poem, entitled *Landun shiyong* 兰敦十咏 (Ten Songs in Praise of London), the unnamed author described his excitement upon attending a theatre in London and was obviously delighted by the music, the costumes and the dance he had encountered.\(^4\) A similar example is found in Lin Zhen’s 林鎮 (1824-?) *Xihai ji you cao* 西海纪游草 (Jottings of My Journey to the

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\(^3\) This journal is the earliest Protestant periodical issued irregularly at Canton from 1833 to 1835, see Suzanne W. Barnett, “Protestant Expansion and Chinese Views of the West”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1972), p. 136.

\(^4\) This stanza is cited in full in Chen Lingqun, p. 24.
Western Ocean). Lin, a native of Fujian, worked as an interpreter for a foreign firm and travelled to the United States in 1847. In a poem praising his foreign mistress’ beautiful voice and graceful demeanour, he mentioned specifically in an explanatory note that although most foreign young women were good at various arts, she was particularly distinguished in playing the organ.\(^5\)

One of the earliest Chinese eyewitness accounts of Western music in its birthplace is furnished by a Catholic convert named Guo Liancheng 郭连城. Guo stayed in Rome for six months, having been taken there by an Italian Jesuit in September 1859. The musical scenes he encountered there include military brass bands, choral singing and instrumental music. Guo’s descriptions were characterised by a genuine interest in the subject. For example, when witnessing the playing of a Western military band he showed his considerable excitement by not only telling us such details as the “fifes and tabors were all made of brass” but also by remarking on the sounds of the instruments as “[so] sonorous and resounding [that they] pierce through clouds in the sky.”\(^6\) On another occasion, after listening to an English woman playing the piano, he praised the music as “clear and elegant”.\(^7\) As a Chinese Catholic, Guo’s most vivid description of a Western musical scene, not surprisingly, is of a Church choir scene:

February 2, 1860 was the feast of Mary’s presentation of Jesus at the temple. As part of a grand ceremony Mass was performed in Rome’s Boduolu [Pietro?] Cathedral. A dozen or so choristers were singing on the podium unaccompanied by any instrument. Their voices, resembling the sounds of flutes and pipes, were so high-pitched and sonorous that they pierce the clouds. Truly it was spectacular.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Chen Lingqun, p. 24.
\(^6\) Guo Liancheng 郭連城, Xi you bilue 西遊筆略 (Preface dated 1859), cited in Tao Yabing, Ming Qing jian de Zhong Xi yinyue jiaoliu 明清的中西音樂交流 (Musical Exchange during the Ming and Qing Dynasties) (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2001), p. 156.
\(^7\) Cited in Tao Yabing, p. 156.
\(^8\) Cited in Tao Yabing, p. 157.
Guo was different from other early travellers in that his experiences in Western music contained not just first-hand observation but also involved personal experimentation.

As recorded in his travel account *Xi you bilue* 西游筆略 (Preface dated 1859), he tried at least once to play the piano and thoroughly enjoyed it. And he also noted down a line of a score in order to illustrate the use of the five-line notation.9

Live musical scenes aside, some early Chinese travellers also recorded Western customs that involved music-making. In his *Hailu* 海錄 (Record of the Seas), Xie Qinggao 謝清高 (1765-1822), a native of Jiaying, Guangdong province, who drifted abroad when he was only eighteen years of age, made a brief reference to the English custom of having young girls singing and dancing whenever there was a celebration or festive gathering. He also noted the English tradition of having girls of wealthy and noble families taught the arts of singing and dancing at an early age.10

Of the early Chinese travel accounts, those by Wang Tao 王韬 (1828-1897), the Christian convert-turned-reformer, publisher and promoter of Western ideas, contain the fullest descriptions of Western music.11 Wang apparently took delight in Western music. When he first heard a foreign tune played for him on the piano at the

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9 Tao Yabing, p. 157.
11 Wang Tao has been the subject of intense scholarly attention both in China and the West. Besides such books as McAleavy’s *Wang Tao: The Life and Writings of a Displaced Person* (London, 1953), Paul A. Cohen’s *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T’ao and Reform in Late Ch’ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), Xin Ping’s *Wang Tao pingzhuang* 王韬評傳 (A Critical Biography of Wang Tao) (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1990), and Zhang Hailin 張海林’s identically titled monograph (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1993), scores of articles have also been published about Wang Tao. See Xia Liangcai 夏良才, “Wang Tao yu Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu” 王韬与中西文化交流 (Wang Tao and the Cultural Exchange Between China and the West) in *Jindai Zhongguo renwu* 近代中國人物 (Important Figures in Modern China) (Chongqing chubanshe, 1986), pp. 77-112. For a recent study of Wang Tao in English, see Elizabeth Sinn, “Fugitive in Paradise: Wang Tao and Cultural Transformation in Late Nineteenth-Century Hong Kong”, *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1998), pp. 56-81.
missionary Walter H. Medhurst’s residence in Shanghai in early 1848 he “found [it] very charming in its own way.” On one occasion Wang visited his neighbour, a Westerner with some facility for music, for the express purpose of hearing her play Western music. The following excerpt reveals vividly the kind of exuberant response Wang showed upon hearing her play:

The music changed several times within the space of a few seconds, rising and falling in quick succession. Sometimes it was as smooth as pearls being rolled in a plate, and, sometimes, as uninhibited as water being poured out of a bottle. [When depicting a heroic scene] it sounds like thousands of armoured horses galloping by and ocean billows thundering high. [When expressing sorrow] it reminds [the listener] of a prisoner, an exile, a grief-stricken widow or a love-sick woman whose grief could not be expressed in words. The music was so moving it was truly soul tearing.

Being based in Shanghai, where various Western music troupes began to appear soon after Shanghai became prosperous in the 1850s, Wang’s interest in Western music was in no small measure enhanced by his frequent attendance at concerts and various social gatherings. Wang’s adventurous spirit and his fun-loving disposition certainly motivated him to seek any and all opportunities to familiarise himself with, among other things, all forms of Western music. If Wang’s flight to Hong Kong in the spring of 1862 and his subsequent stay in the British colony did not enhance his knowledge of Western music in any discernible way, his sojourn of twenty-eight months in Europe (December 1867 - March 1870) certainly helped broaden his musical horizons. Wang Tao’s travels to various parts of Europe and prolonged stay in Scotland perhaps did “not radically alter his vision of the West”, but they certainly afforded him plenty of opportunities to hear Western music first hand. In fact, references to

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14 Cohen, p. 73.
musical scenes were made even before he reached Europe. In his diary, for example, he twice mentioned his chance encounters with groups of German musicians when the steamer he was travelling on made stops at Aden and Cairo and each time he noted in favourable terms his impressions after hearing them play.\(^{15}\)

While in Europe, Wang Tao was most fascinated by the ubiquitous presence of music on almost all public occasions. “In Britain, as a rule, whenever there is a grand occasion, a sumptuous feast or various entertainments a military band will be required to play under the stage.”\(^{16}\) Wang was also impressed with the spectacular musical scenes he witnessed in London and other European cities. For example, after visiting the Crystal Palace in London, he wrote in his diary:

There was a concert hall big enough to seat several thousand people. [When we got there] people were singing and playing instruments. With all instruments sounding together, the music almost stopped the passing clouds and pierced through the silks.\(^{17}\)

Wang’s description of the organ and the accompanying choir at St Paul’s Cathedral, London, also reveals much about his fascination with the grandeur and mechanical ingenuity of the instrument and the impressiveness of Western music:

Mounted right in the middle of the Cathedral is a huge organ. It is about four meters high. The sounds it produces are so sonorous that they travel for miles…In the Cathedral there are many choir boys singing hymns and psalms. An organist plays the instrument to harmonise the music. [The music], being harmonious, graceful and elegant, makes the listener forget his tiredness.\(^{18}\)

That Wang Tao was so obviously impressed by the musical scenes in Europe is clearly reflected in his frequent recourse to a well-known Chinese cliché “xiang e yun er sheng lie bo” 响遏雲而聲裂帛.\(^{19}\)

\(^{15}\) Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu*, pp. 74 and 77.


\(^{17}\) Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu*, p. 102.


\(^{19}\) Originally used in specific reference to Qin Qing’s excellent singing skills in the Spring and Autumn Period, this phrase is later used to describe excellence in singing in general. See Liao Fushu, *Zhongguo gudai yinyue jianshi*, pp. 26-27.
Wang Tao, of course, was not the only member of the Chinese elite who left detailed descriptions of Western music. From the mid 1860s the Qing court began to send officials to Europe either as diplomats or as visitors to learn the advanced technology of the West. As part of their job description, the early envoys were required to keep a detailed account of their daily activities in the West. The journals of these envoys, especially those of Zhang Deyi 张德彝 (1847-1919), also furnish us with some useful information on matters such as genres of Western music, types of Western musical instruments, occasions on which music was used and performance skills. Moreover, these journals also provide us with necessary contextual data concerning the ways in which early Chinese officials viewed Western music and reacted to a particular piece of music or to a type of musical performance. Being diplomats they were duty bound to attend official functions and important social gatherings and thus their exposure to Western musical culture was by and large through chance encounters on occasions such as official receptions, balls, banquets, concerts and so on organised by their European or American hosts. It is not surprising to see that descriptions of ballroom dances, masquerades, musical scenes encountered at official and private entertainments, museums, art galleries and official ceremonies, military bands and theatres are abundant while references to specific composers or musical pieces are conspicuously lacking. On the whole, their accounts of Western musical activities are fragmentary and their comments impressionistic and

20 Described as “a first-class diarist, a born writer with a frivolous almost Pepysian interest in trivia for their own sake” (Frodsham, p. xl.), Zhang Deyi, also known as Zhang Deming 张德明, was a member of the Chinese division of the Bordered Yellow banner. In 1866 at age nineteen he went on tour to Europe. Unlike the majority of the early Chinese diplomats, Zhang was young, energetic and fun-loving with an insatiable appetite for novel things. In addition to his youthful enthusiasm, as a student in the English department of the Tongwen guan, he had the bonus of being able to read and speak English. But most important of all is the fact that he was not only fond of music but also in possession of some musical skills. Zhang’s diaries of his eight European missions are one of the main sources of China’s information on Western musical culture prior to the advent of mass communication and the rise of a modern periodical press in the late Qing China. For an English translation of Zhang’s journals, see J. D. Frodsham, The First Chinese Embassy to the West: The Journals of Kuo Sung-t’ao, Liu Hsi-hung and Chang Te-yi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).
perfunctory. Apart from being an object of curiosity, Western music clearly did not seem to have much appeal to the majority of the Chinese envoys either as an art form or a means of governance.

Writing of “the Chinese who gravitated toward a more nationalistic world view before the Sino-Japanese War of the 1894-1895,” Paul Cohen notices “a curious blend of sharp resentment and more than grudging respect” that characterises the attitudes of early Chinese reformers such as Wang Tao, Guo Songtao 郭嵩焘 (1818-1891), Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1852-ca.1923), Hong Rengan 洪仁玕 and a small handful of others toward the West. In the case of music, early Chinese elite members as represented by Wang Tao and Zhang Deyi certainly displayed more than a grudging respect toward the West. In fact, Wang Tao’s appraisal of Western musical art can even be said to be laudatory. But on closer scrutiny, the respect often had more to do with their admiration for the technological superiority of Western music than with their appreciation of its artistic or aesthetic quality. This can be seen in their comments on Western musical instruments.

Of the various Western musical instruments, keyboard instruments stood out as the instruments with which the Chinese were most impressed. The organ in particular served as a constant source of awe to early Chinese travellers abroad. This was due as much to the instruments being marvels of Western manufacturing technique as to the beauty of the sound. For example, Guo Songtao, head of the first Chinese embassy to the West in 1876, described the organ he saw in the Royal Albert Hall in March 1877 in such detail that it contrasted sharply with his normal brevity in mentioning Western musical scenes:

The organ was situated in the middle of the hall. Being the largest organ in the world it comprises several thousands pipes on both sides and three valves. It

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21 Cohen, p. 62.
uses a kind of mechanical device to blow wind into it and its sound effects are such that they resemble those of crocodiles, whales, drum and bells combined. [In fact the sounds are so sonorous that] they fill the hall and the courtyard. Truly it is a spectacular scene.

In fact, the organ as a mechanical device of the West so fascinated him that he offered another more mechanically oriented description of it a few days later upon spotting an organ in the prison chapel of a London prison:

Having tried to play the instrument myself, I got to know that there are actually mechanical devices on both sides of the instrument. When the instrument is played, air will be sucked in through its pipes by the mechanical devices, producing a sound similar to that of sheng 箫 [reed organ], di 笛 [horizontal bamboo flute], zhong 锣 [bronze bell] and nao 镗 [bronze bell with a tongue].

Zhang Deyi’s equally detailed but slightly more accurate account of his sighting of the instrument in Boston in August 1868 provides another example of how impressed early Chinese envoys were by the organ:

At the front of the hall is a huge organ which is four zhang tall and two zhang and five chi wide. It is made of hardwood with forty-six brass pipes inserted. [The pipes] are one zhang and five chi in height and three chi in circumference. There are several hundred small pipes inside [the organ]. One man sits at the organ and plays the instrument with his four limbs. Once the instrument gets started, air is produced and so is the sound. It can produce sounds that are as loud as a thunder or the roaring of a lion. It can also generate tones as faint and subtle as the humming of a phoenix or the chanting of a dragon. According to my local informant, this organ is matchless in the world except for the one in Rome. Although this hall is more than eight zhang tall and so spacious as to require twelve pillars to support the roof, when the instrument is played, the floorboards would inevitably reverberate. From this you can tell how big the organ is.

Yet in spite of the Chinese admiration for Western manufacturing excellence, few Chinese diplomatic representatives showed any genuine interest in Western music as an art form. Nor did they regard Western music as superior to China’s indigenous music. Even Guo Songtao, the man who was “the first to point out to their sceptical

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countrymen that Western civilisation did indeed possess a firm basis of principle,”

did not believe all aspects of Western culture were superior to those of China. In fact,
when early Chinese elite occasionally compared Western and Chinese music, they
often tended to be in favour of the latter. Guo Songtao’s Confucian-induced Sino-
centrism was most explicit when he compared the Chinese concepts of *li* (decorum, or
proper conduct) and *yue* (music) with those of the West. As he wrote in his
journal during his tour de mission in 1876, “It is fairly obvious that this country
[Britain] is extremely well positioned so far as wealth, power and political
administration are concerned but in terms of literature, rites and music they are way
behind China.”

Even with such open-minded spirits as Wang Tao, Western music
was still no more than a curiosity, let alone a model of emulation.

In sharp contrast to the cultural iconoclasts of the 1910s and 1920s, early
Chinese travellers and government officials had complete confidence in their own
musical tradition. Zeng Jize 曾紀澤 (1839-90), the eldest son of Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 and Guo’s successor as China’s minister to Great Britain, brought several Chinese
musical instruments with him when he was stationed in London. He often played
them and also took delight in composing songs in Chinese style and teaching embassy
staff to sing them. He was the one of the earliest to present a memorial to the Qing
court requesting the composition of a national anthem. On more than one occasion he
proudly shared with Westerners, including the conductor and composer Sir Julius
Benedict (1804-1885), his knowledge of Chinese theory of modulation and
demonstrated his mastery of various Chinese musical instruments.

Zhang Deyi also

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proudly tells us how satisfied he was when the Chinese folk song he sang at a dinner party was well received,\textsuperscript{28} and how delighted he was when he was able to answer some difficult questions put to him concerning Chinese music theory satisfactorily.\textsuperscript{29}

Similarly, Wang Tao took great pleasure in impressing his foreign friends with his ability to chant Chinese poems:

\begin{quote}
I chanted Bai Juyi’s \textit{Song of the Lute Girl} for her. The poem, being melodious and subtle in tonal change, was greatly admired by Ally. So impressed was she that she asked me to recite it again word for word so that she could transcribe the tune.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

Instead of denouncing China’s musical heritage, early Chinese travellers and diplomats sometimes subconsciously sought to demonstrate that Western ideas, values, and instruments were discovered and possessed by ancient Chinese sages independently of the West. In \textit{Yuanxue 原學} (On Learning), Wang Tao, for example wrote:

\begin{quote}
Let us take musical instruments as an example. As far as circulation of the seven tones and the modulation of the keynote are concerned, there is no difference between the European-made organ and China’s ancient instruments. The pipe lengths match the \textbf{[Chinese]} standards. Other musical genres such as military band music, percussion and wind music, as well as songs full of emotions had always been part of China’s musical tradition. But these genres have been lost.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

Citing a passage from the \textit{Analects}, he even went as far as to suggest that China’s loss of military musical tradition might have been responsible for the rise of military music in the West.\textsuperscript{32}

In their accounts of Western music early Chinese travellers and scholar-officials also revealed a deep-rooted utilitarian attitude toward music. Years of Confucian training had not only instilled in their minds a set of fixed ideas about what music should be but also led them to stress the social and political function of music at the

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\textsuperscript{28} Zhang Deyi \textit{Hanghai shuqi} in Zhang Jingwei, \textit{YYSL}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{29} Zhang Deyi \textit{Hanghai shuqi} in Zhang Jingwei, \textit{YYSL}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{30} Wang Tao, \textit{Manyou suiłu}, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{32} Liao Fushu, p. 207.
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expense of artistic and aesthetic appreciation. To them, proper music was never meant to be a form of sensual enjoyment but should function as a means of social or moral betterment. This notion of music is clearly indicated by the moral judgments they occasionally made concerning music they encountered. In spite of his open-mindedness and curiosity about all things Western, Guo Songtao, for example, was still very much a Confucian at heart when it came to judging what constituted proper music in terms of moderating human behaviour. As a minister representing the Qing court he often attended balls, receptions, soirées, and other functions. On these occasions he was often scandalised by what he regarded as inappropriate use of music and undignified behaviour on the part of foreign dignitaries and government officials:

Men and women dance together by holding each other’s arms but they do this while they all are in their official attire. There is something about these Western customs that I could never understand … When they dance they normally dance all night till dawn… From a Chinese perspective this is almost absurd.\(^{33}\)

Liu Xihong 刘錫鴻, assistant envoy to Guo Songtao in the first Chinese embassy to the West in 1876, also confessed his incomprehension in his dairy in 1877:

At parties at night many lamps and candles burn. Men and women mingle together, rubbing elbows and shoulders. Sometimes actors and singers are called in to perform plays, to sing and to play music to amuse the guests. (Some people sing and play themselves. European ladies play the piano to amuse the guests. No one finds this strange.)\(^{34}\)

Clearly what is for Westerners a simple matter of entertainment was to Guo and Liu something far more serious. To Guo and Liu, the promiscuous mingling of men and women singing and dancing all night was contrary to Confucian norms of propriety. Guo’s negative view toward ballroom dancing led him to object strongly to its introduction in China. He declared in his dairy: “had China had this, she would be

\(^{33}\) Liao Fushu, “Jindai Zhongguoren zuichu jiechu Xiyang yinyue de fanying” 近代中國人最初接觸西洋音樂的反應 (The Initial Chinese Reactions to Western music) in YYTW, p. 297.

\(^{34}\) Liu Xihong, Yingyao siji 英韻私記 (Private Jottings of a Voyage to England)(1877), p. 143. This translation is by Frodsham, p. 138.
truly benighted beyond redemption.” On a personal level, however, Guo enjoyed going to concerts and was more than willing to praise the musical achievements of the West. What was abhorrent to him was the Western practice of regarding dancing an integral part of their official business. Such practice, as far as Guo is concerned, was as much a violation of social and sexual decorum as a loss of the guoti 國體 or the dignity of the state. This is why he disliked the way high-ranking officials all dressed up in their official attire would spend the night drinking wine, singing and listening to music in the company of women. “Excessive indulgence in such trivial pursuits as admiring flowers and listening to music,” he declared emphatically, “is certainly not something that can be tolerated by the teaching of China’s ancient sages.”

If attending balls and indulging in music was so dimly viewed, learning music was even more objectionable. Even someone as enlightened as Wang Tao could not understand the reason why in Scotland children of good family background were trained to perform singing and dancing:

Learning to act is something that only people of lower social station would do. Yet in Western countries school children are encouraged to perform. Moreover, instead of denouncing it, everybody seems to be in favour of it. This is truly incomprehensible.

Some early Chinese envoys were uncomfortable with the extent to which Westerners indulged in music and unhappy with the excessive use of fast rhythms. In their view, this was contrary to the Confucian aesthetic ideal of slow and harmonious music. After witnessing some musical scenes on board a steamer for Russia, Miao Yousun 缪祐孙, for example, remarked disapprovingly: “Their music is rhythmically too hurried and melodically over-elaborate.” From this seemingly musicological criticism he went on to criticise Western materialism by saying, “Just like the way

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Westerners emphasise materialism, [their music] suffers from an acute lack of harmony, equilibrium and tranquillity.”

Yet early Chinese travellers and envoys did not regard all forms of Western music as trivial pursuits with little practical value. Again the Confucian notion of music proved to be the deciding factor behind their approval of some forms of Western musical practice. For example, most Chinese approved of the types of music used in Western schools, military drills, state ceremonies and churches. Guo Songtao, for example, was so delighted by the songs students sang in praise of the Lord and the monarch that he was prompted to write in his diary:

The ancient Chinese sages educated people by teaching them songs first. The reason for this is to help them express their aspirations and moderate their temperaments in order to cultivate a sense of harmony in their hearts. The lyrics [I heard today] are meritorious enough to inspire in people's hearts a spontaneous sense of loyalty, love and compassion. The ideal music of our ancient sages would not have been any better.

Guo’s high praise was because he saw in the students’ singing an embodiment of the highest ideals of Chinese antiquity. The texts of children’s songs in this case stressed the virtues of love, affection and altruism. Li Shuchang 黎庶昌 (1837-1897), who accompanied Guo to Europe as a third counselor in 1876 and subsequently spent four years in Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain, showed his agreement with Guo. After visiting several schools, Li remarked on the relative merits of using music in English schools, pointing out specifically the power of music on the emotions and its efficacy in cultivating loyalist feelings towards the monarch. This emphasis on music’s utilitarian value was not lost on other Chinese diplomats. Liu Xihong, for example, revealed the utilitarian approach to music when he praised Western military

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39 Guo Songtao, Lundun yu Bali riji, cited in Chen Lingqun, pp. 30-31
40 For a brief biographical sketch of Li by Hiromu Momose, see Arthur Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (Taipei: Literature House Limited, 1964), pp. 483-84.
41 Li Shuchang, Xiyang zazhi 西洋雜誌 (Miscellaneous Notes of an Envoy to the West) (1877), reprinted in Zhang Jingwei, YYSL, p. 69
music for its usefulness in boosting soldiers’ morale while criticising the wastefulness of having too many theatres and entertainment places in London. Zhang Deyi, after visiting a London orphanage in July 1868, commended the practice of incorporating singing and playing musical instruments as part of the curriculum at the orphanage.

When visiting the University of Edinburgh, Wang Tao was equally impressed by the inclusion of music in the university curriculum.

Western Military Bands in China

Despite the practical value early Chinese envoys saw in certain forms of Western music, none of these Chinese observers was moved enough at the time to advocate the introduction of them in China. The realisation that Western music could be introduced as a means to speed up China’s modernisation process was not arrived at until the late 1890s.

As in Japan, where in every case “Western music was advocated for reasons of a very practical character,” the introduction of Western military music was closely linked to China’s search for wealth and power in the late nineteenth century. Once early Chinese military reformers were convinced of the practical uses of Western military bands they lost no time in incorporating them into their troops.

Scholars of Chinese music history generally agree that institutional instruction in Western military music began in 1895. Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was credited with having started this tradition when he founded a Western military band as

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42 Liu Xihong, *Yingyao siji*, cited in Chen Lingqun, p. 30
43 Zhang Deyi, *Ou Mei huanyou ji*, p. 91.
44 Wang Tao, *Manyu suilu*, p. 133.
45 Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan*, p. 5.
46 The presence of Western military bands in China goes back a long way. Fang Hao has provided two examples of the early presence of Western martial music on the island of Taiwan. One refers to an event in 1632 in which a Spanish army band escorted a procession of Christians holding a picture of Virgin Mary to a newly-built church and the other, happening in December 1661, concerns the occupying Dutch troops. See Fang Hao, *Zhong Xi jiaolong shi*, Vol. 5, pp. 7-8.
part of his ambitious programme for the modernisation of the Newly-Formed Army (xinjianjun 新建軍). On December 8, 1895, shortly after China’s defeat at the hand of Japan, the Grand Council presented a memorial to the throne recommending Yuan Shikai be commissioned to supervise the reorganising and training of the imperial military force based in Xiaoazhan, a garrison about thirty-five kilometres south-west of Tianjin. Following his German military advisers’ suggestion Yuan, in a bid to boost the morale and discipline of his soldiers, added a Western-style military band to his army of 3,000 infantrymen, 1,000 artillerymen, 250 cavalrymen, and 500 engineers. Initially comprising only a few men but later becoming quite sizable, this band, was trained by a German instructor by the name of “Gao Shida 高士达 (Gustav?)”. Yuan apparently did not want just to have one band. His plan was to institutionalise bands as part of his army organisational chart. The following details on the size of the band, the number of instruments used and terms and conditions of the players stipulated in the “Expenditure” section of his Xinjian lujun binglue lucun 新建陸軍兵略錄存 (A Record of the Administration of the Newly-Formed Army, 1898) illustrate clearly his overall intention:

- Infantry battalion (five battalions): a band of 120 players should be used.
- Artillery battalion (one battalion): a band of 24 players should be used.
- Cavalry battalion (one battalion) a band of 12 players should be used.
- Engineer battalion (half battalion) a band of 6 players should be used.

Players in the regiment of cavalry are to be paid a monthly allowance of eleven taels each while players in infantry and other regiments are entitled to a monthly allowance of five taels of silver and five cash. Each battalion is to be equipped with fourteen Western horns, four Western drums, two drums and gongs for announcing the time.

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49 Han Guohuang, “The Importation of Western Music to China,” p. 232.
By institutionally incorporating Western music into his army training, Yuan created a precedent. But there is evidence to suggest that China’s adoption of Western military music might have happened earlier. In a state of the field report published in July 1937, Xiao Youmei cited Li Hongzhang 李鸿章 (1823-1901) as the earliest proponent of Western military bands in China. According to Xiao, Li advocated the use of naval bands in his military and naval build-up and used them when he formally established the Beiyang 北洋 Fleet in 1888.51

A testimony to the early presence of Western military bands is the publication of an instruction manual in 1877 by the government press attached to the Jiangnan Arsenal (see Fig. 5:1). *Laba chuifa* 喇叭吹法 (How to Play the Trumpet) gives a fairly concise introduction to the way the trumpet should be played along with some introductory notes on the rudiments of Western notation and theory.52 This suggests that by the late 1870s some of proponents of the Self-Strengthening (yangwu 洋务) movement had become aware of the utility of Western military music in their pursuit of the technical and military superiority of the West. There is also evidence that by the mid 1880s at least China had already begun to manufacture her own Western-style

51 Xiao also suggested that at Li’s request military bands were also included in the organizational chart of the Zongli Yamen 总理衙門. See Xiao Youmei, “Shi nian lai de Zhongguo yinyue yanjiu” 十年來的中國音樂研究 (Research on Chinese Music in the Last Ten Years), reprinted in Chen Lingqun et al eds., *Xiao Youmei yinyue wenji* (Xiao Youmei’s Music Works), p. 449. However, given that the Zongli Yamen was set up as an ad hoc sub-committee of the Grand Council and Prince Gong said it would be as short-lived as possible, it is doubtful that there were bands in its organisational charts. For studies of the Zongli Yamen, see S. Meng, *The Tsungli Yamen: Its Organization and Functions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962) and Masakata Banno, *China and the West, 1858-1861: The Origins of the Tsungli Yamen* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

52 This little primer was orally dictated (口述) by Carl T. Kreyer and written down (筆記) by Cai Xiling 蔡錫齡. For more information about the book, see Han Guohuang, “Zaoqi Xiyue Dongjian de faxian” 早期西樂東渐迹的發現 (The Discovery of Evidence Concerning the Early Transmission of Western Music to China) in Han Guohuang, *Zi Xi Cu Dong* 自西徂東 (From the West to the East) (Taipei: Shibao chubanshe, 1981), Vol. 1, pp. 4 and 7. Kreyer originally came to China as a Baptist missionary from the United States and in 1870 he became a translator working at the Jiangnan Arsenal in Shanghai. Besides his work in the translation department, Kreyer also taught German in the attached school [Guang fangyan guan 庚方言館] for several years during the 1870s but he later resigned to accept a position as interpreter: see Knight Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1961), pp. 175, 178, 190 and 192.
military band instruments. For example, when Zhou Fu 周馥 (1837-1921), then intendant of Tianjin Customs Office, accompanied Yihuan 奕絻 (Prince Chun 醇亲王) to inspect the Beiyang naval defence force in June 1885, he noticed that the Huai army arsenal was producing trumpets and drums along with bullets, artillery shells, explosives, wire, and electric generators.53

Western military bands indeed exerted a strong appeal to early Chinese reformers. When Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909) formed the Self-Strengthening Army (Ziqiangjun 自強軍) in Nanjing in 1895, he also included military bands in the

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53 Zhou Fu, Chun Qinwang xunyue Beiyang haifang riji 醇親王巡閱北洋海防日記 (Daily Records of Prince Chun’s Inspection Tour of the Beiyang Naval Defence) cited in Tao Yabin, p. 201. Zhou Fu served Li Hongzhang from 1861 to Li’s death in 1901. From time to time he held such positions as Tianjin customs taotai and Zhili provincial judge but always continued to give Li substantial assistance. After Li’s death he became Sichuan governor-general, and from 1906 to 1907 was governor-general at Canton.
organizational chart of his army. The Qing court was also not slow in having a Western-style brass band established. The decree on the formation of the Imperial Guard Corps in December 1908 also proposed a military band comprising a bandmaster, a platoon leader, two first-class musicians, six second-class musicians, twelve third-class musicians, twenty-four trainees and five helpers. The Empress Dowager Cixi also took an interest in Western military bands. So much so “the Empress Dowager’s patronage of music,” complained Robert Hart (1835-1911) in a letter dated October 18, 1903, “threatens to decompose my Band.” The young Manchu general Tieliang 王文韶 (b. 1863), who was to replace the elderly Wang Wenshao 王文韶 in 1905 as a councillor in the all-important Grand Council, even resorted to poaching to get skilled musicians to serve in his army division.

Compared to Hart’s allowance of ten taels per month, Tieliang was willing to pay four

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58 As one of the first group of Chinese students who went to Japan for military schooling, Tieliang was instrumental in the formation of the New Army in 1903 and served as a key figure in the subsequent reorganisation of China’s standing armies. In late 1903, after returning from leading a military observation trip to Japan, Tieliang, as vice-president of the Board of Revenue, worked with Yuan Shikai on the creation of the Commission for Military Reorganisation, which was established in Beijing on 4 December of the same year with Prince Qing and Yuan at its head and Tieliang as assistant director. For more detail, see Edmund S. K. Fung, The Military Dimension of the Chinese Revolution: the New Army and its role in the Revolution of 1911 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), p. 20. Also see Mackinnon, pp. 78-79.
times that amount. Band members belonging to the Imperial Guard Corps were also well paid. Their pay was the same as officers in the other units of the Imperial Guard Corps, which were on the whole much better paid than the average soldier in the ordinary divisions. But ranked band members were paid more than ordinary privates in the infantry regiment or cavalry squadron.

The speed with which Western military bands were spread all over China led to an acute shortage of trained musicians in Western military music. This demand was partially the natural result of China’s military reforms begun, as noted earlier, in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War defeat. As a band usually constituted an integral part of a newly formed army division, the completion of these divisions and their subsequent distribution all over China certainly helped usher in a new age so far as the spread of Western military bands are concerned. Even before the completion of the army reorganization, the demand for trained musicians was already high. In 1903, for example, Yuan Shikai was obliged to set up a training school in Tianjin to remedy the situation. According to one account, this training school ran three short-term classes and each class had an enrolment of eighty students. In addition, Yuan also had a training course specially designed for a team of about fifty Manchu bannermen. After finishing their courses, the trainees were assigned to different army units. But during every New Year’s season they had to assemble in Tianjin for further assessments. No more assessment was required after three years.

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59 The I.G. in Peking, Vol. 2, p. 1375. Tieliang’s inducement for this player was indeed very generous. As Fung has shown, the normal allowance for a subaltern was 50 taels, while a first-class private only got 4.50 taels and second-class private 4.20 taels. See Fung, p. 24.
60 The organisation of the New Army was such that a typical division (zhen 鎮) consisted of two infantry brigades (xie 戰), one regiment (biao 標) each of cavalry and artillery, one engineer battalion (ying 营), one transport corps battalion, and a band. See, Fung, p. 21.
61 For a list of the fourteen divisions completed before the 1911 Revolution and their distribution, see Fung, p. 263, “Appendix 2”.
The craze for Western military bands in the last decades of the Qing was not confined to military camps. While military reformers saw Western-style brass bands mainly as a useful tool to boost soldiers’ morale, new-style schools adopted them
more as an emblem of modernity. This is vividly illustrated by the following account of the 1903 graduation exercises of the Nanyang Gongxue 南洋公學 (South China Public School):

One of the most interesting features of the programme was the military drill on the campus. The cadets were dressed in neat uniforms of modern cut and performed their evolutions with remarkable precision. A large and well-trained drum and fife corps added to the zest of the drill and presented a natty appearance in brown uniforms and cockaded caps.

Visual evidence of this phenomenon abounds. The following drawing published in the Xingqi huabao 星期畫報 (Weekly Pictorial) depicts a primary-school students’ band playing at an exhibition organized by the Ministry of Culture in 1907.

![Image of a band playing at an exhibition](Fig. 5: 4: From: Sally Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China*, p. 136.)

While Western military music was popular with enlightened Chinese officials and educational reformers, the adoption of European-style brass bands in schools was

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63 In an article published in the Shibao 時報 (Eastern Times) on August 20, 1917, Bing Tai 冰台 listed fifteen well-known military bands of disparate schools that were not only used in China’s military forces but also in Chinese schools. See Bing Tai, “Zhongguo junyueduo tan” 中國軍樂談 (A Brief Account of Military Bands in China), reprinted in Zhang Jingwei, YYSL, pp. 139-41.


by no means met with universal approval, as the following doggerel chanted by Shandong peasants can testify:

Beating foreign drums  打洋鼓
Blowing Western horns  吹洋号
Students at high schools are up to no good.  高等学堂净胡闹!
Instead of reading the Confucian “Four Books”,  不念四书
They follow the teaching of foreigners.  学洋教,
Instead of practising the art of archery,  不拉弓剑
They shout and yell on the playground  操场叫! 66

The custom of using Western-style bands on almost all social or festive occasions also caught on. “Well-off families hired Western-style bands on such occasions as weddings, whether or not the music played was suitable to the occasion.” 67 Speaking of a turn-of-the-century Shanghai wedding, one foreign writer who had travelled extensively in China wrote:

Two bands were stationed in the court, one Chinese and the other Filipino, the latter a contingent from the Municipal Band of the International Settlement. The contrast between them was ludicrous. The Filipino in fresh uniforms with shining instruments sat erect before their leader and played with spirit. The ten or a dozen Chinese were of all ages, their rags showing beneath faded red jackets and in their hands a collection of indescribable instruments on which from time to time they blew, pounded and pulled, to the evident enjoyment of all the guests but the few suffering foreigners present. 68

Funerals and even farewells were no exception. When Robert Hart, the Irishman who had occupied the important position of the Inspector-General of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Office since 1868, departed China for the last time in 1908, both his own band and other bands in the greater Beijing region played for him:

The morning of his going, I remember, broke fine and clear and the I.G.’s own band had come of its own accord to play ‘Auld Lang Syne.’ As the I. G. stepped from his sedan chair at the end of the platform his face wore an expression of bewilderment, but only for a moment. Then he turned to the

66 Quoted in Han Guohuang, “Zhongguo xiandai junyue zhaoshi chutan”, pp. 34.
commanding officer, and saying ‘I am ready,’ walked steadily down the lines of saluting troops while the bands all played ‘Home, Sweet Home.’

In the same year when the Guangxu emperor 光绪 (r.1875-1908) died, brass bands played Stephen Foster’s “Old Black Joe” at the emperor’s funeral. At the last emperor Puyi’s 溥仪 coronation ceremony, the palace bands were said to have bizarrely chosen to play the totally inappropriate and inauspicious tune of “John Brown’s Body.”

Fig. 5:5. A drawing published in the Dianshizhai Pictorial 點石齋畫報 depicting a Cantonese merchant who used a Western band to head a religious procession welcoming the spirits to the Temple of Tianhou, the Queen of Heaven.  

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In a study of the “Western Impact on World Music” the ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl holds that “learning the music quickly was … more of a function of

69 Bredon, pp. 248-49.
70 Han Guohuang, “Zhongguo xiandai junyue zhaoshi chutan”, p. 33.
71 From Dianshi zhai huabao 點石齋畫報 (The Dianshizhai Pictorial), reprint (Tianyi chubanshe, 1978), Vol. 6, pp. 134-35.
desire or pressure than simply of ability.” As we have seen, the metamorphosis in the Chinese attitude toward Western music certainly shows the importance of attitude in determining the Chinese choice of particular forms of Western music. The craze for Western bands in China at the turn of the twentieth century was a clear illustration of this “desire.” Because Western music was not acquired by the Chinese out of any particular interest in its artistic qualities, but “rather as necessary parts of a Western-derived table of organisation for the particular institution in question”, to use William P. Malm’s words in the context of Western music in Meiji Japan, a utilitarian motive was clearly the driving force behind this desire. Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong did not adopt German-style military bands in their armies for the sake of artistic enjoyment. Rather, they incorporated this particular form of Western music in order to hasten the process of the military modernisation. Their belief that in the Western military bands lay a morale-boosting and discipline-maintaining mechanism was the sole reason for their appropriation of this alien form. In this respect their utilitarianism was no different from that of the Christian missionaries discussed in previous chapters.

Yet, the efforts of these early military modernisers were not without positive spin-offs. The impact of their bands and the associated training programmes they helped set up went beyond the mere existence of the bands themselves. These military bands, because of their wide distribution, helped popularise one aspect of Western musical culture to the Chinese population. At the very least they were

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74 Wu Jianren 吳趼人 (1866-1910), the famous late Qing novelist, more than once mentioned Western style military bands in his *Bizarre Things Witnessed in the Past Twenty Years (Ershi nian muda zhi guai xianzhuang 二十年目睹之怪現狀)* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1986), *xia ce*, pp. 558, 617, 725 and passim. Wang Xiangqing also made similar observations. See Wang, *Wang Xiangqing biji* (Miscellaneous jottings of Wang Xiangqing) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1926), *xia ce, juan* 6.
instrumental in familiarising one segment of Chinese society, the military forces, with Western military music.

Members of the early Chinese bands were transmitters of Western music. Not only were they the earliest indigenous practitioners of Western music but, as far as music proficiency was concerned, they also surpassed the proponents of the school songs by a long way. To be sure, the latter group, as will be discussed in later chapters, was much more influential in their promotion of Western music, due undoubtedly to their advocacy of music in modern Chinese schools and their skilful use of modern mass media. But this influence is partly due to their vociferous voice, a factor helped by their generally high socio-economic status, and the weight of their pen. In terms of levels of proficiency in Western music, particularly in musical performance, they were by no means superior to the pioneer musicians in the employ of Yuan Shikai, Zhang Zhidong and especially Hart. When Xiao Youmei, founder of the National Conservatory of Music in Shanghai and the man commonly regarded as the father of modern Chinese music education, turned the amateur Beijing Daxue Yinyue Hui 北京大學音樂會 (the Musical Society of Peking University) into a full-fledged research and teaching institute in 1922, he turned to players formerly in the bands of Yuan Shikai, Cixi and Hart for expertise. Besides teaching string and wind instruments, these players also formed the nucleus of the institute’s seventeen-piece Western orchestra. Tan Shuzhen 譚抒真 (1907-2002), professor of violin at the Shanghai Conservatory and one of the first native players to play in the foreigner-dominated Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, recalls how impressed he was with the

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75 Xiao Youmei, *Putong yuexue* 普通樂學 (Introduction to Music), reprinted in Chen Lingqu et al eds., *Xiao Youmei yinyue wenji*, p. 251. Han Guohuang, “Beida yinyue chuanxisuo yanjiu” 北大音樂傳習所研究 (On the Conservatory of Music at Beijing University) in *Han Guo huang yinyue wenji*, p. 74. Han has demonstrated that although initially set up as a brass band, Hart’s band was later turned into a small-scale orchestra comprising brass, wind, and string instruments. See Han, “Hede yuedui yanjiu”, pp. 5-26.
general musical skills (such as score-reading) and performance technique of two former members, one clarinettist and one violinist, of Cixi’s band when he was a student in Beijing in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{76} Some of the band members like Mu Zhiqing 穆志清 (1889-1969) had even served as teachers at conservatories after the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949.\textsuperscript{77}

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\textsuperscript{76} Tan Shuzhen, “Huiyi Beijing daxue yinyue chuanxisuo he Mu Zhiqing xiansheng” 回憶北京大學音樂傳習所和穆志清先生 (Some Recollections of the Conservatory of Music of the Peking National University and Mr. Mu Zhiqing), \textit{Yinyue yishu}, No. 2 (1993), p. 43.
\textsuperscript{77} Tan Shuzhen, p. 46.
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CHAPTER SIX

MUSIC TO TEACH AND TRANSFORM: THE CASES OF KANG YOUWEI AND LIANG QICHAO

Historians of modern Chinese music and music education generally agree that efforts to introduce Western-style music education in China on the part of China’s social and economic elite began in the last years of the nineteenth century. It was in 1896 that the reform-minded gentry-scholar Zhong Tianwei 锺天緯 included singing as an extracurricular activity in his newly established primary school in Shanghai.¹ Two years later, in the spring of 1898, the Shimin Academy (Shimin Xuetang 時敏學堂), arguably the earliest Western-style modern school set up by a Chinese in Canton, introduced singing into its curriculum.² In May the same year, the study of musical instruments (qinxue 琴學) was introduced in the first Chinese-run school for girls, the Jingzheng Girls’ School (Jingzheng núshū 經正女塾) in Shanghai.³ Also in 1898, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), the most important figure in the 1898 Reform Movement, recommended the inclusion of singing and music (geyue 歌樂) in Chinese schools as part of his proposal for educational reform in his memorial to the throne “Qing kai xuexiao zhe” 請開學校折 (Memorial requesting the establishment of schools), citing the examples of Germany and Japan as precedents.⁴

This chapter examines music and the 1898 Reform Movement by centering on the two key figures of the movement, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao 梁啓超 (1873-)

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¹ Chen Xuexun 陳學恂 ed., Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi jiaoxue cankao ziliao 中國近代教育史教學參考資料 (Sources on the Teaching of Modern Chinese Educational History) (Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 301. Also see Wang Pu, “Qingmo Minchu yuegeke zhi xingqi queli jingguo”, p. 64.
² Liao Fushu, Xiao Youwei zhujuan, p. 6.
³ Sun Jìnán, YYJY, p. 8; Wu Yongyi, YYJY, p. 129.
1929). By looking closely at what they wrote on music and how they actually used music in their reform activities, I hope to demonstrate two main points: first, the engagement of music as a means to teach and transform the Chinese populace was an integral part of Kang and Liang’s reformist aspirations; and second, the two reformers were united in their Confucian-rooted utilitarian approach to music.

In summarising their ideological positions about music, I do not, however, want to convey the impression that their ideas and practices were indistinguishable. Apart from identifying their similarities, I wish to analyse their respective views in spatio-temporal terms so as to paint a nuanced picture of the differences in their approaches to music. Thus, the questions I ask in this chapter are: What did Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao mean when they talked about music? What were the sources of their inspiration? Were their views of music consistent throughout their careers? Was Western favoured over Chinese music? Why did they favour certain genres of Western music at certain points of time? And, finally, in what ways did the use of music in their reform programmes contribute to the spread of Western music in China?

Music as a Means to Teach and Transform: The Case of Kang Youwei

Kang Youwei’s first mention of music in his autobiography is as follows:

Twelfth year of Guangxu (1886): Twenty-nine sui. I wrote the Discourses on the Intuitive and the Worldly Thoughts of Kang the Philosopher. The intuitive section discusses the principles of heaven, earth, and men, and the worldly section deals with the affairs of government, education, arts and music.5

This entry is significant in that it indicates not only the context in which Kang wrote about music but also the utilitarian nature of Kang’s view of music. Kang’s

categorisation of music as part of “worldly” affairs reveals his functional view of music as an instrument of human governance.

While Kang’s utilitarian approach to music is implicit in his autobiography, his conception of music as an important pedagogical tool is clearly revealed in his *Datong shu* 大同書 (Book of Great Unity) written in 1884-85. In Part VI, Chapter 2, for example, Kang made it clear that in his utopian world music would play an important part in all stages of human development beginning with the “Human Roots Institutions” (*renben yuan* 人本院). When a woman is pregnant, Kang wrote, it was important for her ears to be filled with the sound of music:

There will be special delivery rooms with people playing music and chanting poems constantly... After childbirth there will be specially trained nurses to care for the infants so the mothers will be free to listen to music, to read, and to look at pictures. The mother will be given proper foods and drinks to nourish her in her special condition. There will be music and poetry played and sung, suitable to harmonizing body and soul.7

For Kang, the importance of music lay as much in its transforming power as in its aesthetic appeals. “Nothing is so potent in affecting our natures” than music, he stated explicitly. He was, however, very vague about the kind of music he had in mind and only pointed out that it “will be of the most peaceful and correct sort.”8

Kang’s idea that pregnant women should be surrounded by “peaceful and correct” music was not original. In large part, it represented his summation of theories which had been widely discussed and practiced in educational circles in China since Han times (206 BC-AD 220). Specifically, Kang here engaged an environmental view of education which owed its origins to the traditional Chinese theory of “prenatal teaching” (*taijiao* 胎教).

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8 Thompson, p. 191
First expressed in the Han text the *Lienü zhuan* (Biographies of Chaste Women), the concept of “prenatal teaching,” as Charles P. Ridley has explained, is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese educational theory that “involved a synthesis of the environmental and developmental positions.” This theory became widely known among educated Chinese when the neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) developed this concept in his *Xiaoxue* 小學. It stressed the importance of “external forces on the child’s physical and moral development.” According to this theory, the foetal environment not only has an impact on the developing foetus but also has a lasting influence “on the child’s temperament and moral status after its birth and in its later life.” The Chinese have always believed in the importance of environment in bringing up a child. Confucian thinkers like Xunzi 荀子 emphasised the importance of environment as a determining factor in a person’s upbringing. Kang clearly subscribed to this theory and believed that a child’s education should begin as early as when she or he was still in the mother’s womb. But unlike most of the traditional Chinese educators, Kang stressed the importance of music in prenatal education. In his view, music of the appropriate sort could function as an ideal tool before a child was born.

Kang’s belief in the benefits of music in education can be further seen in his insistence that music be used at all stages of a child’s development. In the chapter on “Infant-care Institutes” (*yuying yuan* 育婴院), for example, Kang stipulated that children should be “taught songs that are aimed at instilling the ideas of benevolence,

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10 Ridley, pp. 36-37.
12 Bai, p. 128.
13 Ridley, p. 36.
compassion and treasuring things and their hearts and ears should be filled with these songs.”14 Singing should also constitute an important part in both the “Elementary School Institutes” (Xiaoxue yuan 小学院) and the “Secondary School Institutions” (Zhongxue yuan 中学院). “Once children have developed an interest in singing,” Kang wrote, “[new] songs which eulogise ancient or contemporary benevolent deeds should be composed and children ought to be taught to sing them.”15 Once students have entered “Secondary School Institutions”, Kang suggested, they “should learn the rites (li 禮) and music (yue 樂).” The purpose of this, according to Kang, was to bring mental as well as physical benefits to students. Rites and music, as Kang explained, would “nurture their inner disposition, harmonise their vital energy, regulate their blood circulation, breed refinement, and stimulate their imagination.”16 This Confucian imperative to emphasise the moral and ethical force of music shows clearly that Kang’s ultimate design was to use music for the sake of moral persuasion and character cultivation. Once again, Kang’s Confucian belief that music could afford intellectual, physical, and moral advantages to children is evident.

For Kang, music was not only useful in teaching students to understand the good but also effective in internalising goodness involuntarily. This is why he maintained that even students at “Collegiate Institutions” (daxue yuan 大学院) should make singing and poetry recitation a part of their daily routine. “Only by singing songs and chanting poems daily could their morals be uplifted and their character cultivated.”17

Kang’s belief in the moral and civilising effect of music is reminiscent of both the Confucian belief in the moral function of music and the mid-nineteenth century Western belief in the social value of music instruction. For Confucius, music “plays a

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14 Kang, Datong shu, p. 319.
15 Kang, p. 323.
16 Kang, p. 325.
17 Kang, p. 331.
broad role in the process of self-cultivation, from the refinement of inner qualities to the acquisition of social graces.”\textsuperscript{18} And for the mid-nineteenth century Americans “[s]ongs and glees, which have a good moral tendency… serve to improve the mind, and add to the refinement of the heart.”\textsuperscript{19} As James H. Stone has pointed out, the Boston School Committee’s confidence in the values of music instruction did not derive from an appreciation of the intrinsic values of music but rather resulted from a realisation of the efficacy of music in moral education.\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, Kang Youwei’s envisioning of the ubiquitous use of music in his utopian world was a direct result of his belief in the power of music in affecting the inner disposition of the listener.\textsuperscript{21}

Like the nineteenth-century Bostonians who believed that “music had mysterious charms which enlivened mind and body,”\textsuperscript{22} Kang also emphasised the practical use of music in providing a delightful living environment. In his “Medical Institutes” (\textit{yixue yuan} 醫學院), for example, Kang envisaged that “the facilities of the hospitals will include pleasant surroundings, music, plays, books, etc. – all the things calculated to foster pleasure of body and mind for the patients.”\textsuperscript{23} In the agricultural sector, each farm will have a library, a music hall, a garden, etc., and in the public industry, “art, painting, sculpture, and music will be the basis” to “make work enjoyable.”\textsuperscript{24} Even the toilet facilities in his utopia “will be made pleasant with music and fragrant odours and mechanical contrivances for flushing away the filth.”\textsuperscript{25}


\textsuperscript{20} Stone, pp. 38-40.

\textsuperscript{21} Thompson, p. 273.

\textsuperscript{22} Stone, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{23} Thompson, p. 201.

\textsuperscript{24} Thompson, pp. 220-1.

\textsuperscript{25} Thompson, p. 274.
Music certainly constituted an important facet of Kang’s reformist thinking. This can perhaps be best illustrated by the fact that almost all his major reformist essays contained a section on music. In his *Xinxue weijing kao* (A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period, 1891) and *Kongzi gaizhi kao* (A Study of Confucius as a Reformer, 1897), for example, Kang took great pains to point out the direct link between music and sound government and stressed repeatedly the significance of music as a means of education (*yuejiao*). Kang Youwei never defined the term music in his voluminous writings, but it is clear that his understanding of the term was deeply rooted in the orthodox Confucian tradition. Music (*yue*) for Kang was clearly a union of rituals, poetry, music and dancing. Although his emphasis on the practical uses of music in school rituals and ceremonies might have been inspired by missionary use of music, it is clear that in his mind there is only one kind of music to which he referred, that is, the refined music of China (*yayue*) as represented by court music, music of the upper classes, and ritual or ceremonial music.

The importance of music in Kang’s reformist thinking can also be seen in his emphasis on the connection between music and politics and his pairing of music and rites. This is entirely consistent with his traditional upbringing and his Confucian outlook. In Confucianism, music is always tied to rites and political governance. The “Yueji” chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*), clearly spells out that “rites, music, government, and punishment are ultimately one and the same – a means to

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27 “By music,” as Homer Dubs pointed out in his study of Xunzi, “the ancient Chinese meant more than we do by the term. What they called music was much nearer the ancient Greek conception of the art than our present conception - it was a union of instrumental and vocal music and rhythm.” See Homer Dubs, *Hsüntze, the Moulder of Ancient Confucianism* (London: Probsthain, 1927), p. 161. This also applies to Kang’s conception of music.
unify the people’s minds and correctly execute the Way.”

Unlike Liang, Kang never seemed to be able to free himself from the traditional Confucian bond. Rather than focusing on music alone, Kang’s promotion of music is always accompanied by his emphasis on the importance of rites. In Kang’s view, music and rites were two essential tools of sound government. Whereas the role of the rites was to safeguard social hierarchy and good behaviour, the role of music was to cultivate morality and instil a sense of harmony among the people. This insistence on the importance of music and rites in political governance is clearly exemplified in his *Jiaoxue tongyi* 教學通議 (General Discussion on Pedagogy), written in the wake of the Sino-French War of 1884-85. In response to the argument that the ancient rites and music cannot be properly revived unless good government is first put in place, Kang retorted:

This is truly the opinion of stupid men who have no idea about statecraft! If rites and music are not revived, how could a harmonious government be possible? If a harmonious government could be established without having to wait for rites and music to be revived, what then is the use of rites and music? And why revive them?

He even went as far as to state that “only by knowing rituals and learning music can good manners be formed and talents cultivated and democracy promoted.”

Kang’s line of reasoning finds its roots in orthodox Confucian thinking. In the music chapter of the *Book of Rites*, it is stated:

Music unifies; rites set things apart. In unifying there is a mutual drawing close; in setting things apart there is mutual respect. If music overpowers, there is a dissolving; if rites overwhelm, there is division. To bring the affections into accord and to adorn their outward appearance is the function of music and rites. When rites and ceremonies are established, then noble and commoner find their

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29 Kang’s emphasis on the importance of the rites can be seen in his work *Chouli wei zheng* 周禮偽證 (Proofs of the Errors in the Rituals of Zhou) and *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (An Investigation of Confucius as a Reformer). See Jiang Yihua 姜義華, Wu Genliang 吳根樑 eds., *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (The Complete Works of Kang Youwei) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), Vol. 3, pp. 280-1 and passim.
31 *Kang Youwei quanji*, p. 127.
own levels; when music unifies them, then those above and those below are joined in harmony.\textsuperscript{32}

Clearly Kang agreed with ancient Confucian scholars in their understanding of the social and political function of music. His consistent belief in music as an important means of moral cultivation and social harmony shows his deep indebtedness to the Confucian conviction that the harmony between the ruler and ruled was essential to universal order and moral rectitude.

Kang Youwei’s conviction on the utilitarian values of music in affording moral, intellectual and physical advantages to an individual’s upbringing led him to include music in his actual teaching practice. In 1891 Kang opened a school at Changxing Lane 長興里 in Canton. Although the school was in spirit like Western schools,\textsuperscript{33} Kang, following Confucius’s example, required his students to master the so-called “liu yi” 六藝 (six arts), namely, rites (li 禮), music (yue 樂), archery (she 射), charioteering (yu 御), reading (shu 書) and mathematics (shu 數).\textsuperscript{34} Confucius himself was of the opinion that in the absence of musical study and participation, education was necessarily incomplete, and therefore inadequate.\textsuperscript{35} Kang certainly took notice of the master’s admonition. The way he copied Confucius’s curriculum and included music as a subject of study in his own private academy is suggestive of his attachment to Confucian pedagogical philosophy.

Kang’s emphasis on the importance of music and rites in education and politics saw him spending much of his time lecturing his pupils on aspects of China’s musical

\textsuperscript{32} Translated by Owen in \textit{Readings in Chinese Literary Thought}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{33} Thompson, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{34} Chen Qianqiu 陳千秋 and Liang Qichao, eds., \textit{Kang Youwei Changxing lijiang xueji 康有為長興里講學記} (Record of Kang Youwei’s Lectures at Changxing Lane) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1972), pp. 26-28.
tradition and its historical connection with governance. He not only made comments on most of the music-related passages contained in the Confucian Classics but also discussed such technical matters as the correct establishment of the absolute basic pitch, *huangzhong* (黃鐘), the range of the musical gamut, methods of calculating the twelve semitones, forms of notation, modes, the tuning of instruments, and the like. He even provided technical descriptions of musical instruments and discussed at length matters relating ritual music of the court, genres of secular songs, the origins of some ceremonial and popular instruments and so on.\(^36\)

Kang Youwei’s insistence on the importance of rites and music in education and ultimately in China’s social and political reforms also led him to taking concrete steps to restore China’s ancient rites and music. His inclusion of music and rites in his school activity, as intimated by the following entry from his autobiography, is most instructive:

Eighteenth year of Guangxu 光緒 (1892). We devised the Dance of Great Perfection (*Dacheng wu* 大成舞) with appropriate hymns for the worship of Confucius. We revived the ancient rites of using shields and battle-axes for the military dance, and we sang hymns of feasting and bestowal. With the students we practice the seventeen chapters of the *Decorum Ritual* (*Yili* 儀禮), arranging the ancient musical instruments and the performers in the prescribed order to signify the ideal of peace.\(^37\)

It is clear that Kang was serious about his efforts to imitate the rituals and music of the past in order to prepare his students for future political roles. So much so that he felt the need to invoke the ancient practice to sanction his own practice. On one occasion, for example, he even followed the directions of the ancients and “made the twelve-stop flute mentioned by Xun Xu [荀譯 died A.D.289].”\(^38\) The reminiscences of his students confirmed Kang’s seriousness about rites and music. Liang Qixun 梁


\(^{37}\) Translation adapted from that of Jung-pang Lo, pp. 53-4.

\(^{38}\) *Kang Nanhai zibian nianpu*. Translated by Jung-pang Lo in *K’ang Yu-wei*, p. 54.
启德 (1876-1965), younger brother of Liang Qichao and a participant in Kang’s academy at Changxing Lane, recalled that every time a ritual was conducted, “bells and chimes would sound in unison, ceremonial implements such as a staff, banners and pennons would be displayed and ritual dances performed.”\(^{39}\) In fact Kang placed such an emphasis on the importance of rituals and music in his teaching that in 1891 he not only supervised the construction of a set of musical instruments but also built a storeroom to house his collection of ritual paraphernalia, implements and musical instruments he had bought for teaching purposes.\(^{40}\) Given this kind of attention of music, it is not surprising that in June 1898 when Kang finally had the opportunity to present a memorial to the throne requesting the establishment of modern schools he recommended the inclusion of *geyue* 歌樂 in the school system.\(^{41}\)

By this point it should be plain that Kang Youwei before the Hundred Days of Reform had formulated ideas containing many of the characteristics of Confucian notions of music and rites. Despite Kang’s indebtedness to the orthodox Confucian tradition, it would be wrong, however, to conclude that his promotion of music was a direct replica of Confucian thinking with no innovation. One obvious example of his difference is his emphasise on the martial dimension of music. Kang believed that “The utmost value of music lies in its sonorous sound and its function to stir up a martial spirit.”\(^{42}\) This emphasis on the valiant and soul-stirring rather than the

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\(^{39}\) Liang Qixun 梁啓勤, “Wanmu caotang huiyi” 萬木草堂回憶 (Recollections of the Thatched Hall amidst Myriad Trees) in *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* 文史資料選輯 (Source Material on Literature and History) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi ziliao chubanshe, 1986), 7 ce, 25 ji, p. 64.


pacifying and harmonising effect of music represented both an expansion of the musical palette and a threat to musical tradition. Aesthetically it signalled a radical departure from the Confucian notion of the perfect music. Confucius’ approved music is *shao* 韶 music - “a genre of ya music attributed to sage-ruler Shun.”\(^{43}\) This type of music, characterised by its slow tempo, simple rhythmic pattern, narrow scale range and tranquil melodic movement,\(^{44}\) was believed to have such attributes as calmness, harmoniousness, and peacefulness.\(^{45}\) Martial spirited music like that of the *dawu* 大武, ritual music attributed to the sage-ruler who defeated the tyrant Zhou 寶,\(^{46}\) was not regarded by the master as “perfectly good,” and therefore not the ideal type.\(^{47}\)

Kang also differed from Confucius in his pragmatic approach to rites and music. In contrast to Confucius’ strict adherence to ancient rituals and music,\(^{48}\) Kang showed much flexibility in his attitude toward change:

As far as food is concerned, it does not have to be the delicacies of the season so long as it can fill the stomach; as far as clothes are concerned, they do not have to be embroidered ones so long as they can keep the body warm; as far as the rites and music are concerned, they must be able to transform the masses even if they may be inferior to the ones used by the ancient sages.\(^{49}\)

To buttress his argument, Kang in *Confucius as a Reformer* cited the creation of the *xianchi* 咸池 by the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, of the *dazhang* 大章 by Yao 尧, of the

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\(^{44}\) For a more elaborate account of the attributes of the *ya* music, see Bliss Wiant, *The Music of China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1965), pp. 3-4.


xiaoshao 蕭韶 by Shun 舜, of the daxia 大夏 by Yu 禹, and of the different music repertoires by the Shang 商 and Zhou 周 kings as primary examples of change.\textsuperscript{50}

That Kang’s conception of music was deeply rooted in Confucian thinking does not mean that his use of music in teaching was immune to Western influence. Both Kang and Liang admitted the impact of Western books on the genesis of their reformist ideas, even though neither of them mentioned specific Western musical influence in their writings.\textsuperscript{51} Kang made occasional references to Western music when teaching at Changxing Lane, acknowledging that “as far as music theories are concerned, the West is the most advanced in recent times.”\textsuperscript{52} Kang was certainly not oblivious to the widespread use of vocal and instrumental music in Christian churches and the inclusion of musical instruction at most of the mission schools. He was particularly impressed by the way in which congregational singing was used as a tool to propagate Christianity, instil the Western values and create an atmosphere of piety. But instead of crediting the Westerners with establishing this practice, his nationalistic instinct impelled him to point to the Chinese origin of it, citing the ancient Confucian practice of including music in the teaching curriculum as the precedence. In a long letter to an important court official written in 1889, for example, he lamented the loss of this didactic tradition in China and remarked: “Nowadays, even Western churches use musical instruments and songs to accompany their religious indoctrination.”\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} Kang Youwei quanji, Vol. 3, p. 297. Keith Pratt explains these titles as follows: Huangdi’s Xianchi, “meant that under him ‘everything’ (xian) received the ‘application’ (chi) of his spiritual power; Yao’s Dazhang, that he had beautified (zhang) the way of heaven, earth and man; Shun’s Xiaoshao, that he maintained (shao: meaning suggested by a gloss in Liji, zhù shù, 38.26) the way of Yao; Yu’s Daxia, that he could practise the ways of Yao and Shun.” See Keith Pratt, “The Evidence for Music in the Shang Dynasty: A Reappraisal”, Bulletin of the British Association for Chinese Studies (1986), p. 43.

\textsuperscript{51} Chi-yun Chen, “Liang Chi’i-ch’ao’s ‘Missionary Education’”, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{52} Kang Youwei quanji, Vol. 2, p. 468.

Kang was by no means alone in claiming Chinese, or shared origin of Western music. His view reflected the intellectual milieu of the last decade of the nineteenth century and coincided with what the intellectual historian Yü Ying-shih terms as the late Qing intellectual trend to disguise “discovery as interpretation.” As Yü explains:

When Chinese intellectuals discovered the unpleasant truth about China being marginalized politically as well as culturally, they immediately confronted the difficult task of how to open China to Western influence without at the same time relinquishing her millennia-old status as a centre of culture. The history of this bizarre intellectual enterprise can be divided into two distinct periods, corresponding exactly to “discovery disguised as interpretation” and “discovery undisguised.

During the period of discovery disguised as interpretation, the general strategy adopted by Chinese intellectuals was to interpret those Western ideas, values, and institutions particularly suited to the needs of China’s modernisation as long as they were discovered by ancient Chinese sages independently of the West.²⁴

In Chapter 5, I have mentioned Wang Tao’s theory of Chinese origins of Western music. In the 1910s, Chinese scholars once again marshalled evidence in support of the theory. Writing in spring 1911 Wan Shengwu 萬繩武, a Qing official with some faculty for music, maintained that Chinese and Western music came from the same origin.²⁵ In an article entitled “An Investigation of the Shared Origins of Chinese and Western Music” published in 1914, Chen Diexian 陳蝶仙, writing under the pseudonym Tianxu Wosheng 天虛我生, even went as far as to itemize several shared commonalities between Chinese and Western music.²⁶

Kang was also aware of the fact that music as a subject of study was well established in Christian schools. In the same letter, he mentioned approvingly that in

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Christian mission schools "students spend one hour everyday studying music and dance."\(^{57}\) He was also aware that the inclusion of music as an integral part of the public school curriculum had been the common practice in Europe and the United States. The very fact that he mentioned the name of the great Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1749-1827) in his June 1898 memorial to the throne requesting the establishment of modern schools gives us reason to believe that he was familiar with the experimental schools of Pestalozzi in Switzerland.\(^{58}\) Kang particularly singled out the case of Pestalozzi’s employment by the Prussian King to illustrate the importance of a state-sponsored educational system in Germany’s rise to power and wealth. Given that it was with specific reference to the Prussian school system that Kang recommended the inclusion of music as part of the school curriculum, it is reasonable to assume that Kang’s idea of school music at this time was of a Western sort, not the traditional type he had taught at the school at Changxing Lane.\(^{59}\)

It is possible that Kang gained his knowledge of Western music through his association with the few progressive missionaries who were also active in promoting music in mission schools. Kang was well aware of the significant contributions made by Christian missionaries in the early development of China’s new schools. Chi-yun Chen has pointed out the influence of Timothy Richard, Ernest Faber and Young J. Allen on Kang and Liang Qichao.\(^{60}\) More recent research by Chinese scholars also points out the extraordinary similarities between the reform ideas expressed by Kang in his memorials and those of Joseph Edkin, Gilbert Reid, Richard and Allen in the

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\(^{57}\) Kang Youwei, “Yu Shen xingbu zipei shu”, p. 384.

\(^{58}\) Kang Youwei, “Qing kai xuexiao zhe”, p. 149.

\(^{59}\) Kang Youwei, “Qing kai xuexiao zhe”, p. 149.

\(^{60}\) Chi-yun Chen, pp. 72-7. Marianne Bastid, however, has argued that missionary influence on China’s educational reform is deliberately exaggerated by the missionaries. Using Zhang Jian as an example, she states: “Zhang never even considered emulating the missionary schools which were numerous enough in Jiangsu. He completely ignored them and displayed only indifference towards missionaries. When Aurora College split in 1906 he became a patron of the new Chinese establishment without expressing the slightest appreciation of the Jesuits.” See Bastid, p. 49.
period prior to the 1898 Reform. Although there is no unambiguous evidence to suggest a direct link between Kang’s reference to music in his June 1898 memorial and any particular missionary influence, given the emphasis Richard, Edkin, Faber and Allen placed on music in their missionary work and their incorporation of music into their school curricula, as will be recalled, it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that such a connection did exist.

In contrast to missionary influences, Japan as Kang’s source of inspiration did not become apparent until the very last years of the 1890s. By 1898, Kang Youwei had certainly become acquainted with various Western books on music translated and published in Japan. This is illustrated nowhere more clearly than in his Riben shumu zhi 日本書目 (A Bibliography of Japanese Books) compiled in 1898. In this book he listed more than a hundred music-related book titles, most of which were textbooks, song anthologies, booklets on the rudiments of Western music theory and instruction manuals on how to play the organ and harmonium.

Music in the World of Liang Qichao

Largely conditioned by his Confucian education, Liang Qichao’s attitude toward music, like that of his mentor, was essentially utilitarian. Yet unlike Kang Youwei’s unswerving promotion of the orthodox Confucian concept of li and yue, Liang’s approach was neither systematic nor consistent. It underwent two distinct stages. Up to the time of the Hundred Days of Reform in 1898, Liang, like Kang, took a broad social and cultural approach to music and emphasised its importance in moral, ethical, intellectual, and physical education. But after fleeing to Japan in late 1898, especially after China’s capitulation at the hands of the eight-nation allied forces in 1900, Liang

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62 For detailed list of these books, see Kang Youwei quanji, Vol. 3, pp. 1115-20.
became more utilitarian in his approach to music, abandoning his former gradualist approach and emphasising instead the value of music as a tool of nationalism. The use of music, especially patriotic songs, in fostering a consolidated national spirit became of such paramount importance to Liang that most of his references to music published in the Xinmin congbao 新民丛报 (New People’s Miscellany) can even be categorised as a blatant form of nationalist propaganda. Liang’s preoccupation with the idea of music in creating a cohesive national entity led him to encourage, among other things, Chinese writers and musicians to appropriate Western, primarily European and American, march-type melodies and adapt them to Chinese settings. Despite its overt utilitarian motive, this encouragement to assimilate foreign musical forms helped the spread of Western music in China. More importantly, it also became an important step in a negotiation between traditional and Western elements that continues to this day.

Liang Qichao’s thinking on music prior to 1898 was not systematic. But there are certain themes that crop up again and again. One such, as explicated in his series of celebrated reform essays entitled Bianfa tongyi 讨法通议 (A General Discussion of Reforms), was the notion that music was a useful means of education.63 For example, in “On the Education of Children” (Lun youxue 论幼学) and “On the Education of Women” (Lun nüxue 论女学), Liang pointed out the mental and physical usefulness of music in education.64 In Liang’s view, restlessness and fatigue could be relieved and classroom discipline improved by the calm provided by singing and poetry chanting. “Music must be studied at schools in order to alleviate the kind of boredom

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63 Wang Pu, p. 62. Liang’s “Bianfa tongyi” was first published in Shiwu bao 時務報 (The Chinese Progress).
64 Shiwubao, No. 23 (12 April 1897), pp. 1a-4a; No. 25 (2 May 1897), pp. 1a-2b.
and dreariness that is associated with learning. [Learning music], moreover, could help children’s blood circulation and invigorate their vital energy.”

Like his mentor Kang, Liang Qichao offered guidelines on the specifics of music teaching and set out some concrete ways forward. For example, he suggested that school music “should include ballads and folk songs as they are easy to sing and chant.” Concerning writing song lyrics, he encouraged the use of the vernacular and everyday expressions for the sake of easy comprehension. He even offered some concrete suggestions on how to use music in teaching some school subjects. Science subjects like astronomy, he suggested, should be taught by performing magic tricks (yan xifa 演戲法) and humanity subjects such as history could be taught by using the traditional popular entertainment form shuo guci 說鼓詞 (story-telling). If lessons could be delivered in this way, Liang reasoned, not only would children’s natural curiosity be aroused, but their interest in these subjects would also be enhanced.

Clearly what interested Liang was not the intrinsic value of music but its utilitarian function. The real meanings of music mattered little. What really mattered was pedagogy, namely how music might help enhance children’s learning.

For Liang, the importance of music, apart from its auxiliary values as a teaching aid, rested with its power in developing the child’s brain. Liang was a forceful critic of the way in which China’s antiquated educational system hindered the development of children’s natural intelligence. China’s educational system, with its emphasis on rote learning, was “suffocating children’s brains (zhinao 窒脑),” Liang charged.

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65 Liang Qichao, Yinbingshi heji – wenji 飲冰室合集-文集 (Collected Writings from the Ice-drinker’s Studio, Collected Essays, hereafter wenji) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941), Vol. 1, p. 45.
66 Liang Qichao, wenji, pp. 45-46.
67 Bai, p. 125.
his view, music, by virtue of its close relation to the emotive aspects of human behaviour and of its recreational value, could certainly help remedy the situation.\(^69\)

Liang Qichao was not the first to emphasize the benefits of music to children’s education. His idea of combing education with recreation (\textit{yujiao yule} 製教與樂) can certainly be traced back to the educational ideas and practices of some Song and Ming scholars. The Song court music theorist and educator Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993-1059), for example, was known for his advocacy of music as a means of education.\(^70\) Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), the Ming Confucian idealist, was also critical of his fellow educators for ignoring the value of music in children’s education. One of the salient features of Wang’s educational practice was his use of singing as an important way to harness children’s energy and deliver moral and ethical lessons.\(^71\)

Aside from its indigenous roots, Liang Qichao’s notion of music as an effective pedagogical tool might also have been inspired by the kindergarten theory developed by the German educator Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). Froebel was widely known as a strong advocate of using music and games in the education of young children. His method of delivering fundamental moral and ethical lessons to kindergarten children was to incorporate these lessons into songs and games.\(^72\) To be sure, our inference here is purely speculative, as we have no direct evidence to show that Froebel inspired Liang. Yet it is possible that Liang was aware of Froebel’s theory and practice when he wrote “On the Education of Children” in 1896. Protestant missionaries introduced Froebel’s theory to China in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The missionary

\(^{69}\) Bai, p. 125.


educator and publisher Young J. Allen, whose reformist writings Liang was familiar with, was particularly active in propagating the theory and made efforts to put some of Froebel’s ideas into practice.73

Liang Qichao was no stranger to missionary publications, especially those by Allen. His Xixue shumubiao 西學書目表 (A Bibliography of Western Learning, compiled in 1896) and Du xixue shufa 讀西學書法 (Annotated Introductory Notes on Western Learning, 1896), for example, clearly indicate the extent to which he was acquainted with missionary writings. Missionary writings on Western educational systems certainly provided much inspiration in his search for alternatives to traditional Chinese education. Of various Christian publications, Liang Qichao made extensive use of the reform-oriented missionary periodical Wanguo gongbao 萬國公報 (The Globe Magazine) edited by Allen.74 As a participant in the imperial examinations, Liang had almost certainly been exposed to Ernest Faber’s widely circulated book, Zi xi cu dong, which was distributed among the students at examination centres.75 Liang must have also read Faber’s Xiguo xuxiao 西國學校 (Western Schools), as he listed it as one of recommended books in his Xixue shumubiao.76 Both books talked about the general importance of music in education. Zi xi cu dong in particular talked at length about the importance of li and yue in the enlightenment and transformation of the Chinese populace. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Faber’s notion of music, expounded most clearly in Chapter 35 of the book, was essentially Confucian. He used ancient Chinese examples and much of the Confucian

74 Richard, Forty-Five Years in China, p. 254.
75 Richard, p. 222.
phraseology and rationale to stress the didactic function of music. This book also contained some specific information on how music as a subject of study was taught in the German educational system. The fact that Faber’s ideas were circulated among Chinese reformers is reflected in the writings of the comprador turned institutional reformer Zheng Guanying. When Zheng wrote his celebrated essay “Xuexiao” 學校 (School) in 1892, he used many terms used by Faber including the term “lüyueyuan” 律樂院, which Faber used in his Zi xi cu dong to introduce conservatories of music in Germany.

Liang’s social and political views underwent some radical transformation after the failure of the 1898 reforms. “Between 1899 and 1903,” as Xiaobing Tang has pointed out in a recent study, “Liang developed an intense interest in constitutional monarchy, statism, and republicanism.” This change in Liang’s political views was also manifested in his views on music. Whereas earlier he shared Kang’s cultural view of music calling attention to the beneficial effects of music on children’s intellectual, moral, and physical developments, he now focused almost exclusively on the practical uses of music in creating a new citizenry and ultimately bringing about societal change. This development is seen nowhere more clearly than in his assigning important social roles to music and musicians.

Compared to his early writings, Liang certainly became more pragmatic in his approach to music and more focused in his promotion of European-style marching songs. He emphasised repeatedly the function of music in the fostering of a cohesive

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77 Hua Zhian, Zi xi cu dong, pp. 179-81.
78 For a reprint of Zheng’s essay, see Shu Xincheng, JYZL, Vol. 3, p. 895.
79 Xiaobing Tang, “‘Poetic Revolution,’ Colonization, and Form at the Beginning of Modern Chinese Literature” in Rebecca E. Carl and Peter Zarrow eds., Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 245. For a more elaborate account of this change, see Tang, Global Space and the Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 80-116.
national spirit and in transforming society. Music was to take on a role that was much more utilitarian and much broader in social and political significance. This utilitarian intent was conditioned by his times and consistent with his instrumental view of literature and the arts as a whole.  

The link between the late Qing “Poetic Revolution” and the inception of the “School Song” movement in the late Qing has been discussed by a number of Chinese scholars including the late professor Huang Xiangpeng 黄翔鹏. Indeed, Liang’s enthusiastic promotion of European-style school songs constituted such an integral part of his “literary revolution” that there is little indication that in Liang’s mind music was independent of poetry. C. T. Hsia, discussing Liang’s role in the advent of new Chinese fiction, has pointed out the utilitarian intent of Liang in his effort to use the novel as an instrument to enlighten and change the hearts and minds of his readers. In more recent research, Hiroko Willcock and Xiaobing Tang also draw attention to Liang’s use of fiction “as a powerful medium” to advance the reform causes and his effort to “infuse artistic practice or sensibility with social relevance” respectively. These observations also apply to Liang’s approach to music. If his advocacy of a Poetic Revolution “made poetry writing a serious social and intellectual commitment,” his emphasis on the social and political significance of music made

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80 Da Wei [Zhang Jingwei], “Liang Qichao, Zeng Zhimin dui jindai yinyue wenhua de gongxian”, p. 39.
82 The very fact that Liang’s major discussions on music are found in his Yinbingshi shihua 饮冰室詩話 (Poetic Remarks from the Ice-drinker’s Studio) gives a clear indication of this line of thinking. Music was part and parcel of the series of genre revolutions that Liang advocated and put into practice after arriving in Japan.
85 Tang, p. 255.
86 Tang, p. 255.
song composing a task more of political agitation than artistic expression. “[T]he role of poets was to usher in a new age and new imagination”; the primary responsibility of songwriters, musicians and music educators was to foster patriotic sentiment and help articulate social and political aspirations.

The salient feature of Liang’s utilitarian approach to music was his promotion of Western-style marching songs. A good case in point is his positive appraisal of Huang Zunxian’s 黄遵宪 marching song lyrics.

Huang Zunxian’s effort to use his literary talent for the purpose of promoting a nationalist spirit among the populace had always been admired by Liang. But it is very telling that, of the voluminous literary works Huang produced, Liang would find such motivational inspiration in the military marches. So impressed was Liang that he once hailed Huang’s military marches “as the best representatives of the poetic revolution.” Huang composed these marches for the express purpose of stirring up martial spirit and patriotic sentiment among Chinese soldiers and ordinary citizens with scant attention to any deep thought and literary merits. The criteria by which Liang judged Huang’s poems were utilitarian rather than artistic. The following two stanzas, one from Huang’s Chujun ge 出軍歌 (Military march) and the other from his Junzhong ge 軍中歌 (A Song of the Military Camps), both of which were published in Liang’s journal Xinmin congbao, will suffice to illustrate this point.

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87 Tang, p. 255.
88 Huang’s works on Japan provided much inspiration for Liang’s reformist thinking and for this reason he held Huang in high esteem. See Zheng Kuangmin 鄧匡民, Liang Qichao qimeng sixiang de dongxue Beijing 黃遵煥啟蒙思想的東學背景 (Liang Qichao’s Enlightenment Thought and Its Japanese Background (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2003), pp. 10-11. Liang was impressed by Huang’s wealth of experience and world knowledge and appreciated his advice on various matters. Huang’s influence on Liang was such that Zhang Pengyuan 張朋園 even suggests that it was partly due to Huang’s admonition that Liang abandoned his radicalism and began to oppose anti-Manchu revolution. See Zhang Pengyuan, “Huang Zunxian de zhengzhi sixiang ji qi dui Liang Qichao de yingxiang” 黃遵熙的政治思想及其對梁啟超的影響 (The Political Thought of Huang Zunxian and His Influence on Liang Qichao), Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), No. 1 (1969), pp. 217-27.
89 Tang, p. 252.
Our country has been here four thousand years
And all of this land is our own land.
In the twentieth century, who will its masters be?
We are in armour now to settle this.
Behold the waving yellow-dragon flags.
Drum! Drum! Drum! Drum!90

To be great, to be great, you nice [fine?] young men,
The best death is death on the battlefield.
Since death must come to everyone,
Don’t waste your chance to make death count.
Die! Die! Die!91

In addition to the overwhelming tenor of ardent nationalism, of devotion to the cause of strengthening China, most of Huang’s marching songs had refrains with such soul-stirring words as “Fight! Fight! Fight!,” “Must! Must! Must!,” “Win! Win! Win!,” “Forward! Forward! Forward!,” or “Brave! Brave! Brave!,” designed to awaken the martial spirit among the Chinese soldiers.92 These songs appealed to Liang because he discovered an ideal form that could be utilised to set the Chinese masses on a march toward creating a strong and independent China.

Clearly what impressed Liang was the belligerent tone of Huang’s lyrics. But this is not to say that Liang was inattentive to the martial quality of Western marching tunes. As far as tunes were concerned, Liang was careful not to promote songs that were light or frivolous. It came as no surprise that Liang should be so enthusiastic about promoting Western-style marching songs in his project of nation building. As a musical form, the revival of the march was closely linked to nationalism, patriotism, and militarism.93 John Philip Sousa (1854-1932), the leader of the U.S. Marine Band from 1880 until 1892 and composer of the official march of the United States of

92 Kamachi, p. 253.
America, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, explained the appeal of marching music as follows:

Like the beat of an African war drum, the march speaks to a fundamental rhythm in the human organization and is answered. A march stimulates every centre of vitality, awakens the imagination and spurs patriotic impulses which may have been dormant for years. I can speak with confidence because I have seen men profoundly moved by a few measures of a really inspired march.⁹⁴

Warren Dwight Allen, a music historian and one-time professor of music at Stanford University also noted:

[T]he march is not only a musical form; it is in itself suggestive of the condition we have set up for civilisation. Mankind is civilized, we believe, when it shows the capacity for progress, for getting out of the rut in which a vegetating culture is content, for lifting weaker members to their feet so they may go ahead with the strong to higher levels in thought and in action.⁹⁵

The Vietnamese revolutionaries certainly showed their belief in the efficacy of the march in motivating the masses when they turned *La Marseillaise* into a call to arms to fight the French colonial power.⁹⁶

Liang’s zeal for poems of muscular quality and martial spirited marching songs was a natural outgrowth of his search for a vehicle for great nationalistic appeal. For years Liang had been gravely concerned with the palpable lack of indignation felt by his countrymen against the foreign encroachment on China’s sovereignty. Attributing what he regarded as a bland indifference to the national interest to a lack of martial spirit among the Chinese people, he pointed an accusing figure to Chinese music for being one of the factors that contributed to this passivity. “There are many reasons for the lack of a martial spirit among the Chinese, but the gentleness of Chinese music is

certainly one,” he argued.  

In his view, the lack of military songs was “not only a defect in our fatherland’s literature but is also closely related to the decline in our national fortunes.” Like the Vietnamese revolutionaries who found in the march “a form that could be used to set the masses in motion advancing toward mankind’s collective destiny of creating a fairer world,” Liang discovered in Huang’s marches a motivational tool whereby he could counter the national psyche of passivity and cowardice:

Previously, when I read Huang Zunxian’s “Four Marching Songs,” I was deliriously happy… for the accomplishments of our Poetic Revolution have reached a new highpoint here. To sum up in one sentence, I must say that anyone who can read these poems without dancing is not a real man!

For the same reason, Liang also praised the poems of Yang Du 杨度 (1874-1931), Tan Sitong 谭嗣同 (1865-1898), and other ancient and contemporary poets. Clearly Liang’s promotion of marching songs was not spurred by Huang’s poems alone but was a conscious effort to encourage Chinese poets and musicians to follow Huang’s suit.

Liang’s belief in the efficacy of music in arousing a martial spirit among the Chinese masses and therefore ultimately contributing to the building of a nation-state

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103 Liang, *shihua*, p. 59.
is most clearly manifested in his citing of the following ancient legend in support of his argument:

Formerly, when the Spartans were besieged and begged assistance from Athens, the Athenians responded by sending a one-eyed, lame schoolteacher, which greatly puzzled the Spartans. But just before a battle, this teacher composed military songs, which, sung by the Spartans, increased their valour a hundredfold, enabling them to win a victory. How deeply music is able to move men!¹⁰⁴

The conviction in the agitating power of the marching song also led him to try his hand in writing song lyrics. The following examples of Liang’s songs, found in his *Yinbingshi shihua* 飲冰室詩話 (Poetic Remarks from the Ice-drinker’s Studio), are illustrative of his efforts:

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Liang Qichao was at pains to explain the rationale for writing these songs. He hoped that one day these songs, along with his novels and poems, would help awaken a national consciousness among the Chinese people.\textsuperscript{105} In explicating his political motives and phrasing his arguments in terms of the national interest, Liang once again showed his utilitarian impulses.

In his study of stylistic development in Chinese revolutionary songs, Godwin Yuen, has attributed the cause of Liang “sudden change of mind” after 1900 to two external factors: China’s humiliation by the allied forces in the 1900 Boxer debacle; and Japan’s successful adoption of a European and American-style group singing in the school curriculum to excite nationalist sentiments.\textsuperscript{106} Willcock, discussing Liang’s role in developing China’s new fiction, even goes as far as to assert that Liang’s “approaches to Chinese modernization” were “conditioned by Japanese utilitarian and practical consideration.”\textsuperscript{107} Liang was to some extent indeed “a man much affected by Japan and Japanese influence” and his stay in Japan between late 1898 and 1905 proved to be “critical in his development as an intellectual, and as a radical reformer.”\textsuperscript{108} Liang’s utilitarian turn may indeed have something to do with his adoption at this time of a modern Japanese revisionist interpretation of the

\textsuperscript{105} Liang Qichao, Xin Luoma chuanqi 新羅馬傳奇 (A new romance of Rome), cited in Da Wei, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{106} Yuen, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{107} Willcock, p. 819.
\textsuperscript{108} Willcock, p. 818.
practical learning (*jitsugaku* 實學), as Wilcock has argued.\textsuperscript{109} But I would not go so far as to attribute his utilitarian emphasis on the functions of literature and music entirely to the Japanese environment. To read Liang’s literary discourse, of which his thought on music was a part, as a passive reaction to the Japanese model is to deny the creative agency of Liang Qichao and his deep indebtedness to the Confucian tradition.

Lydia H. Liu, in her post-modernist study of literary discourse in modern China, has emphasised the importance of agency and context in the process of learning from the West via Japan. Her suggestion that the discourse of modernity was creatively “deployed” by Chinese intellectuals and “reinvented” in its new context has much relevance to our current study.\textsuperscript{110} To be sure, Liang did advocate the appropriation of aspects of Western culture as mediated by Japan, but his encouragement was not a call for blind imitation. As far as Liang was concerned, the assimilation of certain aspects of Western musical culture was primarily predicated on it fulfilling certain needs determined by historical circumstances. At the same time these adoptions should pose no contradiction with Chinese tradition. Western-style marching songs appealed to him not only because of their utilitarian value but also because they satisfied his Confucian predilection for relying on cultural and intellectual suasion in social transformation. Unlike the May Fourth iconoclasts, Liang’s promotion of Western- style songs did not constitute a call for “a transvaluation of all traditional values.”\textsuperscript{111} His view of music is essentially the same as his view on literature, which, as Kirk Denton has pointed out, “is fundamentally Confucian in its didacticism.”\textsuperscript{112}

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\textsuperscript{109} Willcock, pp. 819-29.

\textsuperscript{110} Lydia H. Liu, “Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West”, *Positions*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (1993), p. 161. This argument is elaborated further in her *Translingual Practice*.

\textsuperscript{111} Yü Yingshi 余英時, *Zhongguo jindai xiangsi shang de Hu Shi* 中國近代思想史上的胡適 (Hu Shi in the Intellectual History of Modern China) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiyue gongsi, 1984), p. 17.

The broad diffusion of Western music in Japan and the adoption of European-style singing in Japan’s new school system may have served as a ready example for Liang to emulate, but they did not constitute the root source of his thought. Instead of relying on external influences alone, I wish to draw attention to Liang’s indebtedness to Chinese tradition and focus on the power of Confucian influence in moulding his reformist thinking even at this stage of his intellectual development. It can be argued that in spite of his overt utilitarian turn, his overall approach to music was still firmly embedded in Confucian culturalism.

Lin Yü-sheng, in his study of radical iconoclasm in the May Fourth period, has discussed at length Chinese intellectuals’ propensity to rely on the power of the mind in social and political reform. According to Lin, this “monolithic concern with the power of the mind,” a salient feature of the Confucian way of statecraft, not only dominates the minds of traditionalists but those of cultural iconoclasts as well. In emphasising the function of music as an educational and motivational device, a tool for social, cultural and political transformation, and a means to manipulate the minds of the populace, Liang Qichao’s mode of thinking was still firmly entrenched in the Confucian school of statecraft. After all, music as “an essential instrument for education, social control and political rectitude,” as DeWoskin points out, had always been the focal point of Confucian thinking: “a well defined concept of music that values its social functionality above all else” was formed by Confucian thinkers as early as the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). This Confucian utilitarian propensity not only furnished Liang with justifications for promoting Western music to the

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115 DeWoskin, p. 39.
Chinese public but also conditioned him in his selection of musical models from the West. In fact more often than not he would use Confucian rationale and even phraseology to argue for the social value of music, emphasising particularly the power of songs in renovating the people and society. Even in his utilitarian promotion of Western-style marching songs, he was still adhering to the orthodox Confucian notion of music, pointing out repeatedly the transforming power of music.\(^{116}\)

Yet Liang’s promotion of music was not without its differences from orthodox Confucian tradition. The difference, however, is more of emphasis than radical rupture. Whereas Confucius valued music primarily for its power in perfecting the individual’s moral conduct and harmonising human relations, Liang extended this utilitarian view by linking music more with political struggle and the project of nation-building.\(^{117}\) In this respect, the Japanese environment of the late Meiji era may have indeed inspired Liang. After all, it was in Japan that he became more blatantly utilitarian in his approach to music and more active in his promotion of music as a means of nationalist agitation and nation-building.

Liang Qichao’s time in Japan also saw his departure from his mentor Kang Youwei in his general view of Confucianism.\(^{118}\) As far as music was concerned, Liang eschewed Kang’s practice of incorporating rites and ancient music into the school curriculum. Whereas in 1897 he briefly entertained the idea that school children should recite Confucian songs in daily assembly,\(^{119}\) Liang now became more preoccupied with the more urgent task of using music to mould a public-spirited citizenry. Unlike Kang, Liang’s musical ideas at this time were not a reproduction of

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\(^{116}\) Liang, *shihua*, p. 42.
\(^{117}\) Liang Qichao, *Xin Luoma chuangqi*, cited in Da Wei, p. 39.
\(^{118}\) Chi-yun Chen has argued that Liang had started to deviate from his mentor in his social and political views as early as 1896. See Chen, pp. 115-6. But as far as music is concerned, Liang’s change did not occur until his flight to Japan.
\(^{119}\) Yuen, p. 131.
Confucian ideals but were born of an urgent concern for the preservation of the race 
(*baozhong 保种*) and the country (*baoguo 保出国*). This is clearly manifested in his 
emphasis on music as a tool of nationalism at the expense of music as a means of 
character cultivation --a main facet of the Confucian notion of music. In other words, 
patriotic songs are more urgently needed than a mastery of the *qin*. This also explains 
why among various forms of Western music introduced to Japan during the Meiji era, 
Liang only paid attention to songs of a military type. In short, his music-related 
activities, such as promoting patriotic songs, introducing foreign national anthems, 
encouraging commitments to music learning, reminding songwriters of their social 
responsibilities, and so on, all sprang out of the concern for nation-building.

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Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were not Marxists, but they shared Karl Marx’s 
functional view of culture.\(^{120}\) Liang Qichao’s musical ideas and actions in particular 
demonstrated clearly that they believed that the primary function of music was not the 
cultivation of artistic production or the appeal of aesthetic satisfaction, but moral 
cultivation and political indoctrination. Their interest in Western music, and Liang’s 
interest in a European style of singing in particular, was by no means derived from 
their appreciation of the artistic qualities of Western music. It resulted from their 
conviction that by popularising this type of singing in China their reformist objectives 
could be achieved. In this regard, they were not different from Yuan Shikai, Zhang 
Zhidong and other pioneer promoters of Western military music. Yuan and Zhang 
adopted Western military bands in their armies on the understanding that they could 
help modernise their troops and raise the morale of his soldiers. Kang emphasised the 
importance of music because he believed music could enhance individual morality

\(^{120}\) For recent studies of Marx and music, see Regula B. Qureshi ed., *Music and Marx, Practice, 
Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
and ultimately facilitate the realisation of his utopian world. Similarly, Liang Qichao promoted Western style marching songs because he was convinced that in the march lay a tool that could be used to create a new people.

Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were the earliest Chinese reformers of national renown to call attention to the importance of music in China’s reforms. Whereas in actual practice Kang’s role in disseminating Western music may have been negligible, Liang’s is surely significant. Having, among other things, “revolutionised the Chinese press,” Liang was certainly the most influential Chinese promoter of foreign songs among Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. As a man of action, Liang Qichao not only actively encouraged his compatriots to study music but also wrote patriotic songs and translated foreign anthems into Chinese. Furthermore, he even formulated certain critical views about the concrete problems in the creation of a new Chinese music. Although he was acutely aware of the critical importance of learning from the West in renovating China’s musical tradition, he did not advocate a wholesale importation of Western music. Instead he advised Chinese songwriters and musicians to make good use of such indigenous musical forms as ritual and ceremonial music (ya 雅), regional operas (ju 剧) and popular music (su 俗) while keeping an open eye on musical developments in the West. To him, the future music of China had to be both modern and Chinese. As will be seen, this formula of combining indigenous and Western musical elements even to this day continues to dominate the thinking of Chinese musicians.

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121 Leo Lee and Andrew Nathan, “The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Ch’ing and Beyond” in Johnson, Nathan, Rawski eds., Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 360-95; Xiaobing Tang, Global Space and the Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao.
122 In his Zhongguo jin san bainian xueshi shi, Liang had a chapter devoted to the discussion of music. See Da Wei, p. 40.
123 Da Wei, pp. 39-40.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE JAPANESE CONNECTION

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, prior to China’s defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, Christian missionaries were the main sources of Chinese knowledge of Western music. Besides, the missionaries were also responsible for the inception of a new style of singing, namely the European style of congregational singing, as well as the beginning of modern-style music teaching in China. But the missionary influence, as several scholars have rightly pointed out, was limited in scope, permeating only a small segment of Chinese society.¹ On the whole, the missionary influence seldom extended beyond the immediate circles of Christian converts, a small number of enlightened scholar-officials, and a few progressive-minded individuals. By contrast, the Japanese successes in learning from the West were much more inspiring to the Chinese and hence impacted more widely on Chinese society as a whole.

Unlike missionary-sponsored educational activities, which were viewed with deep suspicion by the Qing government and Chinese social and political elites alike, the programme of “learning the West through Japan” was actively encouraged with political and financial inducements. Japan, on the other hand, lost no time in taking advantage of this newly gained respectability by launching a series of programmes aimed at establishing rapprochement with China. This resulted not only in a dramatic rise of Japan’s status in the eyes of the Chinese but also in a complete reversal in Sino-Japanese cultural exchange. “From 1898 to 1907,” writes Douglas R. Reynolds, “the relationship between China and Japan was so productive and relatively harmonious that it could

¹ Wang Pu, “Qingmo Minchu yuegeke zhi xingqi queli jingguo,” pp. 60-61; Peter Micic, “School Songs and Modernity in Late Qing and Early Republican China”, Chapter 3.
rightly be called a ‘Golden Decade.’”

So convinced is Reynolds of the importance of Japanese influence in China at that time that he further points out: “The intellectual and institutional transformation of China in the dozen years between 1898 and 1910 was a remarkable achievement. It could not have occurred without Japan – China’s model and active partner every step of the way.”

Indeed, Japan’s rise in status had been so swift and the Japanese influence in China so ubiquitous that in 1901 the astute Rev. A. P. Parker was disturbed enough to write an article with the alarming title “A New Japanese Invasion of China.”

Among the Japanese achievements the reform of the Japanese school system proved to have the strongest attraction to the Chinese. Zhang Zhidong was among the first to realise the advantages of learning from the Japanese model and advocated in 1898 the sending of Chinese students to Japan. In the year 1906 alone, at least 13,000 Chinese students were studying in Japan. Not surprisingly among Chinese students in Japan we find the earliest group of proponents of Western music in China.

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3 Ibid.
6 Concerning the grave discrepancies in the total number of Chinese students in Japan in any one year, Roger F. Hackett writes: “While the figures disagree by only a few hundred up to the year 1905, they vary by many thousands in 1906, when, according to most sources, the numbers reached their peak. Figures for 1906 vary from 13,000 to 25,000 to 40,000.” See Hackett, “Chinese Students in Japan, 1900-1910” in Papers on China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 141. Chinese historians of modern education seem to eke on the conservative side choosing the figure 13,000 for the year 1906. See Zhongguo da baike quanshu – jiaoyu 中國大百科全書–教育 (The Chinese Encyclopedia – Education) (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1985), p. 471.
Japan’s critical role in the early history of modern Chinese music is not in question. This chapter will examine how exactly Japan played a role in the process of transmitting Western music to China. I shall start by tracing the origins of the “fever of study in Japan” in relation to music and then examine how the Chinese experiences in Japan helped bring about an attitudinal change on the part of Chinese reformers and educators toward Western music. We shall see how this change of attitude impacted on the wider dissemination of Western music in China at the turn of the twentieth century. The key questions are these: In what way did Japan help to produce the so-called first generation of music educators and critics in China? What exactly did the Chinese learn from the Japanese? And finally, in what way did the Japanese environment of the late Meiji era help to trigger the revolutionary impulses of the first generation of Chinese practitioners of Western music? Unlike the previous chapter on Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, this chapter emphasises doers rather than thinkers, with a specific focus on the role Japan played in further popularising one particular form of Western music in China, that is, a European-style group singing (changge 唱歌, shōka in Japanese).

**Early Observations of Western Music in Japan by Chinese Diplomatic Representatives and Officials**

After China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 Japan became the focus of attention of both the scholar-gentry and proponents of social, economic and political reforms in China. But Japan’s reforms along Western lines initially were not much of an attraction to the Chinese. Prior to the first Sino-Japanese War very little

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information on Japan was available in China even though Japan was one of the first major nations to which China began to send diplomatic representatives as early as the 1870s. Huang Zunxian, the diplomat-poet-reformer, was one of few exceptions. As a man steeped in the Confucian tradition of statecraft, Huang was preoccupied with the importance of education to a nation’s strength. Upon arriving in Japan in 1877, he “made serious efforts to comprehend the great changes that were taking place in Japan after its encounter with the modern West.”

Taking full advantage of his position as a counsellor to the Chinese Legation in Tokyo, Huang studied Japanese reforms with a special focus on the newly reformed Japanese school system. In his writings on Japanese schools we find the earliest mention of Western music in Japan.

Huang Zunxian’s earliest mention of Western music in Japanese schools, found in his Miscellaneous Poems on Japan (Riben zashi shi 日本雜事詩, 1879), is couched in terms of its usefulness in education, with no attention to music’s intrinsic aesthetic value. He observed, for example, that singing (change 唱歌) was one of the subjects taught at Japanese kindergartens for the purpose of “developing children’s intelligence and invigorating their energies.”

In his Treatise on Japan (Riben guozhi 日本國誌), written between 1880-1887, Huang mentioned again that singing was a compulsory subject in the Japanese elementary and middle school curriculum. He also pointed out that music

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8 The first Chinese minister to Japan He Ruzhang 何如璋 (1838-1891) was dispatched in 1877. See Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, China’s Entrance into the Family of Nations: The Diplomatic Phase, 1858-1880 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), Appendix B. See also Chow Jen Hwa, China and Japan: The History of Chinese Diplomatic Missions in Japan 1877-1911 (Singapore: Chopemen Enterprises, 1975), pp. 86-99.
10 Kamachi, Reform in China, p. XV.
11 Kamachi, pp. 78-9.
12 Cited in Wang Pu, p. 59; Wu Yongyi, YYJY, p. 347.
(yinyue 音樂), along with sewing and weaving, was a regular subject in Japanese schools for girls.\textsuperscript{13}

Zhang Sigui 張斯桂, deputy ambassador of the first Chinese Legation in Tokyo, made similar references to music. Like Huang, Zhang’s observations of music sprang from his interest in Japanese educational reform. He visited numerous Japanese schools, including the Tokyo Normal School for Women. Founded in 1875 under the patronage of the Empress, this was one of the earliest schools where music was an integral part of the curriculum. Zhang was impressed by the women students’ ability, among other things, to play Western musical instruments and the way music was taught there. As he noted in a poem, “principles of drawing, singing and playing musical instruments were taught in the Western way.”\textsuperscript{14}

Although these early references to Western music in Japan were often brief and perfunctory, they indicated the ubiquitous use of Western music in Japanese society. In the 1870s Western music, along with other Western institutions, began to be widely adopted in Japan “as necessary parts of a Western derived table of organization.”\textsuperscript{15}

Whereas previously Western music might seem novel and curious to the Japanese ruling class and court musicians, at this time it was taken seriously in light of its practical value. One embodiment of this attitudinal change was the implementation of music teaching in the late 1870s as a regular school subject in the Japanese curriculum.\textsuperscript{16} With the

\textsuperscript{13} Wang Pu, p. 59; Wu Yongyi, YYJY, p. 347.
\textsuperscript{14} Zhang Sigui, Shidong shilu 使東詩錄 (Poems Written as an Associate Envoy to Japan) cited in Wang Pu, p. 59; Wu Yongyi, YYJY, p. 346.
\textsuperscript{15} Malm, “The Modern Music of Meiji Japan”, p. 259.
\textsuperscript{16} Although regulations concerning the inclusion of singing in the curriculum of elementary schools were promulgated by the Japanese Ministry of Education as early as 1872, the actual teaching of the subject was not started until the establishment of the Music Training Centre (Ongaku denshū-jo 音樂傳習所) in late 1879 and the arrival of Luther Whiting Mason (1828-1896) in March 1880. This was due mainly to lack of
establishment in October 1879 of the Music Investigation Committee (*Ongaku Torishirabe-gakari* 音樂取調掛), whose aim was to create a music curriculum for the Japanese school system, and the appointment as its head of Izawa Shūji 伊澤修二 (1851-1917), the man commonly regarded as the father of music education in Japan, a new era in the history of modern Japanese music education began.\(^\text{17}\)

The Japanese use of Western music was by no means confined to modern schools alone. It permeated other segments of Japanese society as well. When visiting the palace in Akasaka on New Year’s Day 1878, for example, He Ruzhang 何如璋 (1838-1891), head of the first Chinese Legation, noticed that “Western food was served and Western music played.”\(^\text{18}\) But it was in the education sector that Western music found its widest use in Japan. Indeed, so prevalent was the use of Western music in Japanese schools that some twenty years later, Fu Yunlong 傅雲龍, a court official who was sent on a study tour of Japan, and several other countries by the Zongli Yamen from 1887 to 1889,\(^\text{19}\) observed that not only was music, along with Chinese, English, ethics, geography, physics, mathematics, history, home economics, and callisthenics, taught as a regular subject at Japanese high schools for girls, “even organ-playing was included as part of the Japanese normal school curriculum.”\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^{17}\) For a detailed account of the role of Shūji in the origin, development and significance of music education in Japan, see Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan*, pp. 48-9.

\(^{18}\) Kamachi, p. 35.


\(^{20}\) Fu Yunlong 傅雲龍, *Li you Riben ji* 歷遊日本記 (*Jottings of My Travel in Japan*) (1887), reprinted in *Zaoqi Riben youji wuzhong*, p. 125.
Western Music in Japan in the Eyes of Visiting Chinese Officials

In contrast to the general paucity of information in the early period from 1871 to 1895, the decade after the Sino-Japanese War saw a dramatic increase in the number of Chinese accounts of Japan. Most of the accounts contain observations of Western music in Japan.

In contrast to the brevity of early Chinese accounts of Western music in Japan, similar records after 1895 were detailed and subject specific. Generally speaking, the visitors’ observations consist of matter-of-fact descriptions of music courses or musical activities the authors encountered in Japan. One such example is found in Dongying xuexiao juyao 東瀛學校舉要 (A Brief Account of Japanese Schools), a report of about two-month educational inspection tour to Japan despatched by Zhang Zhidong in early 1898. Yao Xiguang 姚錫光 (1856-1927), the report’s author and head of the mission, thus described the ubiquitous use of music in Japanese primary schools:

Everyday during their spare time students are taught how to dance and instructed in music. They are as a rule taught to sing martial songs and make impassioned valiant music in order to boost their morale.

Most of the Chinese visitors during this period were particularly impressed by the Japanese adoption of Western music as a tool for patriotic education. This, however, is not to say that they understood fully the necessity of including music as a school subject. Music as a regular subject in Japanese schools intrigued the Chinese. For Yao, the apparent importance attached to music in the Japanese educational system was puzzling.

This is clearly reflected in his observation that “music as a school subject does not seem

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21 Sanetó Keishū 賀藤惠秀 (1896-1985), the most indefatigable scholar of Sino-Japanese relations, located “117 published accounts of Chinese missions to Japan dating from 1898 to 1906.” See Harrell, p. 41.
22 Cited in Wang Pu, p. 59.
to be terribly important, yet it is stipulated as a compulsory subject in every primary and secondary school [in Japan].”

Visiting Tokyo at the end of 1898, Zhu Shou remarked: “Chinese schools are set up solely [for instruction] in classical subjects. In the case of Japan, what is taught has been extended to military subjects and trade, to the arts, agriculture, music, sewing, teaching the blind to read, teaching the deaf to speak, dance, physical education.”

But this bewilderment did not seem to prevent the Chinese from fully understanding the importance of music, especially martial music—“the first type of Western music to be introduced to modern Japan”—in Japanese educational and military institutions. In addition to noting down such details as teaching systems, course design, and the number of years required to complete a musical course in Japanese higher normal schools, Yao Xiguang noted specially that “military songs are sung in various military academies and military bands constitute an indispensable part of their organizational structure.”

Like Yao, Shen Yiqing 沈翊清 (1858-1918), head of a twenty-five strong delegation dispatched to Japan in 1899 by the Qing court to gain firsthand knowledge of Japan’s political, military and educational systems, was also impressed with the way Western military music was taught and used in Japanese schools. So impressed was he by the military band he saw at one of the Japanese schools that he left a detailed account of the size, organisational structure and the type of instruments used in the band:

[The band], which consists of forty-eight players arranged in nine rows, played one marching tune [for us]…. The instruments used are: one big drum, one medium-

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23 Zhu Shou 朱绶, *Dong yu ji cheng* 東遊記録 (A Record of My Trip to Japan) (1898). Translated and quoted in Harrell, p. 50.
24 Zhu Shou, *Dong yu ji cheng*, quoted by Harrell, p. 50.
sized drum, one brass instrument, two brass horns, and other brass instruments such as trumpets and flutes. When they play, each player would have a music sheet written in Western notation stuck on his instrument. There are two bandleaders, one standing aside and the other conducting with a wooden stick in his hand.  

But admiration for the Japanese use of music in new-style schools was not confined to Chinese visitors to Japan. Government sponsored educational officials aside, the shared “common admiration for Japan” in the wake of the first Sino-Japanese War also led to an increased number of progressive-minded educators and enlightened gentry-scholars travelling to Japan. They too recorded their encounters with Western music there. Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940), the editor of the journal Jiaoyu shijie 教育世界 (The World of Education), for example, made brief references to music education in Japan in his general account of his mission to Japan, Fusang liang yue ji 扶桑兩月記 (Notes of Two Months in Japan, 1902). Wu Rulun 吳汝倫 (1840-1903), vice-president for faculty and instruction of the Imperial University in Peking, also mentions briefly musical education at the various Japanese state and provincial schools in his Donogyou conglu 東遊叢錄 (Collected Records of Travels, 1902).  

Western Music in Japan in the Eyes of Chinese Educators and Gentry-Scholars

The visits of Chinese educators and education-minded individuals to Japan were not without tangible results as far as music was concerned. After returning from Japan, Yan Xiu 嚴修 (1860-1929), the Hanlin compiler and bibliophile, who travelled together with

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27 Shen Yiqing 沈翊清, Dong yu riji 東遊日記 (Daily Records of My Journey to Japan), excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, YYSL, p. 85.
28 Bastid, Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China, p. 44.
29 Wang Pu, p. 60.
the founder of the Nankai schools Zhang Boling 張伯苓 (1876-1951) to Japan in 1903, recruited a Japanese teacher named Ono Suzuko 大野鈴子 to teach Japanese and music in his Yan Family School for Girls (Yanshi Nüshu 嚴氏女塾) in Tianjin. Impressed by the Japanese use of songs in their schools, Zhang Jian 張謇 (1853-1926), the industrialist and reformer-educator, also developed a keen interest in school music after his ten-week visit to Japan in 1903. Like Yan Xiu, Zhang employed a Japanese teacher to teach his children and personally wrote three songs for teaching use in 1904.

Japan as a successful model in adopting Western subjects, including music, in its schools is most clearly reflected in numerous writings of the Chinese educators who went on study tours to Japan. But rather than seeing music as a discipline of study in its own right, most of the Chinese observers saw the value of music in relation to other modern school subjects such as callisthenics (ticao 體操) and drawing (tuhua 圖畫). A typical picture of how music was seen can be gained from the following passage written by a Chinese teacher named Hu Yujin 胡玉缙 about a visit to a Japanese elementary school playground:

A woman teacher was leading a [group of] forty to fifty new entrants, aged six and above, to view a demonstration [of callisthenics]. They all were excited and wanted to follow suit. When one segment [of an exercise drill] was over, the little ones all applauded. Subsequently, they too joined in the exercises. From beginning to end, they were the picture of uniformity and discipline. What is remarkable is that at the outset there were all together between three and four hundred students on the playing fields. Some were playing games, others were tugging at the teachers’

clothes, still others formed circles or stood holding hands. The teachers gaily joined in with these activities. When the whistle blew, each individual returned to his line. Talking subsided, and there was silence. Once the drill was over, [the youngsters] resumed their games as before. Subsequently, an organ was played, and every student returned to his classroom, marching in time to the organ music.33

Music here was clearly not seen as an artistic or aesthetic exercise but a useful tool to maintain discipline and obedience. Hu’s matter-of-fact mention of the organ music indicates clearly that the artistic or aesthetic value of music was yet to come to the notice of these Chinese visitors. Rather than an end itself, music here was viewed as one means to a practical end: the cultivation of a sense of uniformity and of responsiveness to authority, “pointing”, to quote the ethnomusicologist Alan P. Merriam’s words, “to a rallying point around which the members of society gather to engage in activities.”34

Unlike later Chinese proponents of Western music who were explicit in their advocacy of school songs in China, most of the Chinese visitors at this time saw music as part of the Japanese educational package and described it as such with little elaboration. There were, however, some exceptions. Some Chinese visitors, for example, showed considerable interest in the practical side of musical instruction in Japanese schools noting down in minute detail the kind of music used, the rationale for its use, and the ways to go about it. Miao Quansun 糜荃孫 (1844-1919), the well-known bibliographic scholar and the founder of several excellent libraries, was one such person. During his visit to the Girls Higher Normal School in Hongo ward in Tokyo in 1903, Miao not only noted down such details as the use of Western musical instruments and of staff notation,

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33 Hu Yujin 胡玉缙, Jiachen dong you riji 甲辰東游日記 (A Diary of My Trip to Japan in 1904). Translated and cited in Harrell, pp. 46-47.

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but also recorded the way in which music classes were conducted in the kindergarten attached to the school and the contents of the musical programmes there.\footnote{Miao Quansun 繆荃孫, “Riben kaocha gongwu youji” 日本考察公务游記 (Accounts of My Visit to Japan on Official Business), excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, \textit{YYSL}, p. 88. For a biographical sketch of Miao, see Boorman, \textit{BDRC}, III: 34-7.}

Xiang Wenrui 項文瑞, who had a prolonged study tour (six months) in Japan for the sole purpose of studying and observing the Japanese educational system in 1902, was also interested in finding out about the sources of inspiration for Japan’s music education and the actual practice of Japanese music teaching. Like Miao, Xiang not only carefully noted down the singing lessons he observed on his visits to various Japanese schools but also described in his journal the types of Western instruments used there. In addition, he also took pains to record such details as the type of notation, titles of the school songs and even the exact number of black and white keys on an organ. He went so far as to ask: “Suppose I were to learn how to compose our own national songs, would I be able to do it if I study organ playing for three months?”\footnote{Xiang Wenrui 項文瑞, \textit{Dong yu riji} 東游日記 (Daily Records of My Journey to Japan), excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, \textit{YYSL}, pp. 86-88.}

Miao and Xiang, of course, were by no means the only scholars keen to learn Japanese teaching methods. Impressed by the way Western music was taught in Japanese schools and the ubiquitous use of the organ in Japanese teaching practices, Zhang Weilan 張維蘭 recorded in his diary similar details of the musical scenes he witnessed at a Japanese normal school for girls and a musical academy in 1905.\footnote{Zhang Weilan 張維蘭, \textit{Yisi dongyou ji} 己巳東游記 (An Account of My Visit to Japan in 1905) excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, \textit{YYSL}, pp. 89-90.}

In her study of Chinese students in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, Paula Harrell has pointed “the key interest” that the Chinese visitors showed in “[t]he relationship between the educational system in Japan and ‘raising the country,’ or

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national progress.” The Japanese emphasis on the importance of music in raising national consciousness certainly appealed to the Chinese even at this early stage. It is by no means a coincidence that, of the various forms of Western music introduced to Japan since the beginning of the Meiji era, the Chinese visitors showed a particular interest in the way Japanese educators used patriotic songs to arouse martial spirit among their students and to propagate nationalistic messages. On witnessing a music lesson during his visit to the Dōbun Gakkō (Tongwen Xuexiao 同文學校) in December 1905, Dai Hongci 戴鴻慈 (1853-1910), a high-ranking official who was sent on a diplomatic mission to Japan, the USA and European countries in 1905, wrote approvingly that the teaching of military songs aroused in one’s heart a profound sense of heroism. Earlier when Chen Hongnian 陳鴻年 visited the Datong School (Datong Xuexiao 大同學校) in Yokohama in 1903, he was so moved by the military songs and military band music performed by the students there that he remarked in his diary on the utilitarian value of music as a means of “emotional education.” With similar remarks common in other Chinese accounts of Japan, by the early years of the twentieth century a new Chinese consciousness concerning the utility of Western music was emerging. This shows a change of attitude on the part of Chinese writers toward Western music. As we will recall, less than three decades earlier even the progressive Guo Songtao was dismissive of the notion that Western music could be of any use to China.

38 Harrell, p. 46.
40 Chen Hongnian 陳鴻年 Dong yu riji 東遊日記 (Daily Records of My Journey to Japan), excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, YYS, pp. 90-91.
41 See Xiang Wenrui, Dong yu riji, p. 87; Lin Binzhang 林炳章, Guimao dongyou riji 春卯東遊日記 (Daily Records of My Visit to Japan in 1903), excerpted in Zhang Jingwei, YYS, p. 89.
Proponents of Western Music among Chinese Students in Japan

Starting from the early 1900s an increasing number of Chinese students in Japan became actively involved studying Western music. Of various categories of Western music, they were particularly attracted to *changge*, a European style of group singing in unison. The word the early proponents of Western music used most often was neither the traditional Chinese term *yue* 樂 nor the modern compound word *yinyue* 音樂, but the more restrictive term *yuege* 樂歌 (lit., music and song). This indicates that the Chinese were not passive in their selection of aspects of Western musical culture. The very fact that song, especially of the marching type, was valued over other musical forms demonstrates clearly that these Chinese promoted Western music not out of any profound commitment to the aesthetic or artistic values of Western music but from an appreciation of the utilitarian functions of songs as a didactic tool. In other words, these early advocates of Western music saw singing as an indispensable means to social and political ends.

Music and the Idea of a Militant Citizenry

One way of illustrating the point that Western music was promoted on utilitarian grounds is to look at the backgrounds and ideas of those who advocated it. Early Chinese proponents of Western-style school songs were without exception either socio-political reformers or radical students. In both types their formal education was in fields outside music.

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42 This is evidenced by the establishment in Tokyo of the Society for the Study of Music (Yinyue Jiangxi Hui 音樂講習會) by Shen Xingong in November 1902 and of the Society for Asian Elegant Music (Ya ya yinyuehui 亞雅音樂會) by Zeng Zhimin in February 1903.
One of the first to call attention to the importance of music was the future military command Cai E 蔡锷 (1882-1916). Cai’s reference to music is couched in terms of its usefulness in the forging of a martial spirit among the Chinese populace. In his long essay “Jun guomin pian” 軍國民篇 (On the Martial Citizen), published in the February 1902 issue of the Xinmin congbao, Cai blamed China’s weak position in the world on her lack of a martial spirit and called attention to the contributions of new-style Japanese literature, philosophy, and music to the development of a militant citizenry:

Ever since the Meiji Reformation Japan has been emulating the West in every aspect of her life. As a result, singing is included in the school curriculum as a subject of study. Although school songs are not military songs and school music not military music, they nevertheless contain ideas of patriotism and exalt the martial spirit. Upon hearing these songs a nationalist spirit is aroused even without one’s being conscious of it.43

If China were to regain the martial spirit she had lost, Cai suggested, she would have to follow the Japanese example and use music as a means to carry out military and patriotic education.44

That Cai E should have appealed to a military basis for musical study is not at all surprising, given his reformist background and the context of the times in which he was speaking and writing. A native of Hunan province, Cai studied at the Shiwu Xuetang 時務學堂 (Academy of Current Affairs) in Changsha 長沙 during the short-lived 1898 Reform Movement and was one of Liang Qichao’s favourite students. After the conservative coup of 1898, he and several of his classmates followed Liang to Japan and studied at a Japanese military academy. Before the 1911 Revolution he promoted

constitutional monarchy and afterwards was an important military figure in south China until his death in 1916.45

Although militarist ideas began to flourish in China in the late nineteenth century as a result of European influences, calls for promotion of military education did not become widespread until the turn of the twentieth century when they gained momentum among a number of radical Chinese students in Japan.46 Along with advocacy of “the popularisation of the idea of a martial citizenry”47 and “military national education”48 came the appeal for the use of military songs and martial music. In this context Cai E made his plea for a martial-spirited music.

Cai was not alone in emphasising the importance of military songs and military band music. “Even a man like Liang Qichao, usually seen as a promoter of liberal values,” as one China scholar has recently pointed out, “expressed militarist ideas at least in the last decade of the Qing.”49 Liang was certainly not immune to this sentiment and advocated at the same time the creation of military marches for the sake of national salvation. As discussed in the previous chapter, he praised highly the military songs Huang Zunxian wrote and had much to say about the effectiveness of including soul-stirring songs in nationalist education. Like Cai E, Liang Qichao’s interest in the idea of using music to militarise society was partially aroused by the practice of singing patriotic

46 Major articles in this regard include: Anon., “Junren zhi jiaoyu” 軍人之教育 (Education of the Soldier), Youxue yipian 英學譯篇 (Translations by Overseas Students), 7 (August 1903), Junshi (Military affairs), pp. 38-40; Lan Tianwei 藍天蔚, “Junjie” 軍解 (The Meaning of Soldiers), Hubei xueshengjie, 1: 57-62 (Feb., 1903); and Feisheng 飛生 (pseud.), “Zhen junren” 真軍人 (The True Soldier), Zhejiang chao, 3: 65-72 (April 1903).
49 Hans van de Ven, “Recent Studies of Modern Chinese History”, p. 266.
songs at Japanese schools. Even when he visited the United States he could not help noticing primary school children there “sang songs about military heroes.”

Cai and Liang were not the only men to advocate the importance of music in arousing a martial spirit among China’s masses. Ideas such as these prevailed among radical Chinese students and educationalists in Japan. But rather than confining music’s role to merely arousing a martial spirit among the people, most reformers and radical students tended to view the function of music in a much broader sense. In his explosive essay “Zhongguo yinyue gailiang shuo” 中國音樂改良說 (On the Reform of Chinese Music), published in the June 1903 issue of the revolutionary journal Zhejiang chao 浙江潮 (Tide of Zhejiang), Fei Shi 畢石, for example, also commented on the use of music in Japan to stir up a martial spirit. Like Cai and Liang, Fei Shi emphasised the importance of music education in nation building by declaring that “music education is of fundamental importance.” But unlike Cai E, he drew attention to the practical use of

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51 For an account of this journal, see Ding Shouhe 丁守和 ed., Xinhai geming shiqi qikan jieshao 辛亥革命時期期刊介紹 (An Introduction to Periodicals at the time of the 1911 Revolution) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1982), Vol. 1, pp. 269-89.
52 Information about the background of Fei Shi is extremely scant. We know his real name was Chen Shiyi 陳世宜, Fei Shi being his pen name. Born in Jiangning, Jiangsu province, 1884, he from very early on enjoyed a reputation as a kind of radical and was given to unruliness and to harassing local conservative gentry-scholars with the curiosity of precocious youth. A supporter of constitutional monarchy prior to the 1911 Revolution, Fei Shi became a radical political activist in his native province, Jiangsu. His study in Japan must have qualified him in either political studies or law, as after returning to China in the early 1900s he taught for some years at the Suzhou Academy of Law and Political Studies (Suzhou Zhengfa Xuetang 苏州政法學堂) until his flight to Southeast Asia for political reasons. He worked as a secretary at the Ministry of Industry and Agriculture and became a member of the Nanshe 南社 (Southern Society) in 1913. Education seemed to be his calling, as he later taught at the Nanlin xueyuan 南林學院 (Nanlin College) in Chongqing, Sichuan province. After the founding of the PRC in 1949, he worked as a compiler at the Shanghai Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Relics until his death in March 1959. He acquired some distinction as a poet and three collections of his poems were reportedly printed. This material on Fei Shi is drawn from Zhang Jingwei, “Zhongguo jindai yinyue shi de zhengui wenxian (A Valuable Document in the History of Modern Chinese Music), Yinyue yanjiu, No. 3 (2003), p. 30, n3.
Western music in forging a public-spirited citizenry (*guomin* 国民). He stated: “Western music, if used properly, can often encourage progressive ideas among the citizenry, and therefore contribute to the forging of a unified national will.”

Harking back to the famous *ti–yong* 體-用 formula, Fei Shi justified his unreserved promotion of Western music in terms of its usefulness in application, not in fundamental principle. Unlike Cai E, whose realisation of the importance of music did not seem to lead him to any concrete proposal of how music could be approached, Fei Shi was enough of a realist to know that a precondition for his dream of developing a musical culture was an elaborate and well-organised system of musical education. Thus he suggested four ways to achieve the objective: (1) establish music schools; (2) incorporate music into the school curriculum; (3) promote public participation by offering concerts, and, (4) introduce music into ordinary households as a healthy leisure pursuit. Given his priorities, he clearly envisaged the cornerstone of such a system being a mass-oriented education.

Echoing Fei Shi’s argument, Jiang Weiqiao 蒋维乔 (1873-1958), a well-known educationalist, politician and onetime head of the school textbook department of the Shanghai Commercial Press, was equally adamant in his belief in the efficacy of songs in promoting patriotism, martial vigour and public-spiritedness. In a speech delivered at a concert at Changzhou in 1904, Jiang stated:

> The so-called patriotic feelings, sense of togetherness, and a military spirit are fostered by nothing other than songs and music. As far as elevating the morals and

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54 Fei Shi, p. 9.
55 Born in Wujin, Jiangsu province, Jiang Weiqiao was a close associate of Cai Yuanpei. He studied education in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. After his return from Japan he became the principal of the Shanghai Patriotic Girls’ School in 1902. In 1912 he worked as a counselor in the newly-established Ministry of Education and head of the Jiangsu provincial education bureau in the 1920s. Until his death in 1958 he worked tirelessly to promote modern education in China.
This emphasis on the use of music in arousing martial spirit and nationalist feelings was well heeded by Chinese educators and early proponents of Western music, with Japanese army and naval songs enjoying the widest circulation among foreign songs introduced to China.\(^\text{57}\)

**Music as a Means of Promoting Nationalism**

Not every Chinese student in Japan was prepared to accept the notion of a “militant citizenry.” While some military minded reformers and revolutionaries promoted the use of martial music in militarising society, many nationalist-minded students were more interested in the immediate effects of singing as an instrument of nationalism and how it could help in their struggle for socio-political reform and national rejuvenation. Sharing the militarists’ instrumentalist view of music, they emphasised the social significance of music by pointing out the efficacy of music as a means to exalt patriotic emotions and cultivate a public-spirited citizenry. To them, singing school songs in particular was not simply an educational activity, but a sharp instrument for collective discipline and nationalist indoctrination. They argued that singing could help create a sense of solidarity and togetherness and hence bring people of diverse backgrounds together. By helping forge a national spirit and a sense of community, music was to serve in China’s nation-building project.


The revolutionary Li Xieyi 李燮義 (1875-1926) was a prime example of such thinking. Born in Dali, Yunan province, Li, better known by his style, Jian Hong 剑虹, was a son of a rich merchant. He was one of a few Chinese students who chose to enrol at the Tokyo School of Music in 1904. As a radical student, he joined the Revolutionary Alliance (Tongmenghui 同盟会) in 1907 and started to write songs for revolutionary purposes. After returning to China in 1908, he continued his involvement with the revolutionaries in their resistance to Manchu authority in Yunnan while ostensibly working as a music teacher in Kunming.  

In spite of his formal training in music, Li demonstrated little appreciation of the artistic merits of Western music. Instead, he advocated the use of music as a tool of the state to shape the minds of young Chinese and to encourage nationalism. He reiterated this focus on the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic values of music in an article published in the November 1906 issue of the periodical Yunnan 雲南 entitled “Yinyue yu jiaoyujie zhi gongyong” 音樂于教育界之功用 (The Function of Music in Education). Li took pains to point out that the primary function of music in education was its instrumentality. Although he mentioned that there were two facets to music, namely, the aesthetic and the moral, Li emphasized the practical function of music in nation building. He advocated the inclusion of musical instruction in schools as a way to enhance nationalist emotions and arouse the national spirit.  

As a result of Li’s determined efforts, Yunnan, despite its remote geographical

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location, became one of the first provinces where musical instruction was included in schools of all levels.

Li suggested the composition of national songs as a means to promote patriotism and collective consciousness:

If we want to build our strength and reform our country we must therefore start with music education at primary school level. We should compose more national songs in order to awaken our fellow countrymen, inspiring in them a sense of patriotism and the valiant fighting spirit.  

To buttress his argument that national songs were best means to arouse nationalist emotions, he specifically asked his readers to write songs similar to *Hail Columbia* and *La Marseillaise*.  

Benedict Anderson in his classic study of the origins and spread of nationalism observes the usefulness of songs in the creation of an “imagined community”:

Take national anthems, for example, sung on national holidays. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the *Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda*, and Indonesia *Raya* provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community.

Li Xieyi’s utilitarian assumption that music promotes discipline and order and is conducive to the exaltation of patriotic feeling is not an isolated case. In fact, most of the early proponents of school music held similar views. In mid-nineteenth century America, for example, the school music movement was closely connected to the aims of fostering, among other things, “social progress,” and “the future citizen.” In Vietnam, Ho Chi

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60 Ibid. p. 221.  
61 Ibid. p. 221.  
Minh and his communist comrades were certainly aware of the propaganda values of Western music when they set *L’Internationale* and other similarly martial songs like *Rot Front* from the German communist movement and *Bandiera rossa* from the Italian Communist movement to Vietnamese lyrics in the 1920s.  

Li Xieyi’s instrumentalist view of music was also inextricably linked to the aspirations of the 1911 revolutionary movement in which preparing citizens for a democratic republic was a central goal. Japan’s Meiji Reformation had demonstrated to many Chinese that a modern nation state could only work effectively when the citizens are enlightened, orderly, and disciplined; music was one of the means to prepare such a citizenry. Tang Hualong 汤化龍 (1874-1918), a well-known constitutional reformer and a co-founder of the Jinbudang 進步黨 (Progressive Party), was among many who concurred with Li in his emphasis on the effectiveness of music as a means of promoting a sense of national pride and shaping national character.  

Like Li and other Chinese students in Japan, Tang was awed by Japan’s swift rise to power and sought to discover its secret of success. Tang was particularly impressed with the way patriotic songs were used in Japanese kindergartens. He saw a vital link between the use of music as a tool of the state to shape the minds of young Japanese and to encourage nationalism and Japan’s success in her search for wealth and power. For example, in the 1906 preface to *Jiaoyu changge ji* 教育唱歌集 (Anthology of Educational Songs), Tang, then a student of Hōsei Daigaku 法政大學 (University of Law and Administration), argued that Japan’s meteoric rise on the world stage owed much to the use of music in its educational system. The Japanese experience taught him that the highest role of music was to further the progress

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64 Gibbons, “The West’s Songs, Our Songs,” p. 63.  
65 For a biographical sketch of Tang, see Boorman, *BDRC*, III: 230-32.
of the nation. Tang saw how music promoted patriotism and aroused nationalist sentiments among Japanese students as well as “moulded a public-spirited citizenry that was at once independent (duli 獨立), disciplined, and cooperative (hequn 合群).”

Driven by this utilitarian understanding, he advocated the immediate introduction of singing to Chinese schools, so that the children of China would be indoctrinated through a disciplined programme of patriotic songs.

The Chinese students’ prevailing enthusiasm for music in advancing nationalism can be seen in the publication at this time of a large number of songs bearing the title Aiguo 爱国 (Love the Country) and of songs that called for resisting foreign aggression, saving the nation and reforming society. Titles such as Song of the History of the Han People (Hanzu lishi ge 漢族歷史歌), The Yellow River (Huanghe 黃河), My Country (Wode guo 我的國), The Yangtzu River (Yangzi jiang 扬子江), Song of the History and Geography of the Eighteen Provinces (Shiba sheng dili lishi 十八省地理歷史), Motherland (Zuguo 祖國), When will China Awake (Heri xing 何日醒), Boys must Have High Aspirations (Nan’er diyi zhiqi gao 男儿第一志气高), Chinese Men (Zhongguo nan’er 中國男儿), and so on give a clear indication of the extent to which nationalist ideas were expressed in songs and how strongly the nationalist ideals appealed to Chinese reformers, revolutionaries and promoters of music alike.

Clearly the Chinese interest in the efficacy of music as a means of instilling a sense of national pride in the minds of children owed much to the Japanese intellectual milieu.

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67 Ibid.
68 Bibliographical details of these songs can be found in Zhang Jingwei, Sousuo lishi, pp. 334-35.
of the time. It is true that the Meiji government encouraged the modernisation of Japan’s political systems and institutions along Western lines. But nationalistic reactions against this trend of wholesale Westernisation began to emerge among Japanese proponents of modern education as early as the early 1880s. As far as the philosophy and organisational structure of Japan’s nationwide education system were concerned, this nationalistic turn resulted in a series of noticeable shifts: from an initial imitation of the Dutch and French models to an endorsement of the more liberal American form, and finally to the adoption of the more nationalist-oriented German system. In the sphere of music, the Japanese Ministry of Education was quick to point out the importance of creating a national music that would reflect its national identity as well as encourage patriotic feeling. In spite of his fondness of Western music and his close association with the American music educator Luther Whiting Mason (1828-1896), Izawa Shūji, commonly regarded as the driving force behind Japan’s music reform, advocated “a middle course” (setchū 折衷). This involved retaining what was good in Japanese music and learning from the West, rather than a wholesale adoption of Western methods in his reform of Japanese music. In the mid-1880s he supported the call for “national learning” by pushing for the establishment of a “national music (國樂).”

Izawa was no stranger to Chinese students in Japan and most Chinese proponents of Western music were certainly familiar with his work, particularly the song anthologies and musical textbooks which he either edited or were edited under his supervision. For example, Shen Xingong, as will be discussed in the next chapter, based his 1904 Shanghai anthology Xuexiao changge ji 學校唱歌集 largely on Izawa’s songbooks (more

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detailed discussion will follow in the next chapter). Izawa was also directly involved in musical activities organised by Chinese students in Japan. His appearance at the gatherings of the Tokyo-based Chinese student musical association, Yaya Yinyue Hui 亚雅音樂會 (Society for Elegant Asian Music), testifies to this effect.\(^70\)

As important as the Japanese environment and Japanese personnel were in influencing the Chinese students’ outlook and behaviours, the situation in China largely conditioned the way in which the students responded to the various influences in Japan. During the Meiji period, as pointed out by Ury Eppstein in his study of musical instruction in Japan, “music was valued as a factor conducive to the establishment of discipline and raising morale in the army and navy, and to the spiritual and physical health and character formation of school pupils.”\(^71\) It was precisely these emphases on the extrinsic values of music that struck a harmonious chord among Chinese reformers, educators and students in Japan.

_Pedagogical Benefits of Music_  
While nationalist-minded students tried to justify the study of music on the basis of its importance as a tool in popularising patriotism, spokesmen for the advancement of modern education in China promoted musical instruction on pedagogical grounds. Rather than focusing on the narrow function of music as a tool for collective discipline and political indoctrination, they called attention to the beneficial effects of music in developing children’s mental alacrity and intellectual skills.

\(^{70}\) Anon., “Yaya yinyuehui kaihuishi wei jiachen zuyesheng songbie ji” 亚雅音樂會開會式為甲辰卒業生送別記 (A Farewell Concert for the Graduates of 1904), _Xinmin congbao_, No. 3 (July 1904), p. 102.\(^{71}\) Eppstein, _The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan_, p. 131.
One such person was Hou Hongjian 侯鸿鑾 (pen name Baosan 保三, 1872-1961).

While studying in Japan, Hou was deeply impressed by Japan’s achievements in educational reform. He founded the famous Jingzhi Women’s Academy (Jingzhi nüxue 競志女學) in Wuxi in 1905 after returning from Tokyo. Being a firm believer in the educational significance of music, Hou held that a sound music education could benefit children both intellectually and physically. In an article in the radical student journal Jiangsu 江蘇 published in Tokyo in 1904, he advocated an immediate inclusion of Western-style singing in Chinese schools on psychological and pedagogical grounds:

Singing must be made one of the compulsory subjects at primary schools. Because singing can arouse children’s interest [in learning], cultivate their temperament and therefore is an extremely important aspect of education.72

Commenting on the prevalent emphasis on physical strength and military education and the general neglect of the beneficial effects of music in Chinese schools, Hou pointed out the place of music in what he regarded as a balanced education for children. “A primary school curriculum is incomplete if it only stresses the importance of physical education. Physical education must be balanced by musical study.”73 To put his ideas into practice, he compiled two song anthologies and published them in 1906 and 1907.74

Hou was not alone in emphasising the importance of a balance between physical strength and emotional well-being in the school curriculum. Nor was his stress on the

73 Bao San, “Yuege yiban”, p. 121.
74 These two anthologies, entitled, Danyi diyi changge ji 单音第一唱歌集 (The First Collection of Monophonic Songs) and Danyi die changge ji 单音第二唱歌集 (The Second Collection of Monophonic Songs), are kept in Wuxi library and the library of the Music Research Institute in Beijing respectively. Some of the songs in these two anthologies are reprinted in Zhongguo jin xiandai yinyue shi cankao ziliao (Source Materials for the Modern and Contemporary Chinese Music History) compiled by Chinese musicians’ association and Chinese Music Research Institute (Beijing: unpublished monographs, 1959), Vol. 1 (1840-1919), No. 103.
function of music in achieving such a balance a lone voice. A number of Chinese educators endorsed his point of view. In the preface to a school songbook entitled *Educational Songs (Jiaoyu changge 教育唱歌)* (1905), Huang Zisheng 黄子绳, a reformer-turned educator and compiler of songbooks, believed that the roles of physical education and musical instruction were complementary. Since both physical and musical education was beneficial to children’s well-being, Huang argued, both should be equally emphasised as the foundations of a sound education.\(^75\)

Subscribing to the concept of the transferral of learning, Chinese reformers and educators also believed that music, apart from affording moral, pedagogical, and physical advantages to children, was conducive to the enrichment of a child’s overall knowledge. Hou Hongjian, for example, argued that music provided a means of integrating other aspects of the curriculum:

> If singing can be introduced as part of the school curriculum, what students learn from other school subjects like history, geography, ethics, science and calisthenics can all be incorporated into it. By singing and chanting [what they have learned], not only can old lessons be revised but new knowledge can also be gained. This is one of the benefits of school songs.\(^76\)

Most Chinese reformers and students were convinced of the social significance of music, believing that the practice and performance of music would instil values of sociality, teamwork, competition, and self-presentation. Ultimately, they maintained, music was to play a crucial role in creating a culturally unified and cohesive nation-state. Hou Hongjian was certainly conscious of the important social function music could serve. In his opinion, the act of music making, because it was commonly undertaken in group

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\(^75\) Huang Zisheng 黄子绳, “Jiaoyu changge xuyan” 《教育唱歌》叙言 (Prefatory Words to *Educational Songs*) (1905), reprinted in Zhang Jingwei, YYSL, pp. 148-49.

\(^76\) Bao San, “Yuege yiban”, p. 121.
settings, could provide opportunities for individual students to interact with others in the contexts of creating, performing, and listening to music.

Students in the same class singing the same song not only can advance musical study but can harmonise their actions as well. Unity in their voice and action can promote a sense of togetherness and a community spirit. If properly directed, singing school songs either individually or as a group can also encourage students to strive for excellence and inspire in their hearts a sense of pride.

In an argument comparable to Wang Yangming’s theory of elementary education, Hou pointed out the practical benefits of music in catering to the fun-loving nature of the child and its recreational value: “By nature children prefer playing together to playing alone. As a rule, singing lessons should be arranged after difficult subjects in order to refresh the child’s mind and promote cheerfulness.”77 This emphasis on the value of music in stimulating learning and combating restlessness and fatigue is also reminiscent of the pedagogical theories of the English educator Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) and the Swiss Johann Pestalozzi. Both Lancaster and Pestalozzi approached teaching children in a humanitarian spirit and called attention to the advantages of using pleasure rather than pain to stimulate learning. As a diligent student who spent some years in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, Hou’s idea may well have been inspired by Pestalozzi, because starting in the mid 1880s Japan’s new education “leaned heavily on Spencer’s utilitarian theory and the developmental concepts of Pestalozzi.”78

Music, Moral Education and Social Reform

For most of the early proponents of the school songs, music was intimately linked to moral education. This is not surprising given the traditional Confucian emphasis on

77 Bao San, “Yuege yiban», p. 121.
music and character moulding. In a preface to a song anthology published in 1905, Li Baoxun 李宝巽, a Chinese student in Tokyo, advocated the introduction of musical instruction in Chinese schools by stating:

Singing songs is conducive not only to character cultivation but also to the awakening of a child’s [youthful] spirit. By studying singing, children can subconsciously develop a sense of moral integrity as well as a feeling of compassion and faithfulness.  

Subscribing to an arousal theory, Li believed that because music was so intimately connected to emotions, its use could render an individual susceptible to either good or evil influences. Anticipating criticisms that he should give priority to music instead of other more practical branches of learning in his educational proposal, he argued:

Although music [on the surface] is not the most pressing matter of the moment, it is, however, a way of cultivating talent and laying a foundation for learning. The studies of politics, law, economics, military affairs, and other practical subjects are indeed bases of education but the spirit of education is none other than music. This is true in all civilised countries, East and West.  

While Li Baoxun emphasised the imperceptible power of music in transforming the individual character, Huang Zisheng and others were convinced that the benefits of music extended far beyond the narrow confines of moral and intellectual education. In fact their belief in the social and humanistic values of music was such that they idealised music as a kind of panacea for dealing with all moral and pedagogical matters. The following assertion by Huang Zisheng in 1905 was one typical example:

Is there one thing that has the indescribable power of at once cultivating one’s morality, improving social customs, moderating an individual’s temperament and perfecting one’s personality? Yes, there is, that is, music. …Now if we want to promote democracy we must start with social reform; and if we want to create a harmonious society we must first of all vitalise music.  

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79 Li Baoxun 李宝巽, “Jiaoyu changgeji xu” 《教育唱歌集》序 (Preface to An Anthology of Educational Songs) (1905), reprinted in Zhang Jingwei, YYSL, p. 146.
81 Huang Zisheng, “Jiaoyu changge xuyan”, p. 147, 149.
This expansive optimism about the potential centrality of music in China’s reform is a major theme in early twentieth-century Chinese musical thought. The Chinese optimism about the civilising power of music and its significance in social reforms bears a strong resemblance to the faith exhibited by a society of amateur musicians at Harvard in the late 1830s. Like the Chinese, the Americans believed that music “was most significant in its social aspect.” They asserted that the love of music “is essential to the full health and glow of the intellectual and moral system of man.” Some of the Americans even held that music could bring to life such “domestic socialities and the peaceful virtues” as “religious devotion, individual morality, honesty, intelligence, integrity, ability, and almost every other good quality -- patriotism and cognisance of the national experience and destiny, congeniality and pleasure, family loyalty and stability, democracy, and civilization itself.”

Apart from the religious aspect, ideas such as these were precisely the ones that appealed to the utilitarian impulses of the Chinese students in Japan. But while the Americans believed that music instruction would help “advance education towards an ultimate goal of individual and social welfare,” the Chinese were more concerned with the immediate effect of music in the education of the citizen for responsibility and in China’s social and political reforms. Some Chinese proponents of Western music even went so far as to claim first priority for music not only in social and political reforms but also in the training of China’s masses for democracy.

The strong utilitarian and moral propensities exhibited by the Chinese advocates of Western music can undoubtedly be traced back to traditional Confucian roots. But the most important spur for them in making a direct link between music and China’s search

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83 Ibid., p. 40.
84 Li Baoxun, “Jiaoyu changge xu”, p. 147.
For modernity was again the influence of the immediate Japanese environment. To be sure, Japan of the Meiji period (1867-1912) was characterised by a general tendency in favour of Westernisation. Yet Japan’s march toward modernity was by no means always along Western lines with no recourse to its traditional Confucian values. The edict issued by the Japanese Department of Education in 1881, for example, prescribed specifically the teaching of traditional Japanese morals based on Confucianism.85 This emphasis on Confucian ethics and national identity amidst calls for Westernisation found expression in the sphere of music teaching as well. No sooner did the Japanese begin to implement music teaching in schools than they emphasised the importance of music in moral and ethical education. As Izawa Shūji declared emphatically in his introduction to Shōgaku shōka-shū shohen 小学唱歌集编初编: “The aims of education are three: moral education, intellectual education and physical education, of which the most important in elementary school is the cultivation of the moral character. Music, as something that originates in human nature, has a wonderful effect conducive to the proper moral education of men’s minds.”86 Given Izawa’s influence among Chinese students in Japan, it seems likely that the Chinese students got their direct inspiration from their Japanese mentors.

**Attacks on China’s Traditional Music and Calls for Wholesale Westernisation**

Agitation to incorporate music in China’s school curriculum was accompanied by criticisms of Chinese indigenous musical traditions. The encounter with Western music in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century caused some Chinese students to view their own nation’s music as inferior and second-rate. At the same time, awed by the power and wealth of the West, they “assumed that Western music, like Western technology, was

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85 May, p. 38.
86 Quoted in Eppstein, p. 64.
probably based on ‘advanced’ and ‘scientifically objective’ principles.” 87 Often applying what they understood to be Western values and standards in their judgement of Chinese music, they faulted their own musical tradition for a host of reasons, including its alleged lack of dynamism, scientific principle, rationality, and progressive spirit. Because of their deep-rooted belief in the social significance of music, most Chinese music education enthusiasts also demonstrated a strong populist tendency in their view of music, insisting that music should be the voice of the people and the nation, not a domain for the privileged few. Consequently, they not only actively promoted the idea that music was most significant when it was most widely distributed in society and partaken by people all social classes, but also agitated vigorously for a thorough understanding of Western musical theories and techniques as well as the wholesale importation of Western instruments. 88

One person at the forefront of the attack on China’s indigenous musical traditions and utilise Western music conventions was the above-mentioned, nineteen-year-old student Fei Shi. In his essay, “On the Reform of Chinese Music”, published in June 1903, Fei Shi launched a stinging attack on Chinese music on four fronts: (1) its alleged elitist nature, (2) lack of progressive spirit, (3) failure to make use of modern technology, and (4) its lack of theory. 89

“The nature of [Chinese yayue 雅樂, or ritual music of the court],” Fei Shi stated, “is for [the enjoyment of] a small minority, not for the general populace.” 90 Fei Shi was not alone in his attack on the non-democratic nature of Chinese music. Echoing Fei Shi’s

89 Fei Shi, “Zhongguo yinyue gailiang shuo”, pp. 4-8.
90 Fei Shi, p. 4.
sentiments, Huang Zisheng, in his passing reference to the types of music prevalent in contemporary China, wrote: “The so-called music is nothing but a trivial pursuit of the leisured class. It has no beneficial effect for the society whatsoever.”91 Writing in a similar vein, Tang Hualong in the same year also castigated China’s yayue for being “nothing but a tool to glorify the royal house.”92

Apart from being averse to the non-democratic nature of the yayue, Fei Shi was also dissatisfied with China’s popular theatrical music. Once again his condemnation of this traditional musical genre had nothing to do with the aesthetic value of music but resulted from his musical utilitarianism. For example, he lamented that, in contrast with the vitality and vivacity of Western songs, Chinese music of the entertainment type in general and Chinese theatrical music in particular was too often dissolute and licentious and therefore was not conducive to the forging of a progressive Chinese spirit.93 Clearly to him the available genres and melodies were inadequate even to express the complete emotional spectrum, let alone to have the power to induce the citizenry to take up arms for their country. The realisation that Chinese music was “backward” and insufficient to express all the temperaments was one of the main reasons that led a growing number of Chinese intellectuals to call for “direct borrowing” of Western melodies and setting them to Chinese lyrics.94 Significantly, this approach to Western music became the main method of the so-called “school songs.”95

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93 Fei Shi, “Zhongguo yinyue gailiang shuo”, p. 5.
95 For a musicological discussion of how early Chinese music educators and composers appropriated pre-existing tunes including Western song melodies, see Qian Renkang, “Xuetang yuege shi zenyang jiujue fanxin de” (How Old Tunes Are Made Use of in the Schools Songs) in Qian Yiping ed., Qian Renkang yinyue wenji, (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 1997), Vol. 1, pp. 399-409. 

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As a radical student influenced by the evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin, Fei Shi also attacked Chinese music for not making use of modern technology. He pointed out that traditional Chinese music “fails to take advantage of [scientific] instruments” and “has no scientific basis.”

By assuming a serious lack of scientific basis in China’s traditional musical system and acknowledging the superiority of Western music, Fei Shi concurred with the widely shared belief at the time that “Western music, like Western technology, was probably based on ‘advanced’ and ‘scientifically objective’ principles.”

While Fei Shi attacked the conservative tendencies of Chinese music, Li Xieyi revealed disgust toward the inertia he identified in China’s musical traditions: “As a result of several thousand years of conservatism, [Chinese music] gets more and more degenerate with no hope of rejuvenation.” Like Fei Shi, Li believed that such conservative music was not only unsuitable as a tool of nationalism but also detrimental to the forging of a collective national will.

Fei Shi and his fellow students’ criticisms of China’s musical traditions were based almost exclusively on utilitarian grounds. Attacks on Chinese music of a musicological nature did not emerge until the late 1910s. Fei Shi attacked the yayue not because of a lack of artistic merit but because he believed that it “was an antiquated vehicle of the

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98 Gild, p. 116.
99 Quoted in Zhang Jingwei, “Jindai Zhongguo yinyue sichao”, p. 82.
state, bolstering the prestige and authority of the ruling monarch, and as such it had no relevance to the common people.**100 By the same token, he dismissed popular entertainment music of the theatre and traditional-style popular or parlour songs, not because of their aesthetic deficiencies but on the ground that they were unsuited as a tool for nationalist education. For Fei Shi and his contemporaries, what China needed at this time of crisis was not the art of music but a tool to shape the minds of the Chinese masses and to encourage nationalism. And this tool would have to be at once “accessible to a large segment of the Chinese people and capable of arousing in them a new morale of self-strengthening.”**101

Fei Shi was not the first to express these iconoclast sentiments. According to Zhang Jingwei, the classical scholar and radical nationalist Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936) was the first Chinese intellectual of national renown to challenge China’s orthodox musical tradition.102 In his essay “Discourse on Music” (bianyue 辨樂) published in 1900 or 1901 as a chapter of Zhang’s first public anti-Manchu statement Qiushu 觊書 (Book of Persecutions),103 Zhang questioned the practicality of using traditional Chinese music as a means of reforming Chinese society. His raison d’ être, like that of Fei Shi, had nothing to do with the artistic side of Chinese music. Chinese music was castigated not because of its musical or aesthetic deficiency but due to its irrelevance to modern society.104

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Yet Fei Shi and his generation of radical students were more iconoclastic in their attack on Chinese tradition than Zhang Taiyan and more open in their advocacy of Westernization. Unlike Zhang, who with his fellow “guocu” 国粹 (National Essence) scholars “disguised their discovery as interpretation” and studied assiduously the works of non-canonical philosophers and other Confucian and non-Confucian sources, in order to find a particular Chinese essence.105 Fei Shi and his colleagues looked outside China for inspiration and called for a wholesale remoulding of Chinese music along Western lines. Fei Shi took the notion of music reform one step further by suggesting an unreserved adoption of Western-style modern music: “As far as music reform is concerned, I have come to the conclusion that we have no choice but to strike out on a new course, that is, to adopt Western music.”106

Fei Shi was not alone in his call for a complete overhaul of China’s musical culture. Writing in 1904, Zeng Zhimin, as we shall see, stated that “there is nothing in China that can be reformed; total destruction is needed before reconstruction can take place.”107 Even a moderate man like Shen Xingong, usually seen as a promoter of Chinese musical values, expressed similar sentiments in 1905 when he wrote:

In the future, the more progressive our nation is the more we need to emphasise the importance of music. Surely it would not be long before people smash their qin, zheng, sanxian and the like, and teach their children to play the organ and piano.108

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108 Shen Xingong, Xuexue change jiaoshoufa 小學唱歌教授法 (Methods of Teaching Singing at Primary Schools) (1905), reprinted in YYSL, p. 218. More detailed discussion of Zeng and Shen will be found in the next chapter.
Yet like the May Fourth iconoclasts of the late 1910s and early 1920s, Fei Shi and his generation of music enthusiasts were not prepared to advocate a total break with Chinese musical tradition, nor were they content to replace Chinese music with Western. Despite his derogatory remarks about Chinese music as nothing but “dogs’ maddening yapping”, 109 Zeng Zhimin, for example, showed his strong disapproval of a wholesale Westernisation of Chinese music by maintained that “importing civilisation without having created civilisation will result in a civilisation that is never going to be one’s own.” 110 Like their Japanese mentors, the reformers of Chinese music believed that the path to the ideal form of music was to find some way to merge Western and Chinese elements and to create a “national style” for the future. So rather than turning their backs on Chinese indigenous musical traditions altogether, they advocated the creation of a new kind of music through a synthesis of Chinese musical elements and the musical techniques of Western civilisation. But the creation of a national music was not an end in itself; it was invested with a crucial social purpose. Clearly, the close relationship of politics, morality, and music that was potent in China’s Confucian tradition remains latent in efforts to forge a new music tradition. Ultimately music was to be used to “stir up the national spirit and bring about a total transformation of Chinese society.” 111 For this social and political end Fei Shi and his fellow radical students favoured the creation of a music vernacular of great popular appeal. Driven by the same kind of utilitarian consideration, Zeng and other proponents of the school song movement insisted that the

111 Fei Shi, “Zhongguo yinyue gailiang shuo”, p. 3.
transformation of Chinese society should be predicated on the creation of a new type of Chinese songs.112

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Through an analysis of early observations of Western music in Japan by Chinese diplomatic representatives and government officials and by charting the debate over the role and content of music by Chinese students in Japan, I have demonstrated that the Chinese discovery and study of Western music through Japan was essentially a by-product of China’s search for wealth and power. Taking their cue from the Japanese experience, early Chinese students of Western music creatively appropriated aspects of Western musical culture to fulfil their social and political ambitions, as evidenced by their taking a special interest in the Western-style group singing.

The Chinese students in Japan were more explicit in their utilitarian promotion of Western music in China. This is because their efforts were inextricably tied to China’s social and political reforms of the early twentieth century. Their general emphasis on the social and political values of music fitted in well with the government initiative to modernise and the society’s general mood for change. Their specific efforts to include music instruction at schools coincided with the inception in China of an educational system similar to that of the West and the abolition of the civil service examination system. As a result, their influence was relatively widespread and far-reaching. The impact of these students as agents of Western musical culture is especially noticeable in the educational sector as most of them were either educators or promoters of educational reforms. They differed from their missionary, and diplomatic and official predecessors in

at least four respects. First, by highlighting the utilitarian values and functions of music, they were among the earliest to alert the Chinese public to the importance of Western music in China’s struggle for modernity. Second, by actively involving themselves in translating Japanese books on Western music and musical pedagogy they were the earliest Chinese advocates of Western music in China. Third, being the earliest Chinese compilers and producers of song anthologies, teaching manuals and musical textbooks, they played a crucial role in facilitating the establishment of Western-style music education in China’s modern schools. Finally, as most of the Japanese-trained Chinese students taught at newly-established schools at one time or another, they distinguished themselves as the earliest Chinese practitioners of Western-style music teaching.