

### III. Dialogue of Cultures

# The Influence of Schiller's Thought In Revolutionary China

by William Jones

March 5—The recent decision by the Chinese government to make aesthetic education an integral part of every Chinese student's educational curriculum was based in part on the general understanding that education in music and the arts helps foster creative thinking in the child. Together with the fact that creativity and innovation are now the driving forces of the Chinese economy, such aesthetic education becomes of paramount importance for China's future.

There is an element of this new policy which is not so apparent for those not well-versed in Chinese history—the role played by the proliferation in China of the ideas of German dramatist and poet, Friedrich Schiller, who uniquely laid the theoretical basis for the concept of aesthetical education in a series of letters he wrote to the Duke of Augustenborg at the end of the 1700s, which he later published as a free-standing theoretical work, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. The thought and works of Schiller played a not insignificant role during the course of China's development as a modern nation.

#### The Roots of Revolution

The victory of Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) gave overwhelming proof that China's attempt to shut the door to the influence of Western ideas, particularly scientific and technological ideas, had significantly undermined the country's military strength, which had



Portrait by Friedrich Pecht

Friedrich Schiller

made China an easy prey for Western subjugation in the British Opium Wars in the 1840s and 1860s, and now for Japan as a rising Asian power. As a result of that war, Japan took political control over Taiwan and Korea, which had previously been tributary states to the Chinese Empire.

China's defeat forced the conservative Qing authorities to consider opening the door to Western ideas, in what became known as the "Hundred Days of Reform." The reform was quickly ended, however, when the Qing Empress, Cixi—fearful that Western ideas would effectively undermine the authority of the Manchu-led Qing Empire in China—closed the door.

Ferment for change continued to grow, however. A young Hong Kong-educated doctor,

Sun Yatsen, was hard at work trying to mobilize the support and the funding for a revolution in China that would overthrow the Qing Dynasty.

Although Sun had been the leading force behind several unsuccessful attempts to launch such a revolution, he was absent, visiting the United States on a fundraising campaign, when the first successful attempts at a revolution were launched in 1911 in the city of Wuhan. When Sun received the news, he chose not to return immediately, but went to Europe in order to lobby governments there to support the new revolutionary republican government in China. The European governments, wary of alienating the Qing Dynasty, which still held power in

the north of China, rebuffed Sun's requests. Returning to China, Sun was named the first President of the new Republic of China in January 1912, although the warlords of the Qing era still held power in the north of the country.

### Schiller Comes to China

The new opening to Western ideas had broadened the exposure of Chinese elites to Western ideas, both in science and in the arts and humanities. The works of poets such as Friedrich Schiller and Percy Shelley began to influence the Chinese intelligentsia, and more broadly the Chinese people.

Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, a play that became widely performed in China, was first translated in 1911, the year of the republican revolution, known as the Xinhai (stem and branch) revolution, ending the last Chinese monarchy. Schiller's play, printed in the magazine *Xin Zhong Hua* (New China), was translated by Ma Junwu, an ardent republican and follower of Dr. Sun. Ma had studied metallurgy in Japan and in Germany, where he learned German and came into contact with Schiller's work. It was while on vacation in Switzerland, the setting of *Wilhelm Tell*, that Ma decided to translate this work:

It is certainly a theatrical work, but, in fact, it can be considered the founding history of Switzerland. I am otherwise not sentimental, but while I was translating it, I could not hold back my tears. I didn't know what emotions the reading of this play would awaken in my fellow countrymen.

Tian Han, the leading Chinese dramatist of the time, later said that Ma Junwu's translation of *Tell*



Sun Yatsen, first President of the Republic of China.

“deeply influenced the Chinese people in their struggle to overthrow the constitutional monarchy and against the military rulers in the north.”

Ma's translation is written in classical Chinese prose style, which was current in the writings of the time. This was the literary language of the intelligentsia, but was not the spoken language of the people. Because of the difficulties of translating Schiller into classical Chinese prose, and keeping a Chinese structure to the verse, it was a freer translation than would later be the case.

### The Provisional Republic and World War

Shortly after being declared President, Sun Yatsen was forced to turn over power to Yuan Shikai, a former Qing general in

Beijing. While Sun and other leaders of his movement had carried out the revolution that created the republic with the support of the population, they had little real military power and could therefore not persuade the Qing Emperor to abdicate. Yuan, who feigned support

for the creation of a republic, led a substantial army. Faced with the possible failure of establishing a government at all, Sun agreed to relinquish the Presidency to Yuan. He then accepted the post of Minister of Transportation, well aware that the only hope for China's industrialization was the creation of a national system of railroad and infrastructure development.

But Yuan soon showed his true colors and tried to suppress the national parliament established during the revolution and later would even try to have himself proclaimed Emperor. Failing to reach a compromise with Yuan, the forces of Sun moved against him, but suffered a major defeat, and Sun Yatsen was



Le Petit Journal, January 16, 1898

The imperial powers carve up China.

forced into exile in Japan, where he had many supporters. In 1913, Yuan demanded that all the members of Sun's Guomindang be purged. By 1914, the Parliament had been disbanded, while Yuan's junta was supported by the foreign colonial powers.

When the war broke out in Europe in 1914, Japan, in a mutual defense alliance with Great Britain, used the opportunity to seize the German-occupied Shandong Province, the historic home of Confucius and Mencius. The Allies promised the Chinese, who had joined the Allies, that the province would be returned to China after the war, but during the negotiations for the Versailles Treaty in 1919, they reneged on the agreement, in an attempt to keep Japan in President Woodrow Wilson's envisioned League of Nations. This provoked a tremendous upsurge among Chinese students and others, who then went on strike on May 4, 1919, staging demonstrations that led to the second phase of the Chinese revolution, the May 4th Movement.

Many young intellectuals during this period went overseas—to Japan, to Europe, and to the United States—seeking new pathways for China's development. This brought them into contact with some of the more important thinkers of the West, including the works of Friedrich Schiller. Two of the major promoters of the works of Schiller were the Chinese writer and poet, Guo Moruo, and the dramatist, Tian Han, both of whom studied German literature in Japan, sharing a common interest in the works of both Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Tian's correspondence with Guo, regarding culture and politics, but also Tian's grief over his inability to marry a Japanese girl due to Japanese customs, were later published under the title *Cloverleaf*, which Tian considered to be the Chinese version of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

### A Revived Interest in Schiller, and Goethe

Guo translated Goethe's *Faust* into Chinese. After visiting Guo in 1920, Tian Han declared: "Schiller is here. Goethe is also here." They saw their friendship in the same way as the two Weimar poets and had their picture taken in the same pose as Goethe and Schiller in the sculpture of the two in Weimar.

Ma Junwu's translation of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* appeared in book form in 1925. Others translated several more Schiller plays: *Die Räuber* (The Robbers) was translated in 1926, followed by *Wallenstein* in 1932, and *Kabala und Liebe* (Intrigue and Love) in 1934. *Kabala und Liebe* became the most popular of all of Schiller's works for the Chinese public. Guo Moruo also translated *Wallenstein* in 1936, which he had read with his friends twenty years earlier, and, along with his popularity among political activists, it gained wide popularity.

Guo was keen to draw parallels between Schiller's historical dramas and the situation in China at that time. In the Afterword to his *Wallenstein* translation, he wrote:

The lessons that we can draw from this period, for Europe belong certainly to the past, but for China it retains its significance for the present. In this play we see the end of the European feudal period. But our Chinese society has not quite rid itself of feudalism.



Cai Yuanpei as a young scholar at the prestigious Hanlin Academy.

In the late 1930s *Wilhelm Tell* was partly re-written, situated in northern China, in a play entitled *The Nation Lives*. This re-write was then taken by a theater troupe to Sichuan where it was performed several times to raise support for the anti-Japanese resistance.

### Aesthetic Education and Cai Yuanpei

Perhaps the most permanent trace of Schiller's influence in China lies in the lasting philosophical influence of his *Aesthetic Letters*, which were introduced in China as educational policy by a remarkable scholar, Cai Yuanpei. Cai was born to a relatively prosperous family in Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. He was given an education under the traditional system, learning by heart the works of Confucius and other Chinese classics. The mastery of what are known as the Five Classics and the Four Books, including the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, provided the traditional route to a position in the state bureaucracy.

Cai excelled in his endeavors and received the degree of *Jinshi*, the highest degree in the Imperial examination system, at a rather early age, and was accepted to the prestigious Hanlin Academy in 1892. He



had an intimate understanding of the Confucian classics and was well versed in the rites and in traditional music, the two areas that Confucius considered the fundament of a proper education. (Later on, Cai would lament having spent so much of his youth on rote learning that was characteristic for education in the classics in those days.) But he was not satisfied with his situation in life at this time of great turmoil in the Empire.

With the Chinese defeat by Japan in 1895, Cai began to turn from his work of compiling Chinese classics, to translating Western literature which he felt was necessary for China to become a real power in the modern world. With the failure of the “Hundred Days” in 1898, he left the Hanlin Academy to teach at the East-West Academy in his native Shaoxing not far from Shanghai, known then as the “Paris of the East,” which had become a hotbed of revolutionary activity.

Cai became convinced that China could not be modernized without overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. While he worked to translate Western works into Chinese, hoping this would provide the fuel for rousing the population, this distinguished Confucian scholar also became a revolutionary. During his time in the Shanghai area, he organized a number of revolutionary organizations. In 1903, he transferred to Qingdao University where he studied German. In 1905 he joined Sun Yatsen’s *Tongmenghui* (Chinese United League), which had been established by Dr. Sun in Tokyo. Sometimes, in the course of his political work, he even became involved in training groups of young people for assassination assignments!

By 1907, he had become disillusioned with revolutionary activism, and was more and more convinced that the only path for change lay in education of the youth. He then utilized the opportunity to travel to Germany for further study. After studying the German language in Berlin for a year, he began work on a doctorate at the University of Leipzig, remaining for four years studying philosophy, aesthetics, anthropology and experimental psychology.

During his time in Europe, Cai also did his best to

fully imbibe European culture. He went to museums, attended concerts, and learned to play the piano and the violin, having already some versatility on Chinese instruments. He was heavily influenced by the works of Friedrich Paulsen, a neo-Kantian professor, who introduced him to the work of Kant. Cai was deeply impressed by the Humboldt education system, which would be important for his future reform of the Chinese educational system. And it was here that Cai became acquainted with the work of Friedrich Schiller, which would have a decisive effect on his life and work. In 1911, Cai did a thorough study of Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters*.

While Cai Yuanpei was introduced by Paulsen to Kant’s work on aesthetics, and all too many scholars attribute his interest in aesthetic education to the Königsberg “fraudster,” it was rather the heroic work of Schiller that struck a sympathetic chord with Cai. In Schiller’s notion of aesthetic education, Cai felt that he had found the means of fashioning the moral character of Chinese youth, which would inculcate in them a keen sense of their own responsibility for the development of the nation and a spirit of self-sacrifice to work for that cause. This is what he felt was lacking in his own countrymen. His own commitment to the ideals betrayed by the French

Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—he felt could be absorbed into the culture and language of China with the aid of aesthetic education.

Returning to China in 1911 on the cusp of the 1911 Revolution, he was named Minister of Education in Sun Yatsen’s cabinet. Here he was determined to introduce the notion of aesthetic education as the foundation stone of education. In addition, his experience with the Humboldt system in Germany provided a means of transforming the Chinese university system.

In accepting the position, Cai had very clear ideas of what he wanted to do. The crying need for Western knowledge, particularly in the areas of science and engineering, had to be at the forefront of learning in a country like China which was faced with the need to catch up with the West after years of self-imposed isolation, and the decades of humiliation by the colonial powers. But



*Cai Yuanpei leaving for advanced studies in Germany in 1907.*



A manuscript page of Cai Yuanpei's "A General History of Aesthetics."

for Cai this was not sufficient to inculcate in the students a sense of their responsibility in building a nation.

### Education to Build Moral Character and Promote Creative Thought

Education had also to have the function of building moral character and promoting creative thought. He found the means for doing this in Schiller's aesthetic education. Not simply by invoking a Kantian or other form of "moral imperative," but rather by cultivating the emotions in order to achieve a higher sense of self-identity, could one resolve this dilemma. As Cai would explain in an essay later in 1930, titled simply "Aesthetic Education:-";

The classic comprehensive work of Schiller on Aesthetic Education, the lodestar of aesthetic education, first makes the subject clear for all to see. Schiller wrote many poems and plays, and a work on aesthetics, *Letters on Aesthetic Education*; our country's discourse on aesthetic education is interpreted from the standpoint of this German aesthetic education. On that basis, Europe's aesthetic education can provide much that we can draw on for the development of our own awareness.

At the same time, Cai felt that the goal was not simply to imitate the West or blindly adopt Western ideas. Such a cultural transposition was simply not possible or even useful. One had to find in Chinese culture



In 1920, Peking University became the first in China to admit women.

the conflict then raging in Chinese intellectual circles over whether one should simply adopt Western norms and beliefs and cast off the old teachings, or reject Western norms entirely or, at best, to simply adopt Western technology as a pragmatic measure, but hold on to the traditional concepts of the Confucian state. Cai felt that it was necessary to gain a true grasp of Western culture in order to "absorb" it into the Chinese viewpoints. A strong republican, he wanted to instill in the hearts of Chinese youth the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity as the basis of the motherland.

And, he wanted to transform the Confucian tradition of the five loyalties—of son-to-father, brother-to-brother, wife-to-husband, devotion to the ancestors, and devotion to the clan—into a sense of patriotism, of loyalty to the nation and to humanity. He therefore gave these Western concepts "Chinese characteristics." For liberty he substituted the

Confucian concept of *yi* (义) or righteousness; for equality he used

*shu* (恕), or forgiveness, as reflected in Confucius' "Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself"; and for fraternity or brotherhood, he substituted *ren* (仁) or benevolence.

### Cai's Educational Reforms

Cai wanted universities established in all of the provinces, and not be limited to Beijing alone. He wanted to decentralize education. He opened education further to women (it had already begun). He wanted to ban training in the classics in elementary school and

a focal point which would allow an "absorption" of that which Western culture had to offer. Cai was posing a solution to an issue that Gottfried Leibniz had first broached in his encounter with China—finding a means of "translating" one culture into another. In order to do so, one had to find in the recipient culture those conceptual characteristics that best corresponded to the ideas to be transmitted, and to use these to "digest" the new concepts.

introduce handicrafts and drawing. And the teaching of Confucian ethics was to be given in readers, not in the original classical version. He wanted to place a stress on creating a greater understanding of the world abroad and promote internationalism.

But at a general conference of educators in 1912, where he introduced his ideas, he met with a good deal of resistance. Some of his ideas were accepted, but the idea of education as a way to develop independent personalities, and his emphasis on internationalism, were rejected in favor of simply training people who would prove useful to the state. And while his idea of aesthetic education was guardedly accepted, the notion of “world outlook” education was discarded, and the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity totally abandoned. As a result, Cai did not remain long in his post as Minister of Education.

But there were bigger problems looming on the horizon than the problem of education. After ceding power to Yuan Shikai, Sun had tried to persuade him to set up his office in the new capital, Nanjing, where the parliament had been formed. Yuan’s base of political support, however, was in the north, and he wasn’t about to shift the center of power to the Yangtze Valley. Sun sent Cai Yuanpei and two other colleagues to Beijing to persuade Yuan to set up in Nanjing. When Cai’s delegation arrived in Beijing, a reported mutiny among Yuan’s soldiers, perhaps staged by Yuan himself, “prevented” Yuan from leaving Beijing. Faced with Yuan’s resolute refusal to leave Beijing and fearing that further insistence might shatter the Sun-Yuan agreement entirely, Cai telegraphed Sun and told him that he should accept Beijing as the capital, which Sun reluctantly agreed to do.

A new government was then formed, and Cai was asked to continue as Education Minister. Cai did not want to serve under Yuan, but Sun persuaded him to accept the post. President Yuan had no interest, however, in subordinating himself to any parliament, and called for the establishment of a presidential system in

which he would retain the real power. In the face of this breach of his promises, in July 1912, several Guomindang parliamentarians resigned in protest. In return, Yuan retaliated and fired Cai Yuanpei as Education Minister. Cai was then called upon by academic leaders to take over the leadership of Peking University, but Yuan would not permit this either.

The Guomindang’s subsequent attempt to overthrow Yuan by force, which failed miserably, forced Sun back into exile in Japan, while Cai went abroad and settled in Paris, where he would remain through the

early days of World War I. While in France, Cai studied French and assisted in running the Educational Institute for Chinese Laborers in Lyon, and in organizing the Sino-French Educational Association, where both Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping would benefit from their studies.

In 1916, Yuan Shikai died. Cai then received an invitation to return to China to become chancellor of Peking University. Some of his party colleagues told Cai he should not take the position because the new government was corrupt and was run by the war lords. Sun Yatsen, however, encouraged him to take the position, which he did.

Now was perhaps his best opportunity to put into operation his ideas for saving China by creating a generation that was morally strong and committed to develop the nation. Taking up the chancellorship in January 1917, he wanted the university to play a key role in shaping the new republic.

Acquainted with the Humboldt principles of education that he had come to know in Germany, he intended the university to be more than a training ground for government officials, but rather a serious center of research and study, which would help improve the moral and intellectual tone of the country. The university would be a tool for creating an intellectual elite for the nation. He encouraged the university students to express their opinions freely, inviting scholars of different persuasions and views to teach there. He placed great emphasis on learning about other cultures and other



*The entrance of the Red Building of old Peking University, the former School of Liberal Arts, School of Sciences and School of Law.*





*Members of the Preliminary Committee for Unification of the National Language, established in 1928.*

countries as well as integrating aesthetic education into the curriculum—indeed, into the life of the nation as a whole.

The paradigm of a proper Confucian “gentleman” in his personal mannerisms, Cai’s very provocative intellectual style stimulated the rise of a new political consciousness among the students.

### **The New Culture Movement**

Several people who subsequently played leading roles in vastly different factions, politically and intellectually, in China’s future, taught under Cai’s chancellorship. These included Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, later the founders of the Chinese Communist Party; Hu Shih, who would introduce the agenda of “pragmatism” espoused by John Dewey, who had been his teacher at Columbia University; and Lu Xun, one of the first authors to write in the vernacular and to lecture on world literature. Most of them had been colleagues in the disparate political movement for change in China during the time Cai was in Europe. Chen Duxiu was the editor of two of the most prominent political journals, *The Tiger* and *New Youth*.

This was the core of what became known as the New Culture Movement, generally considered as the force that laid the basis for the May 4th Movement. The program of the movement was succinctly elaborated by Chen, something of a “slash-and-burn” advocate towards the old culture, who said that the movement would replace “Mr. Confucius,” with “Mr. Science” and “Mr. Democracy.”

A number of elements united these rather disparate characters with Cai Yuanpei. Cai was in favor of hiring people with entirely different views from his own, be-

cause he felt that it was important to introduce Western ideas of all stripes into the Chinese education system, and that the university should display a variety of ideas in order to stimulate debate and discussion. Similarly, he hired some very conservative scholars as well.

The members of the New Culture Movement were in agreement over the need to reform the Chinese language. Cai compared the use of classical Chinese, which was only understood and utilized by the scholarly elite, to the use of Latin in Western Europe until the Renaissance, when the vernacular was introduced in literature and art. The same had to happen in China, making the spoken language of the people capable of expressing elevated and profound concepts that could be understood by the population at large. This process was also helped by the flood of foreign works which were being translated into the vernacular, thus capable of reaching a mass audience. The political tracts of the socialists and communists had of necessity to use the common language, called *baihua* (common language), in order to mobilize the population.



*Cai Yuanpei with Chinese graduate students from Peking University in front of Columbia University in New York City, 1921.*

But there the similarities ended. Hu Shih was a disciple of John Dewey, one of his teachers at Columbia University, who regrettably came to China to “assist” in the development of the Chinese educational system. Hu was an ardent supporter of a pragmatic, utilitarian philosophy, typified by Dewey. Hu was also an admirer of Thomas Huxley, a collaborator of Charles Darwin and follower of genocidalist



*Sun Yatsen with some members of his cabinet in January 1912.*

Thomas Malthus.

Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao were attracted to Marxism and later founded the Chinese Communist Party, Li of a more intellectual bent than Chen, who became the strongest supporter of the Satanic Bertrand Russell, who was also visiting China in 1920-21. Lu Xun, who was the first Chinese novelist to write in the vernacular, was an ardent admirer of irrationalists Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer.

While supportive of the introduction of both science and democracy in China, Cai was quite wary of where this “movement” was actually heading. Cai was an adamant opponent of both social Darwinism and Benthamite utilitarianism, which was running rampant among the country’s intellectuals. He attempted to counter the effects of these two destructive forces by introducing Schiller’s aesthetic education, personally teaching a course in aesthetics and writing a history of aesthetic thought. Cai wrote that if China were to rely on science alone for her development, she would undoubtedly become rich and powerful, but she would falter in her primary obligation of helping to build a better world of peace and human brotherhood.

### The Purpose of Education

The purpose of education, Cai thought, was to educate the young in the pursuit of virtue (道德, *daode*). While this was a Confucian concept, it had to absorb the new concept of nationhood and the values of liberty, equality and the brotherhood of man which

had emerged from the Renaissance in Europe. And the notion of the beautiful as it had been expressed in Schiller’s work was needed to raise China’s youth to the sense of the sublime, where they would be willing to sacrifice, even their lives, for the sake of the nation and of humanity. Cai also utilized Schiller’s notion of the “play drive,” or *Spieltrieb* which Cai gave the Chinese term *chongdong* (冲动) which might generally be characterized as “impulse based on excitement.” Schiller’s notion of a “beautiful soul” was rendered in Chinese by the Confucian *junzi renge* (君子人格) or the “personality of a noble character.”

In an essay in 1930, titled “Aesthetic Education and the Life of Man,” Cai explained his views:

The Will manifests itself in action, and in the midst of action, it is common that a person will attempt to maintain one’s well-being and avoid death, and seek his benefit and try to avoid harm. These forms of action, combined with everyday intellectual knowledge, may serve to guide one effectively in his life’s path. But a more advanced standpoint considers the life of all men and the benefit of all men as its object; and the life and the benefit of the individual can help support this higher goal. These types of action, on the one hand, are also based on intellectual



*Tsinghua University students prepare to burn Japanese goods on the campus quadrangle during the protests of May 1919.*





*A Peking University student leader gives a speech during the May 4th demonstrations in 1919.*

## ‘Magnificent Works Bring Universal Delight’

Cai succeeded in introducing aesthetic education into the curriculum, but his perspective was much broader than simple curriculum reform. In accordance with Schiller’s program, aesthetic education, he believed, must permeate society. Students must be exposed to the great works of culture. Quoting the famous Chinese poet, Tao Yunming (365–427), that “Magnificent works bring universal delight,” Cai encouraged students to acquaint themselves with the works of great culture, visit art galleries and museums, attend concerts, and learn to play an instrument. Even before a child is born, Cai said, pre-natal homes should be designed for expectant mothers in Renaissance style in order to relax the mother and

knowledge, the knowledge that all men are mortal, and that the individual is not able to exist on his own.

On the other hand, however, there enters in here the driving force of the emotions, of not being able to stand aside while people perish, or not being able to remain aloof when harm is brought upon the nation. This emotion is even greater when, in times of need, one is prepared to abandon one’s own life to help save the people from perishing; or is willing to abandon one’s own advantages in order to share in the calamity of the masses, from which they may have been separated, and thus in one’s own life to let fall the usual relationship of benefit versus harm, and allow it to descend into complete oblivion. This form of magnificent, high-minded action can be fully attributed to the emotions.

To create emotion of this type was the purpose of the beautiful, which would raise man above his every-day cares and away from his mundane calculations of gains and losses (*li/hai* 利/害). All men have emotions, but not all manifest great and noble conduct, because their emotions are weak and frail. The weakness has to be made strong, and the frailty made firm, to bring them to maturity. The means of cultivating that is through objects of beauty, and the action of that is called aesthetic education.

provide the first home for the new child. In their early years, art and music should be placed near the child. And when he or she begins to study, he should receive artistic training.

But also, in society as a whole, it were essential that the aesthetic element be dominant, in the architecture and in the surroundings. Flower gardens should be placed in the parks along with statues of famous people. And along the walkways and streets there should be walls adorned with seasonal flowers, while in the plazas, fountains should be built. Cities should be adorned with images of great persons or of figures from famous fairy tales, or sculptures or carvings reflecting these. Trees should be planted along the sides of the road.

He also called for arranging art shows which should be open to the poor and disabled, asking only for small contributions from those who are able in order to maintain the facility and to add to their holdings. Cai encouraged shop-owners to show taste in their advertising posters and never use any base themes or pictures. He encouraged businesses to use motorized transportation for their commercial transports. He discouraged the use of rickshaws except for tourists, elderly people, or the very young. They could also be used in the case of emergency transport of the sick.

He called for the creation of parks with ponds and pavilions. “Plant there flower gardens and stock the ponds with fish and birds, he advised. Set up botanical gardens. Build zoos so that the visitor looking in every

direction will see the remarkable appearance and activity of the animals.

Build a natural history museum with many specimens, he argued. And create an institution of fine arts.

Cai himself established the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts, noted by President Xi Jinping when he sent a letter of congratulation to the Academy on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. The art academy should also tap into the art collections of private individuals and borrow them for temporary exhibits which would be open to the public, thus supplementing its own collections.

The country should create public cemeteries divided into two sections, one for burial and one for cremation. And monuments should be erected to the deceased in order for the relatives to honor their dead. In nurseries, the walls should be decorated with drawings and paintings reflecting children's fairy tales, with nothing obscene or boorish to be depicted. In 1930 Cai wrote:

Theaters and cinemas should be built, and noted men of letters and famous actors invited to perform famous works or lecture on scholarly topics, with performances and films that give rise to the higher emotions, and with vouchers or low-priced tickets so that it is available to everyman.

Cai felt that these facilities should also be under public inspection in order to assure the quality of the performances, and those not fitting should be closed.

### **The May 4th Movement**

When the students took to the streets on May 4, 1919, Cai felt a sense of defeat. He felt that the students should stay and study and become the leaders that China needed, but things had gone too far to stop them at that point. Sun Yatsen, on the other hand, was enthusiastic about the May 4th Movement, hoping that it would be an opportunity to garner support for his origi-



*Cai Yuanpei, was the founder of the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts, and President of Peking University.*

nal program and resuscitate his republican movement. As when students rioted earlier in 1918, Cai wanted to resign his post. But then, and now, he was persuaded to stay and continue his work. Writing at the end of 1919, however, he expressed his bitterness at the failure of the New Culture Movement:

The New Culture Movement on the surface may seem to have succeeded; on a deeper level it has failed. It succeeded by freeing thought, enshrining the vernacular, and creating a belief in socialism. It failed in its ability to create a philosophical system, to establish a scientific environ-

ment, or to elevate the spirit of democracy.

Conservatives had attacked him for being behind the demonstrations, as the president of the university that first initiated the action. People like Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, the founders of the Communist Party, whom Cai had appointed, had encouraged the activism. At a certain point, Cai submitted his resignation, believing that the corruption of the Peking Government was out of control, and that in the country at large, the warlords again reigned supreme. Professors and students, however, demonstrated to force the government to refuse Cai's resignation. This protest spread nationwide and led to the fall of the government. The new government refused to accept Cai's resignation. Cai withdrew his resignation, but begged to take a leave of absence in 1923 in order to travel again to Europe, which he was allowed to do.

Traveling to France, Cai began to work with the Sino-French University in Lyons, spending some time in London trying to convince the British to use the Boxer Indemnity to assist Chinese education. Returning to China in 1926, Cai represented a portion of the Guomindang *genro* or "elder statesmen," and took part in party debates. Following Dr. Sun's death in 1924, Sun's leading general, Chiang Kai-shek, continued training Guomindang military forces at the Whampoa

Military Academy in Guangzhou, in cooperation with the Communist Party (CCP) forces under the direction of Zhou Enlai. Chiang, the commander of the combined Guomindang-CCP National Revolutionary Army's Northern Expedition in 1926—which Sun had envisioned would unite the country—suddenly broke with the Communists midway during their advance in 1927, purged the CCP members from the Guomindang, and had many of them executed.

Many Guomindang members, including Cai Yuanpei, opposed Chiang for this, and those who remained true to Sun's original coalition idea remained for a while as a "Left Guomindang" working in collaboration with the CCP. While Chancellor of Peking University, Cai had allowed the formation of a Marxist Study Group, although he personally was not attracted to Marxist ideas. He understood the attraction of the Soviet revolution in Russia to many Chinese students, and he was probably sympathetically disposed to it, but admired more the Mutual Aid philosophy of anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin than the revolutionary theory of Vladimir Lenin. Within the Guomindang, Cai tried to broker agreement between the right and left wings of the party, but with little success.

Cai warned Chiang Kai-shek that rejecting the land reform promised by Dr. Sun, and other programs for the social welfare of the population, would greatly damage the support for the Guomindang and only lead to greater support for the Communist Party, which it did. During his last years on the mainland, Cai spent his time working with Sun's widow, Soong Ching-ling, the leading light in the Left Guomindang, in protecting civil rights within Chiang's ever more authoritarian structure.

Many of Cai's educational ideas were scrapped in the unified government of China in 1928, after Chiang's army defeated the warlords. Cai's hopes for universal education for all were whittled down to only a few years for most Chinese youth. His attempt to decentralize the university system—to give more leeway for local initiatives and creative ideas—was also rejected by the party under Chiang's leadership.

By the middle of the 1930s, Cai was outside the loop of the political decision-making and was suffering from a variety of illnesses. When the Japanese took Shanghai in 1937, Cai decided to remove himself to Hong Kong, where he died three years later. But to the end he was committed to his Schilleresque program, his last intelligible words being, "Science and aesthetics can save the nation"—and this perhaps serves as Cai's final testament.

### Reverberations of Schiller's Works in the Anti-Japanese Mobilization

On the 175th anniversary of the birth of Schiller in 1934, the German Government, then controlled by Adolf Hitler, was intent on using the anniversary of the Poet of Freedom to boost the reputation of Hitler's new regime. Many celebrations were held in Germany, often with a clearly propagandistic character.

The Republic of China, which had had a close relationship with Germany since the 1920s, also arranged a seminar on Schiller in Nanjing. Regardless of the political machinations behind it on the part of the Nazi government, and the propagandistic quality of the official German speakers, it gave Chinese scholars an opportunity to popularize the ideas of Schiller. And there were many of them, other than Cai Yuanpei, who felt that the works of Schiller would help break through the lethargy of the population

as the threat of Japanese occupation increased. Several of Schiller's works were published in the 1930s with *Wilhelm Tell* and *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (The Maid of Orleans) leading the list.

Dr. Chu Chia-hua, then Minister of Transportation in the Guomindang government, who had studied in Germany, was a speaker at the seminar. He drew the parallels between Schiller and Chinese dramatists:

[Schiller] said in his writing, *The Theater Considered as a Moral Institution*: "The jurisdiction of the stage begins, where the region of the world's laws ends." He [Schiller] added that "The theater has a deeper and more lasting effect



*A bust of Cai Yuanpei in the entrance of old Peking University, honored today especially for his work in education.*



than morality and law.” His view of the theater corresponds well with the view of Chinese dramatists. Chinese theater always considers itself as “mankind’s educational institution.” The audience should always leave the theater better persons. In this respect, the two worlds are in agreement.

In November of that year, Vinzenz Hundhausen, a professor of German and World Literature at Peking University, published a *Festschrift* for Friedrich Schiller. One half was from German contributors and one-half from Chinese. One of the German contributions analyzed Schiller’s translation of *Turandot*, with its Chinese theme, which had already won a certain popularity in the country. Among the Chinese offerings were a study of Schiller as an historian, one on Schiller’s essay, “*Lycurgus und Solon*” (Lycurgus and Solon), one on Schiller’s poem, “*Sprüche des Konfuzius*” (Proverbs of Confucius), and several others.

### **Schiller Celebrated in the People’s Republic of China**

The Schiller tradition continued after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Guo Moruo and Tian Han went on to write plays, and often, like Schiller, on historical themes or on famous figures from Chinese history. In 1955, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Schiller’s death, there was a celebration in Beijing which also memorialized the Polish dramatist Adam Mickiewicz; the French writer, Charles-Louis Montesquieu; and the Danish writer, Hans-Christian Andersen. Chinese novelist Mao Dun attended and gave a lecture on the life and work of Schiller. Many papers and articles were published at the time about Schiller and his work.

In 1959, the 200th anniversary of his birth, there was another celebration in which Tian Han gave a moving lecture on the life and work of Schiller. The high point of the celebration was the performance of *Kabale und Liebe*, a performance which, according to reports, brought tears to many people’s eyes.

The Cultural Revolution threw an abrupt hiatus into this activity. Guo Moruo was forced to recant all his previous work, which he did. Later, he would, however, un-recant. Tian Han, the author of the poem, “The March of the Volunteers,” which now serves as the Chinese national anthem, was not so fortunate. He was incarcerated in prison in 1968 by the notorious Kang Sheng, who had helped pave the way for the Cultural

Revolution, and died in prison.

The Cultural Revolution did not eradicate the work of Schiller in China. In 1979, a German Democratic Republic production of *Kabale und Liebe* was broadcast on Chinese television, with dramatic effect. One academic spoke of the impact of the drama on her and her associates:

I can well remember how we aspirants to the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences, sat in front of the television, with our hearts pounding, as we followed the course of the drama. For us it was very real. The tyranny and the misdeeds at the small court of this petty prince made us think instinctively of the Gang of Four and their accomplices who, with their intrigues and cabals had wreaked so much havoc on so many Chinese and had brought our fatherland to the brink of extinction.

In 1984, on the occasion of Schiller’s 225th birthday, the Chinese Society for German Literature and the Goethe Institute sponsored a two-day Schiller symposium in Beijing. They discussed Schiller’s dramatic works, his poetry, and his aesthetic writings, and there was a major presentation on Schiller’s influence on Cai Yuanpei. The following year, the Sichuan Foreign Language High School and the German Schiller Society held a symposium titled, “Schiller and China, China and Schiller.”

Given the long history of a “dialogue” between Schiller and Chinese scholars, is it so surprising that China’s president, Xi Jinping, would make it a point to institute “aesthetic education” as a fundamental part of Chinese education? President Xi expressed his clear understanding of its importance in a letter he wrote to the members of the Central Academy of Fine Arts on the occasion of their 100th anniversary:

Art education is an important part of aesthetic education and plays an important role in shaping a beautiful mind. You proposed to strengthen the work of aesthetic education, it is very necessary. To do a good job in aesthetic education, we must persist in establishing morality, take root in the life of the times, follow the characteristics of aesthetic education, promote the spirit of Chinese aesthetic education, and let the young generation of the motherland grow up physically and mentally.