

***Qingliu* and Reform**

**The Orthodoxy of the Literati in the Reform Movement of
Late Nineteenth Century China**

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Declaration

This thesis represents my own original work.

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PREFACE

This thesis is focused on the ideals and activities of the *qingliu* group during two major political movements, the self-strengthening (*zhiqiang*) and reform (*bianfa*) movements, between the 1860s and 1890s. The *qingliu* group was a political faction of the "scholar-officials" (*shidafu*). In particular, the members of the group comprised the more distinguished of the scholar-officials. Most of the members of the *qingliu* group held positions in the Hanlin Academy, the Censorate or other official bodies and the Court could ill-afford to ignore their opinions, or *qingyi* (literally 'pure discussion,' also translated as 'public opinion'). As a result, the ideas and actions of the *qingliu* group greatly influenced state politics, and the group played an important and dominant role in late Qing history.

In this thesis I have dealt with both ideological factors and personal relationships in studying the role of the *qingliu* officials in this process of change. As is well known, the historic role of a political faction cannot be explained fully through a study of only ideological factors. A more complete understanding depends upon a knowledge of the complex of human motives and personal interests which tied together those who acted upon the political stage. Therefore, in this thesis I have devoted much attention to personal friendships and conflicts, such as the conflicts between *qingliu* members and *yangwu* officials, and the relationship between many *qingliu* members and Kang Youwei. By tracing these personal relationships, I hope to enrich our understanding of the main topic of this

The first chapter is introductory, devoted to the general background of the *qingliu* group. *Qingliu*, as a political term, has had a long history in China. With the aim of redefining the role of the *qingliu* group in the late Qing, this chapter not only gives a general analysis of the group's organizational structure and membership, but also deals with the political affiliations and the evolution of the group during the period between the 1860s and the 1890s.

The second chapter contains discussions of ideological matters, political proposals and the relationship between the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups in the self-strengthening movement. The movement, which began in mid-1860s was a combined response to the powerful forces, dynastic decline and the foreign threats. Both the internal and foreign threats led to a growing demand for change. The first section of the chapter presents an overall view of the different proposals put forward by the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups in their effort to create a stronger China. The second section deals with the power struggles and personal conflicts between *qingliu* and *yangwu* officials. In this part, the Empress Dowager Ci Xi's role in the struggle between the two groups has been given particular attention. The last section returns to ideological factors, tracing the influence upon

Chapters three, four and five, all deal with the role of the *qingliu* group in the reform movement of the 1890s. While the first generation of *qingliu* officials opposed the *yangwu* members who were prepared to accept some western ideas and methods during the Self-strengthening movement, the second generation of *qingliu* officials, known as the later *qingliu*, cooperated with Kang Youwei's reform group, which advocated changing the existing political institutions in accordance with what was known of Western methods. Chapter three traces the earlier relationship between Kang Youwei and some his friends who later became famous *qingliu* members, and examines Kang's political activities with regard to

the *qingliu* movement during the years 1888-89. In this chapter, I also introduce the background of the later *qingliu* group and the maturation of Kang's reform group, which will be helpful for understanding the next discussion in the thesis.

Chapter four focuses on the co-operation between Kang's reform group and the *qingliu* group during and after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). By analysing such cooperative projects as the Peking and Shanghai *Qiangxue hui*, I wish to point out that the later *qingliu* group played a leading role in the political activities, while Kang's reform group played only a supportive role. The last part of this chapter deals again with ideological issues, particularly the ideological differences between the later *qingliu* and Kang's reform groups. The last chapter is devoted to the relationship between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group in the Hundred Days reform of 1898. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first section discusses the role of Weng Tonghe's faction of the *qingliu* group and its relationship with Kang Youwei, while the second section deals with Zhang Zhidong's role in the movement. At the end of the chapter I have presented a short

For the romanization of Chinese names and terms I have used the *Hanyu pinyin* method rather than the older Wade-Giles system. And when referring to late Qing rulers I have used the names given to their reign periods rather than their personal or temple names.

CHAPTER ONE

The Background of the *qingliu* Group

The General Nature of the *qingliu* Group

Historically, political associations or groupings were illegal in China. Under the autocratic monarchy, people were commanded to obey the imperial power completely, and the existence of any independent or private political force was considered dangerous for the state. However, even within the ruling class, there were variations in family background, regional origin, moral standards, spheres of learning, political views and religious beliefs. Men with similar background and interests tended to form groups to protect their own interests and those of similar groups, and discriminate against those who held different views. Informal associations continued to exist throughout Chinese history. These informal political groupings were known by the derogatory term *pengdang*.¹

Usually, Confucianism divided *pengdang* into those composed of *junzi* (gentlemen) and those composed of *xiaoren* (mean fellows). According to Ou Yangxiu, a scholar of the Song dynasty, gentlemen form groupings on the basis of shared ideals, while 'mean fellows' form groupings on the basis of shared personal interests.² Gentlemen come from families of good standing, and are men of great learning and high moral qualities. *Qingliu* as a general category, was an

¹ Literally, *peng* means friends, and *dang* means party. The term *pengdang* may be translated as "clique". For a discussion of the role of *pengdang* in Chinese history, see Zhang Yufa, *Qingji de lixian tuanti* (The Associations of Constitutionlists of the Late Qing Period), pp.11-4.

² See Ouyang Xiu, "Pengdang lun " (On Factionalism) in Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou eds, *Guwen guanzhi* (Collected essential classical writings). Vol.2, pp.427-30.

outcome of the existence of *pengdang* in Chinese autocratic times. The term *qingliu*, which literally means "pure stream," was traditionally applied to members of "gentleman" groupings, while the term *zhuoliu*, "dirty stream" was used for members of "mean fellow" groupings.³ What does *qingliu* really mean? As a general definition, the term *qingliu* seems to be associated with the grouping of orthodox scholar-officials who were well known in social circles or in the academic field. When bureaucracy became rampant, when "mean fellows" held sway, academic achievements were spurned and social order became chaos, *qingliu* members as the embodiment of orthodoxy stood for disassociation with the officials who were regarded as lacking moral worth, and attacked government corruption and immoral social values.

It is widely known that bureaucrats and intellectuals were in the main the same group of people in imperial China.⁴ Using *qing* to describe a scholar-official emphasized the special intellectual and moral qualities expected of a scholar when he had become an official.⁵ There are a number of Chinese terms beginning with *qing* which describe the special intellectual and moral qualities and character of typical scholar-officials, such as *qinggao* (morally disinterested in worldly things), *qinglian* (incorruptible), *qingzheng* (honest and upright), *qingya* (elegant), and *qingbai* (unsoiled). The scholar-officials who came to be termed the *qingliu*

³ *Qingliu* may be rendered literally as "pure stream". The *liu*, however, is a figure of speech, and means a group of people. For more discussion of the translation of the term *qingliu*, see Lloyd Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century" *Journal of Asian Studies*, (1965) 24:4/600, no 27.

In A.D. 905, the powerful official Zhu Wen executed the scholar-official Fei Shu. Li Zheng, an adviser of Zhu, hated the scholar-officials. He suggested to Zhu that as the scholar-officials often called themselves *qingliu*, it would be a good idea to throw their bodies into the Yellow River so that the *qingliu* would turn into *zhuoliu* (dirty stream). See *Xin Tangshu* (A New History of the Tang Dynasty), p.4648.

⁴ This assertion is made by Wu Han in his "Lun shidafu" (On Scholar-officials) in Fei Xiaotong and Wu Han, *Huangquan yu shenquan* (The Power of Emperors and the Power of Gentry), p.66.

⁵ The connotations of the *qingliu* varied according to the period. For example, in the Jin dynasty (A.D.256-420), to call someone a *qingliu* scholar meant that he did not want to be involved in government affairs so as to keep his reputation intact.

usually had great learning and literary ability. They were also seen as highly virtuous, and different from professional bureaucrats, who were considered more prone to corruption. When such *qingliu* scholar-officials expressed their critical opinions on affairs of state or the general moral state of society, they often used a quite intemperate rhetorical style to express their opposition. Compared with the professional bureaucrats, the *qingliu* officials usually were lacking in experience and practical skill to set against their bookish idealism.

Although the *qingliu* officials of the late Qing retained some of the general characteristics of the *qingliu* members in earlier periods of Chinese history, they had some distinctive features of their own. As the Western impact on China escalated through the nineteenth century, the *qingliu* group, as representatives of orthodox scholar-officialdom, not only opposed corruption in government and degeneration of social values while defending the honour of Confucianism, but also took upon themselves the responsibility to protect Chinese tradition and culture from the corrosive influence of the West.

The *qingliu* group which formed in the mid-1870s came originally from the *qingyi* movement. A summary of the history of *qingyi* as a political concept will be found in Lloyd H. Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nine-teenth Century"⁶ According to Eastman, the concept of *qingyi* first appeared in the Western Han, when it referred to government-solicited discussion and criticism of the behaviour and morality of prospective office-holders. Later in the Western Han, this kind of criticism became the tool of an opposition movement which took root among the large number of Confucian literati deprived of power and privilege during the factional struggles that occurred at the end of the

⁶ Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century", pp.595-6. See also Mary B. Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power: Qingyi in Late Nineteenth Century China", *Journal of Asian Studies* (1982) 41:3/453-84.

dynasty.⁷ It was in such oppositional contexts that *qingyi* discourse became important in Southern Song and late Ming politics. The sudden growth of *qingyi* in the late Qing was stimulated by the long crisis in national and foreign affairs. In the earlier periods of the Qing dynasty, the reigns of Emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong (between 1662 and 1795) had been ones of considerable prosperity and strength. Signs of decline had been apparent since the reign of Emperor Daoguang (1821-1850).

Susan Jones and Philip Kuhn have emphasized a different link between developments at the end of the eighteenth century and the political crisis of the nineteenth century.⁸ The connection they identify is to be found in a pattern of social and environmental changes without precedent in the history of Chinese civilization. The decline became worse during the reigns of Emperors Xianfeng, (1850-1862) and Tongzhi (1862-1875). Especially after the internal rebellion of the Taiping, which took fourteen years to suppress, the economic and political system of society was shattered. Serious financial crisis, chaos in law and order and general corruption of social morality caused scholar-officials to criticize government policies and officials who were seen as unfilial, corrupt and otherwise un-Confucian.

Aside from the internal social crisis, the Western impact accentuated the activity of *qingyi*. Before the mid-nineteenth century, the Chinese intellectuals' view of their native land was that it was the centre of the world geographically, while Confucianism was the perfect civilization, superior to all others both socially and politically. The Westerners who arrived in China in about the mid-nineteenth century were called *yi* (barbarians). But since the first Opium War of 1840-1842,

⁷ Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century", pp.597-8.

⁸ See Susan Mann Jones and Philip Kuhn, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion" in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol.10, pp.107-62.

Chinese defeats had led to a series of humiliating treaties. The indemnities exacted by the Western powers and the cession of Chinese territory had aroused anger and xenophobia within the Chinese intellectual class. Though the government accepted the unequal treaties and the humiliating situation, the old feelings of cultural superiority and pride did not go away. Thus, when some officials first introduced Western-inspired innovations in the mid-1860s, both they and their projects were attacked by the majority of scholar-officials.

From one point of view, the first growth of *qingyi* was aimed at opposing the *yangwu* (Western affairs) movement and included attacks on officials who first introduced Western-inspired innovations in the late 1860s and early 1870s.⁹ For the most part, *qingyi* focussed on *yangwu* activities, such as the establishment of schools, for example, the *Tongwen guan* which offered Western language courses; the construction of railway or the sending of diplomatic missions to foreign countries. The *qingliu* group developed from the *qingyi* movement, and thus the xenophobic views of *qingyi* coloured those of the *qingliu* group in its early period. The problems facing the nineteenth-century *qingliu* scholar-officials were therefore much more complex than those which faced the *qingliu* groupings in earlier periods. Regular government administration had been disrupted, and before long, uncontrolled corruption and demoralization began to appear. The crisis in the second half of the nineteenth century in China was unique in the sense that it could not be explained in terms of the usual Confucian notions of what caused administrative or dynastic decline. The objects of the *qingliu* political struggles in the late Qing were not limited to domestic affairs but extended to foreign affairs. These struggles were closely connected with many key questions in modern China, such as the conflicts between Western civilization and Chinese tradition, between the progressive and the conservative, between patriotism and

⁹ See Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", p.454.

treason, as well as over the problem of whether or not the reform should accept some Western knowledge while continuing to adhere to traditional values. The question that will serve as a focus for the discussion in this thesis is that of the *qingliu* scholar-officials' attempts at reforming the government under the strong impact from the West.

The Organizational Structure and Membership of the *qingliu* Group

Two main *qingliu* groups have been identified within the metropolitan bureaucracy during the late Qing: the earlier *qingliu* group of the late 1870s through to the mid-1880s, and the later *qingliu* group which was closely interrelated with the *Didang* (Emperor's Party) in the 1890s.¹⁰

The *qingliu* group, as with many other political factions, had no formal organizational structure, because political associations were forbidden by all imperial dynasties. The Qing dynasty was no exception. The *qingliu* group, strictly speaking, was a loose grouping of orthodox scholar-officials who joined together on the basis not only of political views, but also of personal interests, regional background or other private factors. In other words, the *qingliu* group, as Hao Yanping has said, "was an amorphous grouping based on personal relationships rather than hierarchical formal political organization".¹¹ This poses the question: what were the chief internal bonds within the *qingliu* group which formed it into a political faction? In my opinion, the *qingliu* group's amorphous organizational structure was related to the particular nature of Chinese scholar-officials. I would suggest that the major roots of the *qingliu* group's internal

¹⁰ Ibid, p.456.

¹¹ See Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang: The 'Disinterested' Scholar-Official Group (1875-1884)." *Papers on China* (East Asian Research Center, Harvard University) (1962) 16/41.

relationships lay in the network and ties stemming from the examination system which was closely related to the existence of the whole scholar-official class.

The most important factor in the examination system which played a role in forming the *qingliu* group was the relationship of *mensheng*. The *mensheng* relationship was akin to a teacher-disciple relation. However, it existed not only in teacher-disciple situations but also more widely among the officials. Historically, the *mensheng* relationship had served as one of the major bases for forming political factions. In the early Qing period, the custom of taking on *mensheng* was outlawed, but this did not stop it from functioning. The government under the reign of the Yongzheng emperor finally had to acknowledge this relationship's legal status.¹² The custom of *mensheng* flowered in the latter days of the Qing dynasty. It became a regular practice for degree candidates to treat all examiners as mentors after they had passed the examination, and set up a relationship of *mensheng* with each other, especially when the examiner held a high government post.¹³ At the same time, such high officials also made earnest efforts to enlist able men and scholars with literary reputations into their networks as their disciples. Generally, the more disciples a patron had, the more powerful he was. The acknowledged patrons of the *qingliu* group such as Li Hongzao and Weng Tonghe had held the position of examiner many times, and had a large number of disciples.¹⁴ It was popularly believed that Weng Tonghe had enlisted Wen Tingshi and Zhang Jian by aiding them in their examinations when he was in charge of the

¹² Shang Yanliu, *Qingdai keju kaoshi shulun* (An Account of the Qing Examination System), p.89.

¹³ The *jinshi* examination was usually managed by an examiner-general, four to six vice examiners and about eighteen examiners who were in charge of reading the examination papers. Only the examiner who read and marked a successful candidate's paper was treated as his *zuoshi* (mentor). The examiner-general was commonly treated as *zuozhu* (senior mentor). See Chen Zhiping, *Zhonghua tongshi* (A General History of China) Vol.8, p.107. For more detail on the Qing educational system, see Shang Yanliu *Qingdai keju kaoshi shulun* (An Account of the Qing Examination System), p.33-47.

¹⁴ See Table 1.

examinations between 1890 and 1894.¹⁵ Wen Tingshi and Zhang Jian were two of Weng Tonghe's principal disciples.¹⁶ The *mensheng* relationship served as a vertical tie between *qingliu* members and their leaders.

Another factor within the examination system which played a major part in the formation of the *qingliu* group was the tie of *tongnian*. The relationship of *tongnian* was somewhat like the relationship between classmates, but there was a difference. *Tongnian* means that the men had received their degrees in the same year rather than that they had studied at the same school. Strong ties among *tongnian* were encouraged by the examination system. The government always published a special book after each provincial or metropolitan examination, called the *Tongnian chilü* (Background of the successful candidates)¹⁷. This book gave many personal details such as family and educational background about the new successful candidates. Furthermore, some outstanding examination essays were also published. In this way, the new *jinshi* or *juren* became acquainted with one another. In fact, by taking the examination many times, many had already got to know each other quite well in the course of previous attempts to pass the examinations. If they had personal ties stemming from their family or educational background, they could become very close friends. The *tongnian* relationship could also be very important in their later official careers. The personal or social ties among the *qingliu* members often derived from the period of their examination

¹⁵ See Huang Jun, *Huasui rensheng-an zhiyi quanbian* (The complete Historical notes by Huang Jun) in the edition of Su Tongban and Xu Yanban, pp.600-3; and Hu Sijing, *Guowen beicheng* (Historical anecdotes), 2/16a-b; also Wang Bogong, *Juanlu suibi* (Reminiscences of Wang Bogong) in Jian Bozan ed, *Wuxu bianfa* (The Reform Movement of 1898), Vol.4, p.225.

¹⁶ For the relationship between Weng and Zhang, see Zhang Kaiyuan, "Weng-Zhang jiaoyi yu Wan-Qing shiju" (The relationship between Weng Tonghe and Zhang Jian and its bearing on late Qing court politics) in *Jindaishi yanjiu* (Studies on Modern Chinese History), (1981) 1/179-98. For the relationship between Weng and Wen, see Liu Fan, "Weng-Wen jiaoyi yuqi zhengzhi beijing" (The relationship between Weng Tonghe and Wen Tingshi and its political background) in *Shixue yuekan* (Monthly History), (1986) 1/55-9.

¹⁷ See Shang Yanliu, *Qingdai keju kaoshi shulun* (An Account of the Qing Examination System), pp.87-8.

candidature. If one looks at a list of names of people most closely associated with *qingliu* members, one can see that most of their friendships were established during their examination period. From the 1890s on, the degree candidates who took the examination in the same year took part directly in political activities such as the degree candidates against the Sino-Japanese peace treaty in 1895 and the establishment of the *Baoguo hui* (Society for Protecting the Nation) in 1898. The *tongnian* relationship served as a strong horizontal tie among *qingliu* members.

The third major type of relationship within the *qingliu* grouping was the *tongxiang* relationship. *Tongxiang* means of the same neighbourhood, and was also used more broadly to refer to people of the same town, county or province. Regional ties played a very important role not only in the examination system, but also directly within political factions. During the late Qing, the forming of strong political factions such as those associated with the political forces of Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang mainly depended on personal regional armies (such as the *Xiang* army and *Huai* army) which were formed during the suppression of the Taiping rebellion. As is commonly known, many official associations of people from particular provinces or towns (*Tongxiang hui*) existed in the capital. One of the functions of these associations was to look after the boarding and lodging of degree candidates who came from the same province or town when they came to the capital for the metropolitan examination. Usually, the first thing degree candidates would do on arrival in the capital would be to call on the highest officials from their home area. These officials were then expected to guide and support their townsmen. This so called *xiangtu* (native soil) relationship was a very strong tradition in Chinese culture. There are many stories about examiners or high officials who favoured their townsmen. For example, according to Wen Tingshi, when Li Hongzao took charge of the examiner's position, ninety per cent of his townsmen, [also including those who came from the same province] who

had often visited him, passed the examination.¹⁸ The so-called Northern and Southern factions existed before and during the *qingliu* group's evolution.¹⁹ When Li Hongzao, a Northerner, was part of the inner decision-making group in the Grand Council, it was said that "he did not use officials who came from southern provinces unless it was absolutely necessary."²⁰ The key members of the early *qingliu* group, Zhang Zhidong, Zhang Peilun and Li himself all came from the same province, Zhili. Their activities were criticized at that time in these words: "The northerners, two Zhangs and one Li, colluded both within and outside the government, and formed a wide group of colleagues into a clique."²¹ In the same way, when Weng Tonghe acted as a patron of the later *qingliu* group, it came to be composed almost entirely of southerners. In short, the networks of the *qingliu* group were strongly imbued with regionalism.

The three types of relationship mentioned above served to structure major networks which linked the members of the *qingliu* group. The connection between the members and leaders of the group largely depended on the vertical tie of *mensheng*, while the *tongnian* tie acted as an important horizontal link among the *qingliu* members. *Tongxiang* principle provided both horizontal and vertical linkings. Nonetheless, other personal or social relationships such as personal and family friendship, nepotism, and experience as colleagues, also played quite important roles in forming the *qingliu* group. It may be said in brief that the *qingliu* group consisted of association of high degree holders on the scholar-friend

18 Wen Tingshi, *Wenchen ouji* (Historical notes by Wen Tingshi), in *Jindaishi ziliao* (Sources on Modern History), (1981) 1, p.50.

19 On Northern and Southern factions, see Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation", p.601.

20 Huang Jun, *Huasui resheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, p.555.

21 See Li Ciming, *Yuemantang riji* (The Diary of Li Ciming), p.7126.

model.²² Thus the networks stemming from the examination system were the most basic ties linking the orthodox scholar-official group.

In the studies that have dealt with the question of the *qingliu* group, a number of scholar-officials have been suggested as *qingliu* figures.²³ However, because *qingliu* was a very vague designation, even to contemporaries, there was neither a standard list of members nor a clear distinction between the *qingliu* group's members and the members' associates. The people called *qingliu* usually shared certain common characteristics which are central to our understanding of the group as being one composed of orthodox scholar-officials. These common features united them, and gave them a sense of individual identity and purpose.

Almost all *qingliu* members held the *jinshi* degree and held posts in the Hanlin Academy. They were among the best of the successful candidates in the civil service examinations. It has been estimated that at this time every year two million candidates were taking examinations at one or another level, of whom only about two percent were successful in obtaining the *jinshi* degree.²⁴ Many *qingliu* members had been ranked by the examiners in one of the top ten places including the title of first (*zhuangyuan*), second (*bangyan*) and third (*tanhua*) scholar in the Empire.²⁵ Those who gained the top positions in the examination list had a very high reputation among scholar-officials.

Most *qingliu* members were officials of low or middle rank, which means below the third rank, who served or had served in metropolitan departments like

²² See Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", p.457.

²³ See Table 2 and 3.

²⁴ See Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry*, pp.92-8.

²⁵ See the Table 4.

the Hanlin Academy, the Censorate and the Six Boards.²⁶ According to Qing dynasty law, officials who held the *jinshi* or *juren* degree were called *zhengtu* (regular route) scholar-officials, and only *zhengtu* officials could hold a place in Departments such as the Hanlin Academy, the Board of Personnel, and Board of Rites [The Board of Rites also directed educational affairs].²⁷ Though the great majority of *qingliu* adherents were not at the policy-deciding level, they could greatly influence policy-formation by submitting memorials to the throne.²⁸ One of the main differences between the officials known as *qingliu* adherents and the general run of scholar-officials was that *qingliu* officials performed the unenviable role of attacking corruption among officials and criticizing the policies of the government.

Another marked characteristic of the *qingliu* adherents was that they set great store by moral character. They were meant to be more concerned with the intrinsic values of life than with material necessities. According to Confucian standards, the moral principles should include qualities such as loyalty (*zhong*), filiality (*xiao*), humanity (*ren*), justice (*yi*), etiquette (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), and trustworthiness (*xin*). All *qingliu* scholar-officials claimed to be "pure" in their public and private lives. Kang Youwei described a typical *qingliu* member in the following words:

"Mr Tu Renshou is a gentleman with a broad mind and a sanguine disposition. He is frank and upright, and is full of fortitude and the spirit of universal fraternity. Mr Tu studies the philosophy of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi carefully and with great respect. Seated or

26 See Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation", pp.596-7. Some exceptions such as Li Hongzao, Weng Tonghe and Zhang Zhidong were regarded as the patrons of the *qingliu* groups.

27 *Zhengtu* scholar-officials were those officials who had obtained officials status through the normal channel of examination. See Zhao Ersun, ed, *QSG*, Vol. 12, p.3205.

28 In general, the right to submit memorials directly to the throne was confined to officials of the third rank or higher. However censors and Hanlin officials might also submit memorials directly to the throne, and other low or middle officials could submit memorials through their department's directors. See *Qinding Da-Qing huidian* (Collected Statutes of the Qing Dynasty), 82/10b-11a.

standing, he always keeps a dignified bearing. He dresses formally even in the heat of summer and never takes to his bed in the day-time unless he is very sick. Mr Tu manages his household meticulously, and never appears angry or speaks loudly. In ancestor memorial ceremonies, he strictly observes the custom of abstaining from meat and wine, and offers sacrifice with deep sorrow. He suspended his public activities and observed a three-year fast after the death of a parent."²⁹

When a *qingliu* member failed to behave morally he would be deemed to be unfit for membership of this highly moral grouping. For example, Bao Ting, a respected *qingliu* official, took a prostitute as concubine and was ostracized and humiliated by other *qingliu* members.³⁰ In a similarly situation, Zhang Peilun was attacked for becoming the son-in-law of Li Hongzhang, whose reputation as a high official was poor. Li Ciming, a *qingliu* member, criticized a fellow official in the following words:

"Sun Yiyan considered himself a *qingliu* figure and a fine scholar, but he indulged himself on the pretext of his age. He often used opium and became lax in public affairs. He has brought utter discredit on himself."³¹

This suggests that the term *qingliu* was regarded as a highly respectable title, and officials without a high moral reputation were not qualified to be *qingliu* members.

Another common characteristic of *qingliu* members was that they were famous for their academic learning and their great scholarly achievements. Zhang Zhidong was a great classical scholar; Zhang Peilun, Bao Tin and Chen Baosheng were popular poets and writers; Pen Zuyin was an expert interpreter of inscriptions, ancient bronzes and stone tablets; Sheng Zenzhi was an expert in the

²⁹ Kang Youwei, "Kang Youwei de liangpien weikan-gao" (Two unprinted essays of Kang Youwei) in *Dalu zazhi* (The Continent Journal), (1975) 50:4/195.

³⁰ See Huang Jun, *Huasui resheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, pp.205-6.

³¹ Li Ciming, *Yuemantang riji*, p.4904.

geography of northwest China; Li Hongzao and Weng Tonghe both served as imperial tutors because of their outstanding scholarship; and Zhang Jian and Wen Tingshi were acknowledged to be first-class scholars in many different disciplines.³² It is worth noting that many late *qingliu* members during 1880s-1890s also had wide knowledge of Western affairs.

As we have seen, the *qingliu* was a special group among the elite Chinese intellectuals. They stood as a group of truly orthodox scholar-officials whose scholarship and insistence on high moral principles distinguished them from the common run of officials. Around these scholar-officials with their superior intellectual attainments, there formed a number of social groups of officials who shared scholarly and political interests known as the *mingshi* (famous scholars) circles. Within the *mingshi* social groups, it was not very clear at the time who were regarded as *qingliu* members and who were not. Usually, the so-called *qingliu* officials, by submitting memorials to the throne, established themselves as spokesmen for the *mingshi* group. On the other hand, the list of acknowledged *qingliu* members could be adjusted by changes in some *qingliu* officials' political, scholarly or social positions. A new generation of *mingshi* replaced the old generation of *qingliu* during the 1890s, and this made for the evolution from the early *qingliu* to the later *qingliu*. Though it could be argued that the political views of the *qingliu* group were expressed differently in different periods, both early and later *qingliu* belonged to the same stratum of orthodox scholar-officials. The *qingliu* group not only greatly influenced policy-making in both internal and foreign affairs as a centrally important political force in the government, but also reflected the general trend of thought at the time as the representative of the ideas of orthodox intellectuals.

³² See Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period.*, pp.23, 43, 48, 305, 608, 611-2, 855-6 and 860-1. (in Taiwan reprinted 1972)

Political Affiliations and Evolution of the *qingliu* Group

Nineteenth century Chinese intellectuals lived in an age of change that led China into a new era. This era witnessed strong conflicts between Western culture and Chinese traditions during the last period of the Chinese empire. It took about twenty years of failure, humiliation and defeat after the first Opium War for some Chinese intellectuals to come to the conclusion that if China wished to be strong and defend herself against intruders, she must learn from her opponents. Chinese intellectuals in general, however, did not come to a clear understanding of the situation until much later. During the self-strengthening movement, *qingliu* officials opposed Westernization but were not committed to die-hard conservatism. During the reform movement, *qingliu* officials supported modernization but did not promote themselves as extremist reformers. As a developmental stage in evolutionary process of the group, the *qingliu* group, as I have argued above, were a representative group of Chinese intellectual elite. They appeared to have attempted to find a way of fulfilling Chinese tradition and at the same time finding a way of benefiting from some Western ideas.

The early *qingliu* group in the 1860s-1880s was regarded as a political force which rejected foreign influences. Mid-nineteenth century Chinese intellectual xenophobia can be understood by reference to China's background of isolation and the situation of the time. Firstly, the traditional lack of respect for science and technology aggravated the *qingliu* members' xenophobia. Historically, Chinese intellectuals had not always held an anti-foreign attitude. Indian culture had had a

strong influence on China.³³ This may have been so because the culture that came from India to China was symbolic, literary and ideological. These were familiar to Chinese intellectuals and were accepted without causing social chaos.³⁴ But the Western culture coming into China in the nineteenth century was different. It was based on science and technology, and was exemplified by weapons, machines or other material goods. These were usually despised by Chinese intellectuals. Most Chinese intellectuals had confined themselves to the study of philosophy and political history, and were ignorant of the enormous developments of modern science and technology. When the first Western science courses were introduced into a Chinese school in the 1860s, Wo Ren expressed the following opinion:

"According to my viewpoint, astronomy and mathematics are of very little use if [they] are going to be taught by Westerners as regular subjects of study. From ancient times to the present, I have never heard of any one who could rely on mathematics to restore the strength of a nation. "³⁵

A censor supported Wo's view, saying:

"Astronomy and mathematics should only be studied by those working in the Board of Astronomy. Only the craftsmen and labourers of the Ministry of Public Works should be commanded to learn manufacturing. As for scholars and court ministers, they should not esteem such crafts, nor should they have barbarians as teachers".³⁶

Secondly, the growing anger of the public toward foreigners also played a major role in Chinese intellectuals' xenophobia. Since the 1840s, the Chinese people seethed with an anger built up day by day as a result of the bad treatment they were receiving from foreigners. From the Opium War to the Sino-Japanese

³³ For a general analysis, see Sun Guangde, *Wan-Qing chuantong yu xihua de zhenglun* (The debate on Tradition and Westernization in the Late Qing Period) p.5.

³⁴ See Fei Xiaotong and Wu Han, *Huangquan yu shenquan*, p.20.

³⁵ Translation from Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840-1928*, translated and edited by Ssu-yu Teng and Jeremy Ingalls, p.105.

³⁶ *Ibid*; pp.105-6.

War, China had been repeatedly oppressed by powerful foreign countries. The situation was further aggravated by the haughtiness and unruliness of Christian missionaries who relied on European imperial power to support missionary interference with China's civil administration. For several decades, anger and resentment mounted in the minds of both the upper and lower classes of Chinese. This strong antipathy among both the scholar-officials and common people formed the basis for the reactionary activities which followed the *yangwu* movement against those people who advocated foreign ideas. The feelings among the common people and the intellectuals combined to create a strong anti-foreign public opinion.

Lastly, Chinese intellectuals lacked channels of communication to understand the West. The aspects of Western culture which Chinese intellectuals encountered in the mid-nineteenth century were mainly concerned with military and commercial affairs. Chinese intellectuals knew little of the Western intellectual tradition. They saw the strength of Western culture in completely materialist terms. When the impact of the West led to a series of military conflicts, Chinese intellectuals found that they had still to learn the most elementary facts about the Westerners. Lack of media of communication such as newspapers, magazines and books on the West meant that only scholars or officials who had personal contact with foreign missionaries or merchants could gain some knowledge of Western culture. Even after the First Opium War, the influence of the West was limited to a few cities and the southeast coastal area. An important factor in China's lack of understanding of the West was the fact that China lacked a system of information dissemination comparable to the Western press in the mid-nineteenth century. This made it difficult for any Western intellectual influence to seep through, and confirmed the Chinese in their view of Westerners as possessing solely a material culture.

During the 1870s-1880s, the period of the first *qingliu* movement, the attitude of the *qingliu* officials' was still so coloured by their anti-foreignism that the group has been mistakenly characterized as a group of extreme conservatives.³⁷ Although in the early period *qingliu* officials held strongly anti-foreign attitudes stemming from their self-exalted Confucianism and self-centred traditionalism, subtle changes in the *qingliu* officials' attitude towards foreign things made them part company with the die-hard conservatives. Generally speaking, it is difficult to show that *qingliu* members had views significantly different from those of the conservatives in the 1870s-1880s. They were still at the level of regarding the Westerners as barbarians. The *qingliu* group opposed the early *yangwu* movement. However, with the development of the *yangwu* movement and the spread of Western knowledge, the conservatives began to split. Some of those conservatives who insisted completely on their original attitude towards the West evolved into a group of die-hard conservatives.

These die-hard conservatives unconditionally opposed anything foreign and thought that Chinese tradition with its skills and techniques was the perfect civilization. They argued that the crisis in society and government was caused by the low calibre of administrators, rather than by the law or the administrative system. The most prominent characteristic of the die-hard conservatives was that they refused contact with anything foreign and denied the very possibility of learning anything from the foreigners.³⁸ There were many examples of such an attitude in the second half of the nineteenth century. Wo Ren, for example, when he was ordered to serve in the *Zongli yamen* (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), refused the post by pleading illness. (It was said that the 'illness' was caused by

³⁷ See Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang", pp.46-7.

³⁸ For analysis of the die-hard conservatives, see Li Kan "Lun wangu-pai" (On the Die-hard Conservatives) in *Lishi yanjiu* (Historical research), (1978) 11/3-18.

his deliberately falling off his horse.)³⁹ Another example is Xu Tong, a famous scholar and tutor of the emperors Tongzhi and Guangxu, who so disliked seeing foreigners that he made long detours around foreign buildings in order to avoid passing through them on his way to visit his friends.⁴⁰

These die-hard conservatives held so strongly to tradition that they completely ignored the development of the outside world. From a letter written by such a scholar in the late 1890s, we can see how far they had fallen behind the times. This letter, from Ye Dehui, reads as follows:

"Nowadays, scholars who enjoy Western learning are trying to break the boundary line between barbarian and Chinese, and to combine the civilization of China with that of foreign countries, but I can never agree with them.....Westerners have distinguished the Chinese as a yellow race, which implies that from the beginning, when heaven and earth were created, the Chinese were given a central position [because the colour of the earth is yellow].....Foreigners treat a weak nation like a piece of meat to be eaten or like a prey to be swallowed by whales. It is not surprising that they, being of a barbarian race, are hostile to us. I am surprised, however, that our own so-called progressive scholars who seem to enjoy our misfortune and agree with the foreigners. Such scholars disregard the fact that their grandfathers and fathers were subjects and officials of China, and that their sons and grandsons will be Chinese citizens."⁴¹

Such opinions were not considered strange in the 1840s or 1860s or even 1870s. But it may come as a surprise that they were still being expressed on the eve of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, this group of die-hard conservatives did not represent the major trend among Chinese intellectuals.

³⁹ Zhao Ersun, *QSG*, Vol.38, p.11737.

⁴⁰ See Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840-1928*, p.167.

⁴¹ Su Yu, *Yijiao congbin*, 6/20-21, The translation quoted from Li Chien-nung *The Political History of China 1840-1928*, p.194.

In contrast, the *qingliu* group, as an elite group of Chinese intellectuals, from the 1870s on, tried to argue that Chinese civilization was superior to that of the West and to prove that Western civilization came originally from China. In doing so, they had to compare the two cultures. Thus they had to learn more about Western knowledge and this made them come under more Western influence. With more frequent contacts between China and the West around the 1870s and 1880s, many Christian missionaries settled in the interior of China. Chinese diplomatic missions were sent to Western countries and a number of foreign cultural agencies were established in a number of Chinese cities. These, undoubtedly, improved Chinese intellectuals' information about the West. Though *qingliu* members did not yet regard Western learning as acceptable, they did not refuse to see some Western technology as a complement to Chinese needs. During the early 1880s, some *qingliu* members were involved, though not enthusiastically, in the *yangwu* activities. An example is Zhang Peilun, who served in the office of foreign affairs and was appointed minister of the Fujian Squadron and Shipbuilding affairs in 1884.⁴² Another famous *qingliu* member, Zhang Zhidong, paid great attention to Western affairs in the early 1880s. When he served as governor of Shanxi, he discussed how to establish modern industry with Timothy Richard, a British Christian missionary.⁴³ It is commonly known that Zhang later became a well-known advocate of *yangwu*. This suggests that *qingliu* members did not refuse to understand the West when they had the chance to make contact with Western things. In fact, none of the *qingliu* members were considered as die-hard conservatives at that time or later.

The *qingliu* members were patriots, and they were concerned about the waning fortunes of the dynasty and dedicated to preserving the Empire with all the

⁴² Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, p.14.

⁴³ Wang Shuhuai, *Wairen yu wuxu bienfa* (Foreigners and the 1898 Reform), p.27.

traditional values and institutions. However the defeats and humiliations suffered by China from foreign powers in the second half of the nineteenth century awakened many Chinese intellectuals to the urgent need for administrative reform. The *qingliu* group tended to think of Chinese culture as a divisible mixture. The phrases and terms they used in their arguments such as *nei* and *wai* (inner and outer), *ben* and *mo* (ends and means), and *ti* and *yong* (substance and function) implied their changing attitude towards the West. They tried to argue that change at the physical level would not blur or jeopardize the metaphysical level, but rather help in preserving and strengthening it. In other words, they divided culture into two realms: the changeable and the unchangeable. The former included the military sphere, and the fields of navigation, transportation and technology, while the latter was concerned with ethics and encompassed moral principles and human relationships.⁴⁴ In this the *qingliu* may seem to have been similar to the *yangwu* movement, but in fact the *qingliu* assimilated views and opinions both from the conservatives and from the *yangwu* group, and adopted a new compromise position. It emphasized Chinese tradition as well as accepting the case for limited reform.

Defeat in the war against Japan in 1894-1895 speeded up the development of the reform movement in the 1890s. The serious danger of partition by powerful foreign countries made the majority of Chinese scholar-officials turn towards reform. By that time, the early *qingliu* members had been replaced by a group of younger *mingshi* scholar-officials, and they formed a group also known as the *Didang* (the Emperor's Party) with Weng Tonghe as patron. These younger *qingliu* members abandoned the older-generation *qingliu* officials' prejudice against Western science and technology. The central question of their argument

⁴⁴ See Leung Yuensang, "The Tragic Passage to a New world: Changing Attitudes of the Chinese Intellectuals to the West in the Late Ch'ing Period" in *The Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, (1985) 16/63.

was whether institutional reform should take place according to Western precepts. However, there were two main differences in attitude among the reform supporters. Late *qingliu* officials, like the earlier generation, emphasized the necessity of reorganizing government and social values, but in their opinion, reform, even with the help of Western science and technology, should be based on traditional Confucianism. On the other hand, the radical reformers led by Kang Youwei desired much deeper reform. Though superficially following Confucian principles, they wanted to change the Chinese institutional system to a Western-style constitutional monarchy.⁴⁵ The result of these developments in the reform movement was that the *qingliu* group not only faced strong opposition from 'conservatives', but also found themselves sometimes co-operating and sometimes struggling with radical reformers.

The *qingliu* group's political position in the whole evolution of the self-strengthening movement and the reform movement was different from the position which generally paid more attention to the West than to the upholding of Confucianism. At the same time, they also distinguished themselves from the die-hard conservatives who opposed anything foreign unconditionally and held rigidly to tradition. Hao Yanping has said that "in adjusting themselves to the Western impact, the *Ch'ing-liu Tang* members assumed a middle-of-the-road-position."⁴⁶ In conclusion, the *qingliu* officials could be described as "moderate conservatives" in the context of the self-strengthening movement, while in the reform movement of the 1890s, they played the role as of "moderate progressive". Simply to label the group 'conservative' or 'progressive' would be to miss much of the changing political environment and the special, complex nature of the *qingliu* group.

⁴⁵ For an excellent discussion of Kang Youwei's reform ideas, see Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A modern China and a new world: Kang Yu-wei, reformer and utopian, 1858-1927*.

⁴⁶ Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the *Ch'ing-liu Tang*", p.47.

TABLE 1

EXAMINERSHIPS HELD BY THREE MAJOR *QINGLIU* PATRONS

NAME	DATE	NAME OF EXAM	POSTION
Li Hongzhao	1871	Examination for <i>jinshi</i>	Tutor director
李鴻藻	1874	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Vice examiner
	1877	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Vice examiner
	1883	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner
	1889	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner
	1890	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Tutor director
	1892	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Vice examiner
	1894	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner
Weng Tonghe	1858	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Shanxi	Examiner
翁同龢	1862	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Shanxi	Examiner
	1880	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Vice examiner
	1883	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Tutor director
	1885	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Capital	Examiner
	1886	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner (RPT)
	1888	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Capital	Examiner
	1890	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner (RTP)
	1892	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner
	1894	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner
Pan Zuyin	1858	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Shanxi	Examiner
潘祖蔭	1862	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Shandong	Examiner
	1868	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner (RTP)
	1875	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Capital	Examiner
	1876	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner (RTP)
	1885	Exam for <i>juren</i> in Capital	Examiner
	1886	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Examiner (RTP)
	1889	Exam for <i>jinshi</i>	Vice examiner

Examiner (Zhu kaoguan) 主考官 Vice examiner (Fu kaoguan) 副考官
Tutor director (Jiao xi) 教習
Examiner (RTP) = Examiner (reading test paper) ---- (Du juanguan) 讀卷官

Date extracted from Qian Shifu, *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* (Chronological Tables of Office-holders in the Qing Period), Vol.4.

TABLE 2

MAJOR MEMBERS OF THE EARLY QINGLIU GROUP

NAME	DATES	HOME PROVINCE	DEGREE
Bao Ting 寶廷	1840-90	Imperial Clansman	<i>jinshi</i> 1868
Chen Baochen 陳寶琛	1848-1933	Fujian	<i>jinshi</i> 1868
Deng Chengxiu 鄧承修	1841-91	Guangdong	<i>jinshi</i> 1861
Huang Tifang 黃體芳	1832-99	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1863
Li Hongzao 李鴻藻	1820-97	Zhili	<i>jinshi</i> 1856
Li Ciming 李慈銘	1829-94	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1890
Pan Zuyin 潘祖蔭	1830-90	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1852
Sheng Yu 盛昱	1850-1900	Imperial Clansman	<i>jinshi</i> 1877
Xu Zhixiang 徐致祥	1838-99	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1860
Wu Dazhen 吳大澂	1835-1902	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1868
Zhang Peilun 張佩倫	1848-1903	Zhili	<i>jinshi</i> 1871
Zhu Yixin 朱一新	1846-94	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1876
Zhang Zhidong 張之洞	1837-1909	Zhili	<i>jinshi</i> 1863

Sources as far Table 3.

TABLE 3

MAJOR MEMBERS OF THE LATER QINGLIU GROUP

NAME	DATES	HOME PROVINCE	DEGREE
Ding Lijun 丁立鈞	1854-1902	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1880
Huang Shaoji 黃紹箕	1854-1907	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1880
Huang Shaodi 黃紹第	1855-1908	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1890
Liang Dingfen 梁鼎芬	1859-1919	Guangdong	<i>jinshi</i> 1880
Shen Cengtong 沈曾桐	1853-1921	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1886
Shen Cengzhi 沈曾植	1850-1922	Zhejiang	<i>jinshi</i> 1880
Sheng Yu 盛昱	1850-1900	Imperial Clansman	<i>jinshi</i> 1877
Tu Renshou 屠仁守	1830-1900	Hubei	<i>jinshi</i> 1874
Wang Renkan 王仁堪	1849-93	Fujian	<i>jinshi</i> 1877
Wen Tingshi 文廷式	1856-1904	Jiangxi	<i>jinshi</i> 1890
Weng Tonghe 翁同龢	1830-1904	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1856
Zhang Jian 張謇	1853-1926	Jiangsu	<i>jinshi</i> 1894
Zhi Jun 志鈞	1851-1900	Imperial Clansman	<i>jinshi</i> 1883
Zhi Rui 志銳	1852-1912	Imperial Clansman	<i>jinshi</i> 1880
Zhang Zhidong 張之洞	1837-1909	Zhili	<i>jinshi</i> 1863

Date extracted from Zhao Ersun, *QSG*, p.12460. Huang Jun, *Huasui resheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, pp.199, 550 and 554; Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin-lu* (A truthful account of the Guangxu Emperor), in Zuo Shunsheng ed, *Zhongguo jinbainian-shi ziliao chubian* (Materials for the study of Chinese history during the past hundred years), first series, p.479, Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", pp.478-9; Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang", p.41. Richard C. Howard, "The Chinese Reform Movement of the 1890's: A Symposium, Introduction" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 29:1/12-13.

TABLE 4

EXAMINATION RANKING OF CERTAIN QINGLIU MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

NAME	DATE	NAME OF EXAM	POSITION
Pan Zuyin 潘祖蔭	1852	Palace exam	Third
Weng Tonghe 翁同龢	1852	Palace exam	First
Sun Jianai 孫家鼐	1859	Palace exam	First
Li Wentian 李文田	1859	Palace exam	Third
Zhang Zhidong 張之洞	1863	Palace exam	Third
Huang Tifang 黃體芳	1863	Provincial exam	First
Wu Dazhen 吳大澂	1868	Palace exam	Eighth
Bao Ting 寶廷	1868	Palace exam	Ninth
Tu Renshou 屠仁守	1874	Palace exam	Eleventh
Wang Renkan 王仁堪	1877	Palace exam	First
Sheng Yu 盛昱	1877	Provincial exam	First
Huang Shaoqi 黃紹箕	1880	Palace exam	Ninth
Zhi Jun 志鈞	1883	Palace exam	Fiveth
Wen Tingshi 文廷式	1890	Palace exam	Second
Huang Shaodi 黃紹第	1890	Palace exam	Fiveth
Zhang Jian 張畧	1894	Palace exam	First

Data extracted from Zhu Baojun and Xie Peilin, *Ming-Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* (Index to lists of *jinshi* during the Ming and the Qing periods) Shanghai, 1980; and Jian Liangfu, *Lidai mingren nianli beizhuan zongbiao* (Biography tablets on eminent Chinese persons through the ages, based on epigraphical sources), Beijing, 1937

CHAPTER TWO

The *qingliu* Group and the *yangwu* Movement

Ideological Differences between the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* Groups

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing dynasty had been in a decline which was to lead to the destruction of the Chinese Empire. By the 1860s, having suffered two major foreign invasions and the devastation caused by the Taiping Rebellion, the Manchu dynasty and the traditional Chinese order were teetering on the brink of collapse. The scholar-officials, as the essential force of the ruling class, had attempted a restoration of effective government along traditional lines and the creation of new policies that could ward off modern domestic and foreign threats and yet preserve Confucian society and its ideology. The growth of the self-strengthening movement in the 1860s was aimed at these goals.

It is necessary to point out that there is confusion between the *zhiqiang* movement (Self-strengthening Movement) and the *yangwu* movement (Western Affairs Movement) as discussed in some historical works. According to Hao Yanping and Wang Ermin, the term "self-strengthening" was originally used in the *Book of Changes* to describe the nature of heaven as enduring and strong, and to remind mankind not to cease its efforts to strengthen itself so as to be in harmony with this disposition of heaven.⁴⁷ The great aim of the self-strengthening movement in the late Qing was the revival of Confucian values

⁴⁷ Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, "Changing Chinese views of Western relations 1840-95", in John K Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu eds, *The Cambridge History of China*. Vol. 11, p.167.

and institutions. But there were diverse ideas about how to reach the traditional goal within the scholar-official class. The expression "*yangwu* movement" refers only to the unprecedented official effort to strengthen the Qing dynasty by adopting Western methods in technology and economics. The movement began with the establishment of Western-style schools, arsenals and shipyards from the mid-1860s. There followed the launching of modern industrial enterprises, railroads and a new navy under the leadership of a group of so-called *yangwu* officials such as Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang. The self-strengthening movement, however, included not only the *yangwu* activities, but also those of other officials who wished to strengthen China through reorganizing the system of government and rebuilding the order of society. There were some officials, such as the *qingliu* members, who opposed the *yangwu* movement, but held the same wish to strengthen China, albeit by different methods. Their political activities at that time therefore must also be seen as belonging to the self-strengthening movement. In other words, the self-strengthening movement was broader than the *yangwu* movement and included the latter.

The self-strengthening movement thus included two main tendencies. One was the so-called *neizhi* emphasis which advocated strengthening internal governance, and the other was *yangwu*.⁴⁸ Those officials (including both the early and the later *qingliu* groups) who emphasized *neizhi* tended to look upon Chinese history and Confucianism as a guide for extricating China from crisis and decline. They strongly believed that the traditional ethical teachings should continue to provide the principles and methods for strengthening China in the modern period. The *qingliu* group's opinions on contemporary issues were sometimes contradictory, but, on the whole, most members wanted to see an

⁴⁸ See Shi Jin, "Qingmo ziqiangguan de nierong fenye jiqi yanbian" (The content, division and transformation of 'self-strengthening' in the late Qing, 1840-1895) in *Zhongguo jinxindaishi luncong* (Essays on the Study of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History), Vol.6, p.38.

honest administration of able officials set up to replace the degenerate bureaucracy of the time. The officials who emphasized *neizhi* were largely censors, writers and scholars. Together they created a powerful anti-foreign atmosphere in the self-strengthening movement. The *yangwu* officials, on the other hand, stressed the necessity of adopting what they called Western learning, manufacturing foreign-style implements, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques to let them deal with the 'barbarians'. Although these officials did not wish to see Confucianism replaced by "Western learning", they did pay more attention to Western knowledge and techniques than to tradition.

There were thus two views on how to check the breakdown of the Qing empire and save China from crisis. However, in the field of ideology, the argument between the *yangwu* group and the *qingliu* group had not yet reached a deep level. The *yangwu* movement, which began in the mid 1860s, was not based on any particular knowledge or understanding of "Western learning" on the part of its supporters. Rather it was led by some high officials who had had some personal contacts with Westerners during the Taiping Rebellion and the Second Anglo-Chinese War. The *yangwu* officials still thought that China's civilization and her political and social systems were superior to those of the West. Li Hongzhang once stated in a memorial that if anyone insisted that the only way to change China's precarious position into a secure one was to imitate the West and to become familiar with its machines, he would not agree with such a one-sided point of view.⁴⁹ Generally speaking, the *yangwu* movement did not go beyond the policy advocated by Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan: "learn advanced technology from the barbarians in order to restrain them".⁵⁰ The aim of the *yangwu* movement was to sustain the existing political and social system, using some Western methods towards this end. As the historian Wang Rongzu

⁴⁹ See Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840-1928*, pp.103-4.

⁵⁰ Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (Illustrated treatise on the maritime Kingdoms), p.46.

has commented, the *yangwu* movement did not lead to a wide and significant reform, and lacked both a mature intellectual basis and a clear vision.⁵¹ It is worth noting that the development of the *yangwu* movement from the period of learning Western military technology to that of using it in civilian industry as part of the institutional reform was beyond the early *yangwu* supporters' expectations. Before the 1880s, the argument between *yangwu* supporters and their opponents focused mainly on questions of foreign policy, and did not bring about a general sharp conflict between Western and Chinese culture.

The *qingliu* group and the *yangwu* group were the two most important political factions in the self-strengthening movement. I will now discuss the ideological conflicts between them. The Qing government faced a serious crisis both internally and externally after the end of the Taiping Rebellion in the mid 1860s. The difference between the two groups' views on how to find a way out of the crisis had its origin in different understandings of the national and international situation at that time. Usually, the *qingliu* group paid more attention to the domestic crisis of China. Its members were more concerned about social breakdown, corruption of social values and morals, chaos in the governmental system, and opportunism in official circles. They thought that these factors were serious enough to threaten the very existence of the Qing empire. On the other hand, the *yangwu* adherents paid more attention to the foreign threat to China. They saw the Western powers becoming a major danger. As Prince Gong said in 1865, "At present we are containing the West's impact with difficulty. In a few years or decades, it will be impossible to protect ourselves against this impact."⁵²

⁵¹ Wang Rongzu, *Wan-Qing bianfa sixiang luncong* (Essays on reform thought in the late Qing period), p.72.

⁵² Prince Gong's memorial to the throne, see *Yangwu yundong* (Western Affairs Movement) Vol.2, p.32.

Neither the *qingliu* nor the *yangwu* groups' understanding of the situation of China at that time was wrong, but they both emphasized only one side of the issue and ignored the other side. So the *qingliu* and *yangwu* officials developed different policies according to their own understanding of the situation. The fundamental assumption of the *qingliu* group was, to borrow Wo Ren's words, that:

"the way to establish a nation is to lay emphasis on propriety and righteousness, not on power and plotting. The basis lies in the minds of the people, not in technology".⁵³

The prescriptions of the *qingliu* group were based on "internal governance" as the foundation of self-strengthening. They thought that the essential condition for resisting foreign aggression was to stabilize the domestic affairs of China. In the words of Yang Tingxi:

"If the laws and the system of government are in proper condition; if the imperial edicts and commands are fully executed; and if the philosophical teachings of China's sages are well known by the people, the foreigners will not dare run wild in China however many soldiers, war ships and effective weapon they may have."⁵⁴

In their opinion, China must first rid herself of the time-worn, useless or harmful practices that beset her educational, administrative and political system. The *qingliu* members felt that the way to solve China's problems of internal decline and external aggression was to create a great national revival and, in particular, the revival of a dedicated public spirit among officials and gentry.

⁵³ YWYD, Vol.2, p.30, quoted from Teng and Fairbank, *China's response to the West*, p.76, and for Wo Ren's thought, see Lu Baoqian "Wo Ren lun" (On Wo Ren) in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jinshisuo jikan* (Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), (1971) 2/257-70.

⁵⁴ Yang Tingxi's memorial to the throne in YWYD, Vol.2, p.46.

Gu Hongming, a scholar of the late Qing, commented on the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups in these words:

"The reason why the *qingliu* members were not satisfied with Li Hongzhang was not Li's personal qualities, but the policy to save the nation instituted by Zeng Guofan. Why did this policy not satisfy the *qingliu* members? It was because the policy dealt only with administration and ignored Confucianism. Li Hongzhang followed Zeng's line. He appointed officials focussing on their practical ability but ignored their moral qualities. That was why the *qingliu* members were indignant and clamoured for change, and for the re-institution of moral values which had been weakened".⁵⁵

For reaching the goal of "internal governance", the essential condition was to use men with the right talents. The ideal type, for the *qingliu* group, was a man with a high degree of moral cultivation, and a sincere inner commitment to ethical goals. In short: a real *junzi* (gentleman) or *zhengshi* (upright scholar). Gu Hongming's opinion may have been partial, because he was very much a member of the *qingliu* group and worked for Zhang Zhidong for many years, but he did point out the crux of the difference between *qingliu* and *yangwu*.

Being responsible for national defence and foreign affairs, the *yangwu* officials, with their experience in foreign and military affairs, had a policy which looked simple and practical. They thought that if China owned 'sturdy ships and effective weapons', it would become strong. In Li Hongzhang's words, "Scholars who hope to save China should regard the study of weapon-making as the knowledge of life or death".⁵⁶ We can see the basic tenet of the *yangwu* group from a memorial by Li Hongzhang in 1863:

⁵⁵ Gu Hongming, *Zhang Wenxian mufu jiwen* (Records by an advisor of Zhang Zhidong), pp.4-5.

⁵⁶ Li Hongzhang, *Li Wenzhong gong quanji* (Complete papers of Li Hongzhang), Vol.17, p.17.

"The weapons of our government troops are old fashioned and handed down from the past. How can we resist them [Westerners]? Whenever I think of this, I cannot but be startled with fear and sadly emit a long sigh.....I think that if China desires to make herself strong, there is nothing better than to learn about and use the superior weapons of foreign countries".⁵⁷

Perhaps, it could be said that the policies of both the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups were incomplete and had some shortcomings. The *qingliu* group pointed out the weaknesses of the *yangwu* group's policy, and emphasized the people's resolve and the people's hearts as the most important factors for strengthening and defending a nation. Being inheritors of the age-old scholar-official tradition, they had no wish to alter China's cultural and institutional system, and upheld Confucianism as a perfect creed which naturally implied the exclusion of all Western things and ideas. To the *qingliu* officials, there was no country like China, no people like the Chinese, and no religion which could compare with Confucianism. They had a strong sense of cultural superiority. Essentially, the *qingliu* group's attitude towards foreigners and foreign policy was that of self-righteous patriots. They placed China above all countries, and regarded conciliatory policies toward foreign powers as shameful. This feeling caused *qingliu* officials to acquiesce in the efforts of government leaders to effect reconstruction, but limited the acceptability of anything which could be seen as Westernization. While the *yangwu* members were doing some work which really helped to strengthen the empire, the *qingliu* officials indulged in empty argument in pedantic memorials-memorials which were long, flowery, rhetorical and full of citations from the classics. In this sense, although the *qingliu* adherents were not by definition extreme conservatives, as a grouping of scholar-officials determined to conserve the traditional values of imperial China

⁵⁷ Teng and Fairbank, *China's response to the West*, pp.71-72.

and resolutely opposed to Westernization in the first period of the self-strengthening movement, they played a conservative role.

The *yangwu* group sought wealth and strength, ignoring the basic principles of how to run a government. The scope of the *yangwu* group's plans was confined to the building of ships, the making of instruments, the construction of harbours, and the establishment of telegraph offices, merchant navigation companies, cotton mills and mines. In short, their plans were limited to military and economic affairs. Even the opening of schools and the sending of students abroad were part of a military plan to train interpreters so that Western "techniques of steamships and firearms can be gradually and thoroughly learned".⁵⁸ This is why Liang Qichao criticized the leader of the *yangwu* group in his biography of Li:

"Li Hongzhang knows military affairs, but does not know civil administration; he is familiar with foreign affairs but he does not know domestic matters; he cares for the court, but he does not care for the people; he understands some foreign matters, but he does not understand national problems".⁵⁹

While the *qingliu* group as we have seen had a profound respect for China's moral heritage and the traditional philosophies of China's sages, *yangwu* officials devoted their attention exclusively to matters of immediate, practical advantage. The course of late Qing history suggests that the *yangwu* activities aggravated corruption and speeded up breakdown of the empire. For example, in the newly-organized industrial enterprises and the newly-established navy, the *yangwu* members with Li Hongzhang in the forefront took advantage of these opportunities to look out for their own private interests.⁶⁰ It was generally

⁵⁸ Teng and Fairbank, *China's response to the West*, p.75.

⁵⁹ Liang Qichao, *Li Hongzhang zhuan* (The biography of Li Hongzhang) in *Yinbingshi heji* (Collected words from the Ice-drinkers' Studio), *Zhuanji*, Vol.2, p.41.

⁶⁰ Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang", p.44

recognized that Li Hongzhang was partly responsible for the Empire's corruption and the failures in the Sino-French War in 1884-1885 and the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895.⁶¹ Incapable and shameless officials such as Ye Zhichao and Gong Zhaoyu who performed abysmally in the wars, all had close personal ties with Li Hongzhang.⁶² Liang Qichao said that, in effect, Li's failure was half due to the obstructionist criticism of the other officials who opposed *yangwu* and half to his failure to use the right officials.⁶³ It is true that the *yangwu* movement's achievements were counterbalanced by the notoriously inefficient and corrupt government.

The Power Struggles and Personal Conflicts between *qingliu* and *yangwu* Members

A close look the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups reveals that the conflict between them was not only over ideology and political views, but also had to do with power struggles and personal conflicts. The evidence to be presented here will suggest that the *yangwu* movement was, consequently, supported or opposed by men not simply because they had different opinions or outlooks but because they felt that the movement would be conducive or detrimental to their immediate interests. Before we discuss the struggles between the two groups, let us look briefly at the background of the leading *yangwu* figures.

The *yangwu* group, formed in about the 1860s, was not a "formal" group of orthodox scholar-officials. Although some leaders of the group such as Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang held the *jinshi* degree, they had got to the top of

⁶¹ See Xu Yishi, *Linxiao Yishi suibi* (Historical notes by Xu Yishi), p.72.

⁶² Both Ye and Gong came from the same city (Hefei, in Anhui) as Li Hongzhang, and served in the Huai Army. See Zhao Ersun ed. *QSG*, pp.12729-31.

⁶³ Liang Qichao, *Li Hongzhang zhuan*, p.38.

officialdom mainly through their military experience and achievements during the suppression of the Taiping rebellion. Before the *yangwu* movement, they had formed their own personal political forces. Their political power depended on two bases. There were the personal regional armies such as the Xiang Army and the Huai Army; and the personal staff (*mufu*) system. Each of these systems was a relatively amorphous group linked by highly personal ties. The officials in the armies and *mufu* had usually obtained their official rank through purchase or personal and regional relationships. In short, the *yangwu* group was a political force outside the orthodox scholar-official tradition. From the end of the Taiping rebellion, meanwhile, both Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang had served as Governors-General with exclusive military and territorial authority.⁶⁴ The *yangwu* group therefore held more power at regional level than in the central government. The great power of provincial authorities was to some extent a threat to both the regular rule of central government and the orthodox scholar-official class.

The conflict between the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups reflected on the one hand the struggle between officials who had passed through the regular channels of the examination system and those who had achieved their position through *yangwu*, *mufu*, military experience or private connections; and, on the other hand, that between the central government officials and the provincial officials.

The immediate problem was created by the sales of rank and office which became common in mid-century to help finance the suppression of the Taiping rebellion. Men successful in the examinations still had to compete for jobs with

⁶⁴ For a general discussion, see Liu Kwangching, "The Limits of Regional Power in the Late Ch'ing Period: a reappraisal", in *Ch'ing-hua hsueh-pao* (July, 1974) pp.176-207 (in Chinese) or pp.207-223 (in English).

irregular degree-holders and endure long waits for substantive appointments. A second cause of the problem was the number of officials who had achieved high positions because of their military achievements. After the Taiping rebellion in 1864, these irregularities led to a serious crisis in the system of government. One famous member of the *qingliu* group, Zhang Zhidong pointed out in a memorial that: "*juanna* (purchase of office) damaged the personnel system and presented an obstacle to the *zhengtu* (regular) scholar-officials' promotion".⁶⁵ Another official, Jang Qiling, commented:

"The growth of internal rebellion is caused by the chaos in the personnel system; the chaos is caused by incompetent people lurking in officialdom. The right way for government is to use the *zhengtu* scholar-officials, but the obstacles to the use of *zhengtu* scholar-officials are precisely the *juanna* and *jungong* [officials who had achieved their position because of military merit]".⁶⁶

Though there are no exact figures on how many officials acquired positions by purchase and through military merit, it was undoubtedly a very large number. According to a report by Zeng Guofan, by 1865 there were over ten thousand officials with third class rank or above who had achieved their position by military merit.⁶⁷ Zuo Zongtang also said in a memorial that there were hundreds of thousands of officials who had gained military rank by recommendation since the resort to arms to suppress the Taiping rebellion.⁶⁸ The result was a shortage of positions for qualified candidates. Usually, a vacant position was competed for by tens or hundreds of officials, so that a great deal of money was needed to bribe one's way into a position. When one had obtained the position, one would recoup oneself during one's term of office by practising extortion. As the *qingliu* official Bao Ting put it, "In general, a man who purchases a *bitieshi* (clerical)

⁶⁵ See Xu Daling, *Qingdai juanna zhidu* (The System of Purchasing Office in the Qing Period), p.159

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.147

⁶⁷ Huang Dashou, *Zhongguo jindaishi* (A History of Modern China), Vol.3, p.425

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.425

position will become rich in ten years if he is good at securing personal gain even if he cannot read or write."⁶⁹ The use of the concept of human talent, loudly proposed by the *qingliu* members, would have implied a redistribution of power. Concrete proposals included more rapid promotional opportunities for *hanlin* scholars and other *jinshi* as opposed to holders of purchased degrees or beneficiaries of patronage, as well as curbs on clerical power.

Furthermore, during the most active period of the *yangwu* movement, the establishment of new departments, enterprises and a modern army also needed a great deal of money. At that time, the government could not provide enough funds, and therefore still had to sell official ranks to supplement its resources. For example, it sold thousands of official ranks when the government decided to establish a modern navy in the 1870s. Shao Zuozhou, a scholar at the time, commented that:

"The *juanna* for establishing the navy make people vie with each other to purchase official ranks so that there is great confusion in the government and the market..... The money from the sale of official ranks can only buy a warship. Can the country become strong simply as a result of that? But one or two thousand incompetent people came into government positions each year so that officialdom become even more overstuffed and the system of government will be even more confused."⁷⁰

Although the *yangwu* officials set up many new departments and enterprises during the self-strengthening movement, the orthodox scholar-officials gained nothing from it because the *yangwu* high officials looked down on the orthodox scholar-officials and almost never used them. Li Hongzhang criticized scholar-officials who indulged in the practice of writing in fancy and flowery language, and said that what they had learned was useless and what

⁶⁹ Xu Daling, *Qingdai juanna zhidu*, p.169

⁷⁰ Shao Zuozhou, *Shaoshi weiyan* (Warnings from Shao), pp.18b-21b

they should know was what they did not learn.⁷¹ The preference of *yangwu* officials was for those who were skillful in handling practical problems. Most of Li Hongzhang's staff were professionals and experts with specific knowledge in various fields, rather than scholars of philosophy and literature. For example, Ting Jiachang served in Zeng Guofang's and Li Hongzhang's *mufu* for many years before being promoted to be Governor of Gansu, despite having only the *xiucai* credential and the purchased rank of expectant director of schools. Zhang Yinhuan also purchased an official rank in his early years but reached a very high position without any degree because he dealt with his responsibilities in the *yangwu* movement effectively. Other examples are Xue Fuchen, who served in Zeng's and Li's *mufu* and then as China's envoy to England, and Li Fengbao, who was first a tutor at the Jiangnan Arsenal, and then China's envoy to Germany. Both only had the *xiucai* credential.⁷² The evidence shows that except for a few officials such as Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang and Shen Baozhen, most of the *yangwu* adherents had lower degrees or, more precisely, were below the *juren*. On the other hand, orthodox scholar-officials, such as the *qingliu* members, for their part looked down upon the people employed by the *yangwu* officials. According to *qingliu* opinion, men who had some expert knowledge of commercial affairs or technology were not gentlemen but tradesman. *Qingliu* members were strongly critical of a situation in which non-degree officials could obtain good positions easily and use *yangwu* activity as a short cut to high office. As Mary Rankin has pointed out, new *jinshi* had reason to feel insecure and to believe that their legitimate career expectations were being thwarted.⁷³ In short, the scholar-officials who were successful in the examinations resolutely opposed the *yangwu* officials and their activities, which they saw as destroying their prospects.

⁷¹ Teng and Fairbank, *China's response to the West*, p.70.

⁷² Leung Yuensang, "The Tragic Passage to a New world", pp.70-71, Table B.

⁷³ Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", p.455.

In any discussion of the struggle between the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups, the role of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi must be mentioned. Though in general the *qingliu* group cannot be regarded as a tool of the autocracy in the late nineteenth century, the early *qingliu* movement was indeed encouraged by Ci Xi, who rose to power after the death of the Emperor Xianfeng in 1860.⁷⁴

There are two main reasons which led Ci Xi to support the *qingliu* group during the 1870s and 1880s. Firstly, the development of the *qingliu* group was accompanied by an increasing interest in collective political activity and in establishing institutions through which middle or lower officials could influence policy. When the four-year-old son of Empress Ci Xi became the Tongzhi emperor in 1861, the Court was ruled in the name of the two Empress Dowagers "from behind the curtains". Traditional Confucian ethics supported the two women in their claim for authority, yet they did not have enough experience and prestige to run the government. In these circumstances, the Empress Dowagers initially found it indispensable to rely on opinions and assistance from below in practically every area of their governmental activities. Given the necessary dependence on others, Ci An and Ci Xi did not develop autocratic tendencies in any significant way. What prevailed was an implicit coalition whereby the power, prestige and responsibilities of the throne became dispersed instead of concentrated. Though Prince Gong was central to the working of this coalition, he too quickly acknowledged his subordination in the imperial structure, and requested the throne to encourage all officials to criticize court policies so that he might know how better to serve the throne.⁷⁵ That *qingliu* adherents were

⁷⁴ See Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century", pp.606-7

⁷⁵ See Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang", p.43

encouraged by the authorities could be seen from a comment by Yun Yuding who served in central government at the time:

"The *qingliu* members with Li Hongzao, who had a decision-making position in the Grand Council, as their leader, enthusiastically expressed their opinions to the throne. Almost all memorials sent by *qingliu* members to the throne were effective. *Qingliu* members became so bold that they attacked people in their memorials without regard to the power or honour of the officials. Sometimes, someone who sent an outstanding memorial to the throne in the morning would be promoted to a high position in the evening, and this caused consternation among the ministers".⁷⁶

As Lloyd Eastman has pointed out, officials who attracted attention by their memorials were often promoted to higher posts.⁷⁷ In fact the youth of the emperor and the inexperience of the two women regents made it necessary for the court to consult frequently with officials from both higher and lower ranks.

A similar situation recurred when the Tongzhi Emperor suddenly died in 1874. Ci Xi chose the three-year-old son of Prince Chun to succeed to the throne. The new Emperor Guangxu was a cousin of Ci Xi, so his succession brought up the question of legitimacy, because succession within the same generation was contrary to the laws of the dynasty. Although Empress Dowager Ci Xi was more mature in state affairs by then, her ruling position was still relatively weak, and she did not dare immediately to limit the officials' freedom to express their views and opinions. This perhaps suggests that the position of the *qingliu* members was still quite strong in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

⁷⁶ Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin-lu* (A truthful account of the Guangxu Emperor), in Zuo Shunsheng ed, *Zhongguo jinbainian-shi ziliao chubien* (First edition of historical materials of China during the past hundred year), pp.479-80.

⁷⁷ Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century", p.596

Secondly, the power struggle in the top circles of the court promoted the influence of the *qingliu* group. In the first two decades of Ci Xi's ascendancy, two political forces imperiled her domination. One of them was the powerful provincial authorities, and another was the political strength of Prince Gong. A particular worry for Ci Xi was an alliance which had first emerged in the earlier period of the *yangwu* movement between the *yangwu* officials and Prince Gong. She therefore played an intricate game of balancing between the *qingliu* and the *yangwu* groups. Ci Xi recognized the *qingliu* group as a powerful political force, and sought to use it to offset the power of potential political rivals. During the self-strengthening movement, Ci Xi allowed the *qingliu* members to attack *yangwu* officials in order to check the growing power of the latter.⁷⁸ At the same time, she supported the *yangwu*'s policy of launching a Westernization movement in order to divert the *yangwu* officials' ambition for power. In other words, she both encouraged the *qingliu* grouping and at the same time sided with the *yangwu* officials. She saw strife between the two as an ingenious way of extricating herself from trouble, and as giving her an excellent opportunity to consolidate her personal power.

The death of the Eastern Dowager Ci An in 1881 increased Empress Dowager Ci Xi's domination of the Court. The only potential opponent remaining was Prince Gong. When in 1884 Ci Xi succeeded in dismissing Prince Gong with the help of a memorial by Sheng Yu (who had criticized the Grand Council without intending to attack Prince Gong),⁷⁹ it opened the way for Ci Xi's supporters to dominate the Grand Council for the next decade. Ci Xi changed her strategy at once after Prince Gong's dismissal. Prince Chun, who was completely loyal to Ci Xi, controlled the Grand Council. Meanwhile, Li Hongzhang set up close relations with Prince Chun and the powerful eunuch Li

⁷⁸ Hao Yen-p'ing, "A Study of the Ch'ing-liu Tang", p.44.

⁷⁹ Huang Jun, *Huasui rensheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, pp.553-4.

Langying, and proved to be a loyal servant to Ci Xi. As a result, Ci Xi no longer needed to rely on the support of the *qingliu* group. Many *qingliu* members were transferred out of the central government and left Peking. Li Hongzao, the leader of the group, was removed from the Grand Council at the same time as Prince Gong, and later sent to Henan province to take charge of water conservancy.⁸⁰ The celebrated *qingliu* members Zhang Pailun, Chen Baoshen and Wu Dazheng were sent to regional government positions after Prince Gong's dismissal. *Qingliu* members who criticized Li Hongzhang or the government's policies after 1884 were also subject to demotion or dismissal. Among the officials dismissed or demoted were Liang Dingfen, who attacked Li Hongzhang in a memorial to the throne;⁸¹ Zhu Yixin, who was dismissed because he criticized Li Langying;⁸² Huang Tifang, who was demoted because of his attack on Li Hongzhang in 1889;⁸³ and Tu Renshou, who was dismissed in 1889 because he opposed Ci Xi's plan to rebuild the Yuanming Park and for some other political reasons.⁸⁴ An Weijun and Wen Tingshi were later dismissed for similar reasons.⁸⁵ The withdrawal of Ci Xi's support signified the end of the first phase of *qingliu* political activity.

To conclude, during the self-strengthening movement in the period from 1865 to 1885, there were two different attitudes to the challenge of the Western impact and to China's internal crisis. The *yangwu* group turned to the West as a guide to the attainment of wealth and power, while the *qingliu* group upheld the Confucian tradition of good government. Both groups hoped that China would become stronger and safer, but they could not co-operate due to the great

⁸⁰ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, p.472.

⁸¹ Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.36.

⁸² Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, "Zu Yixin zhuan" (Biography of Zu Yixin), pp.12463-4.

⁸³ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, p.349.

⁸⁴ See Kang Youwei, *Kang Youwei zibian nianpu* (The chronological autobiography of Kang Youwei), in *Niangpu congshu* (Series of chronological biography), Vol.58, p.20.

⁸⁵ Qian Ersun, *Wen Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, p.41, and Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, pp.12466-7

difference between their political views and the situation of personal connections. The fact that Ci Xi's manipulation of the balance of power between the two groups sharply deepened the confrontation between them.

The Transformation of the *qingliu* Ideology

For almost two thousand years, Confucianism had not only provided a standard for the Chinese people's everyday behaviour and morals, but had also enjoyed absolute prestige among Chinese intellectuals. Their ability and wisdom were deployed within the bounds of Confucian values. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the international situation had forced China to face the world. It became clearer and clearer with the passing of time that the traditional classics and ethics had not kept abreast of the development of affairs. As the conflict between Chinese tradition and Western culture sharpened, the Chinese intellectual class began to try to find or create a compromise position.

In the heated argument between the *yangwu* and *qingliu* groups during the self-strengthening movement, a new idea appeared and gradually spread in intellectual circles. This was to emphasize both *neizhi* and *yangwu*, and to point out the defects of each groups. The people who held this kind of opinion usually had a deep knowledge of the Chinese classics as well as wide experience of contact with Western affairs. The major representatives of the trend included Wang Tao, Feng Guifen and Xue Fucheng. Although few in number, these scholars played a significant role, inasmuch as their writings were highly influential in changing many scholar-officials' outlook on the world.

Among the writers who tried to mix Western learning and Chinese tradition, one of the most interesting was Wang Tao (1828-1897).⁸⁶ Wang was not an official and represented no particular group. He took a post under the Qing but deserted to the Taipings in the 1850s. He later betrayed them and worked in the treaty ports. He had been in contact with Westerners in Shanghai and Hong Kong and assisted them in translating several volumes of the Chinese Classics. Wang Tao was invited to Scotland by James Legge, a British missionary sinologue, in late 1867 and spent two years in the British Isles and Europe. He became well known as an editorial writer soon after returning from Britain. In 1873, he founded his own newspaper, the *Xunhuan ribao*, in which he wrote many famous editorials. Under foreign protection in Hong Kong and Shanghai, Wang was bold in his attacks on the corrupt Chinese administration. He did not oppose the adoption of Western methods in technology and economics, and was also an ardent advocate of a domestic reform program. Some of Wang's points of view were similar to those of the *qingliu* group with its concept of *neizhi*. For example, in an essay on 'Reform and self-strengthening' written in about 1870, Wang advocated, as a four-point reforms program, improving the selection of scholars, the training of troops, the school system and the legal code.⁸⁷ With the exception of the troop-training, all of these featured in the proposals for strengthening internal governance which were emphasized by the *qingliu* group at that time. As Wang Tao said later, "When I speak of change, I mean changing the outer, not the inner; changing what it is proper to change, not what cannot be changed".⁸⁸

⁸⁶ For a brief account of Wang Tao's life, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp.836-8, and for a discussion of his thought, see Paul. A. Cohen, *Between tradition and modernity, Wang Tao and reform in late Ch'ing China*, and Wang Rongzu, "Wang Tao bianfa cixian lungang", (Outline of Wang Tao's views on Reform) in Zhou Yangshan and Yang Xiansu eds, *Wan-Qing sichao* (The thought of Late Qing), pp.353-87

⁸⁷ Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian* (Additional essays of Wang Tao), in *WXBF*, Vol.1, p.139.

⁸⁸ Quoted from Cohen, *Between tradition and modernity*, p.146

While Wang Tao as a pioneer journalist was reaching a newspaper-reading public, Xue Fucheng, who had earlier been a member of the *mufu* of both Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, was writing memorials and essays which had a more limited but also a more influential circulation.⁸⁹ In 1879 he compiled a volume called *Chouyang chuyi* (Rough discussion on the management of foreign affairs) which contained fourteen essays on current problems such as how to secure intelligence about the enemy, how to prevent the loss of China's vassal states, and how to carry out institutional reform. Feng Guifen (1809-1874) was another scholar who shared the idea that Chinese moral learning was unchangeable, but Western learning could be adopted without affecting the base of Chinese tradition.⁹⁰ If Wang Tao cannot be regarded as an orthodox scholar-official, Feng, who took his *jinshi* degree in 1840, certainly was one. Feng Guifen had contacted Westerners during the Taiping Rebellion, and assisted Li Hongzhang as an adviser after its suppression. In the turbulent mid-1860s, Feng was one of the most far-sighted scholar-officials and had a better understanding of the whole situation than most others. In 1861 he wrote a book with a collection of about fifty essays, called *Jiaobinlu kangyi* (Forthright proposals from the Jiaobin studio) in which he examined the social and economic problems of the time. Feng wrote in this work:

"Regarding the present situation there are the following major points: in making use of the ability of our manpower, with no one neglected, we are inferior to the barbarians; in securing the benefits of the soil, with nothing wasted, we are inferior to the barbarians; in maintaining a close relationship between the ruler and the people, with no barrier between them, we are inferior to the barbarians; and in the necessary accord of word with deed, we are also inferior to the barbarians. The way to correct these four points lies with ourselves, for they can be changed at

⁸⁹ For a brief account of Xue Fucheng's life, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp.331-2.

⁹⁰ For Feng Guifen's thought, see Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp.50-51, and Lü Shiqiang, "Feng Guifen zhengzhi sixian" (The Political Thought of Feng Guifen), in Zhou Yangshan and Yang Xiansu eds, *Wan-Qing sichao*, pp.243-79.

once if only our emperor would set the general policy right.....What then we have to learn from the barbarians is only one thing, solid ships and effective guns."⁹¹

Men like Wang, Xue and Feng were important not because of their foresight but because their writings had considerable influence in some scholar-official circles. In point of view, their ideas offered an ideological bridge from blindly opposing Western methods to partly accepting Western learning. They upheld the principle of learning from the West without indiscriminately admiring everything Western. They emphasized "internal governance" and the Chinese tradition, but gave consideration to the arguments of both the *yangwu* and the *qingliu* groups. They tended to mix Western science and Chinese culture into a new theoretical system which seems to have been more easily acceptable to intellectuals in general. As I argued above, many *qingliu* members, as members of the elite of Chinese intellectuals, now paid close attention to the wave of new ideas. For example, Weng Tonghe, who had disdained *yangwu* programs in his early years, read Feng Guifen's book carefully and presented it to the young emperor Guangxu in 1889.⁹² He advised Guangxu to read it carefully, saying that this book was essential for government administration.⁹³ Zhang Zhidong had despised Western learning in the early period of the self-strengthening movement. In his early book, *Shumu tawen* (Selected bibliography for scholars), he listed more than two thousand books that he thought worth reading, only nine of which related to Western learning, eight being on geography and one on military matters.⁹⁴ In the late 1880s, Zhang showed a dramatic change in his attitude towards *yangwu*, and emerged as an influential

⁹¹ Feng Guifen, *Jiaopinglu kangyi* (Forthright proposals from the Jiaobin studio), pp.70-71, and as translated in Hsiao Kung-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the Reform Movement of 1898", in Hsü, Immanuel C.Y. ed, *Readings in Modern Chinese History*, p.350

⁹² Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyin ben* (A typeset edition of Weng Tonghe's Diary), Zhao Zhongfu ed, Vol.4, p.1578.

⁹³ Ibid., p.1580.

⁹⁴ Li Guozhi, *Zhang Zhidong de waijiao zhengce* (The foreign policy of Zhang Zhidong), p.5

leader in the *yangwu* movement, matching the position of Li Hongzhang. The famous formula "Chinese learning for the base, Western learning for the use." (*Zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong*), was one which Zhang produced in his late work *Quanxue pian* (Exhortation to Study). The idea encapsulated the argument of Feng Guifen and Wang Tao that the self-strengthening movement was not a step towards Westernization but an indispensable means to insure the continuity of the Confucian empire by wisely selecting and adopting those elements of Western civilization that had proved efficacious in giving Western countries their material resources and military might.

A second cause of the widespread change of attitude among Chinese intellectuals was the direct influence of Westerners living in China during the second half of the nineteenth century. Missionaries in China were one of the most immediate channels of Western influence. Chinese intellectuals' ideas of the West were formed in great measure from their activity. By degrees an increasing number of English, French and American Protestant missionary scholars began to work seriously on the problem of interpreting the West to China. It was these men who produced most of Chinese tracts and translations of Western works on history, science, technology and other subjects. Their translations, worked over by Chinese assistants, were readable and so had a great deal of influence among the Chinese scholar class. An outstanding example was J. Allen's Chinese periodical the *Wanguo gongbao* (Globe Magazine), which was published in Shanghai from 1875 to 1907, and had the avowed aim of propagating knowledge about Western countries and their culture.⁹⁵ Another particularly influential missionary was Timothy Richard. His personal contact with many Chinese scholar-officials such as Zhang Zhidong and Weng Tonghe

⁹⁵ Wang Shuhuai, *Wairen yu wuxu bianfa*, p.9-10

played a positive role in the change of their attitude to the West.⁹⁶ Another prominent influence was the Society for the Diffusion of General Knowledge, also known as the *Guangxue hui*. Under the leadership first of Alexander Williamson, and later of Timothy Richard, this society of foreign missionaries, merchants and diplomats made a joint effort to introduce Western culture to Chinese intellectuals through publications, newspapers and public lectures.⁹⁷ The result was that the majority of Chinese intellectuals in the 1890s no longer doubted the value of Western learning and were inclined to accept an evolutionary concept of change. This was symbolized at the linguistic level by the adoption of new terminology; for example, by using the word *yangren* (foreigners) instead of *yiren* (barbarians), by calling Western learning *xinxue* (new learning), and by using the expression *shiwu* (current affairs) instead of the traditional *yiwu* (barbarian affairs).⁹⁸

Attitudes towards Western culture thus changed greatly in this period. Western learning was no longer seen simply in terms of material or technical skills. Generally speaking, an obvious explanation is that as *qingliu* members came into more and closer contact with Western affairs and gained more knowledge of Western countries and people, they were able to take a more 'realistic' view on foreign affairs. Moreover, when they themselves were sharing the direct responsibility for making important decisions, they realized that it was never wise to be rash in dealing with foreign powers. Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang and Prince Gong were part of the first group of officials who had personal contact with Western affairs in the 1860s. Their attitude towards the West was transformed earlier than that of many other scholar-officials. In the

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.48-50, 54-56, and also see Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.4, pp.1981, 1990, 1994, and Vol.5, p.2005.

⁹⁷ Wang Shuhuai, *Wairen yu wuxu bianfa*, pp.36-44

⁹⁸ See John K Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu eds, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol.11, p.200

1880s and 1890s, the increasing impact of the West on China gave more opportunity for Chinese scholar-officials to make contact with Western affairs. For instance, many of the *qingliu* members were dispatched to the front line on the eve of the Sino-French War. Zhang Zhidong was appointed governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi; Zhang Peilun was appointed commander-in-chief of the Fuzhou squadron; and Chen Baoshen and Deng Chengxiu were assigned offices in the *Zongli yamen*.⁹⁹ Though it may have been the Empress Dowager Ci Xi's trap to send out these Confucian-oriented 'speaking officials' to unfamiliar tasks after her power had been consolidated, the fact remains that practical experience in dealing with the Western powers led to changes in thought and in attitude among the *qingliu* members. As we have seen, Zhang Zhidong later became a leader of the *yangwu* movement. Zhang Peilun who later joined Li Hongzhang's *mufu* to assist him in various Western affairs became fervent about *yangwu* and reform.¹⁰⁰ Chen Baoshen, a former *qingliu* member, was recommended to deal with reform in 1898 by Chen Baozhen with the following comment: "Chen is a very wise and able official. His knowledge is based on the Chinese classics, but recently he has sought pragmatic knowledge and become a keen student of Western learning."¹⁰¹

Such dramatic change also happened among the younger generation of *mingshi* scholar-officials, who came to form the group known as the late *qingliu* in the 1890s. These younger *mingshi*, who were no longer afraid that their reputation would suffer if they did not oppose foreign ideas, accepted Western learning more easily. Some of them were dissatisfied because change was being confined to the technological level, and urged that the ideal of "internal governance" be pursued through institutional reform according to some Western

⁹⁹ For Chen Baoshen's role, see Huang Jun, *Huasui rensheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, pp.199-201, and for Deng Chengxiu's role, see *QSG*, p.12458.

¹⁰⁰ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp.48-9.

¹⁰¹ *Wuxu bianfa dang'an shiliao*, (Archival materials on the 1898 reform), p.160.

ideas. As we have seen, *qingyi*, the opinion of the orthodox scholar-official class, represented an anti-foreign attitude before the late 1880s, but in the 1890s, it signified the demand among the intellectual elite for reform and modernization. All in all, in the aftermath of the Sino-French War, many scholar-officials began to accept *yangwu* as well as ""internal governance". However, in the political arena we still perceive two political factions competing and struggling with each other. The conflict was now between the 'radical' reformers and the later *qingliu* officials, the 'moderate' reformers.

CHAPTER THREE

Establishment of Relationship Between the *qingliu* Group and Kang's Reform Group

The Roots of the Relationship Between the *qingliu* Officials and Kang Youwei

In this chapter, we shall examine the relationship between the late *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group. John Schrecker has pointed out that there was a close connection between the *qingyi* movement which began in the 1870s and the reform movement of 1898.¹⁰² Some other scholars have also discussed the problem.¹⁰³ However, further inquiries into the matter may still be useful. My present discussion does not attempt to re-establish the conclusion that there was a close connection between the two groups, but proposes to trace the relationship in detail, paying special attention to how the relationship was established and how it developed into political co-operation.

(1) Kang Youwei's early link with the *qingliu* officials

Kang Youwei was born in 1858 and grew up in a family of local prominence in Nanhai, Guangdong province. The family predicted a great

¹⁰² John E. Schrecker, "The Reform Movement and the Ch'ing-i: Reform as Opposition" in Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker eds, *Reform in Nineteenth Century China*, p.289.

¹⁰³ The following works discuss the relationship between the *qingliu* group and reform movement in the 1890s: Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power"; Richard Howard, "The Chinese Reform Movement of the 1890's: A Symposium, Introduction" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 29/1, pp.7-14; and Daniel H. Bays, *China enters the twentieth century: Chang Chih-tung and the issues of a new age, 1895-1909*, pp.22-8.

future for the boy when he came into the world. His grandfather even wrote a poem to commemorate the event, one line of which read: "I have restored the scent of books which you should perpetuate."¹⁰⁴ Kang did not have a happy childhood. His father, an expectant Magistrate, was called to military service in Fujian in 1862 and returned two years later. After a period of ill health, he died in 1868. The responsibility for Kang's upbringing rested mainly with his paternal grandfather, a respected figure in the places where he had served as teacher and official. In his childhood, Kang Youwei was no different from the majority of teenagers who came from gentry families. He shut himself up in the study and hoped for success in the civil service examinations. However, Kang failed three times (in 1871, 1872 and 1876) to pass the examination for juniors before his eighteenth birthday. This was not an auspicious omen for an ambitious young student and his family. In 1876, Kang was sent to *Lishang* Hall, a school established by Zhu Ciqi who was a famous scholar and a close friend of Kang's family. Kang's thought and scholarship were influenced greatly by his teacher. Kang acknowledged later in his autobiography: "From my teacher, Mr Jujiang (Zhu's familiar name), I learned the essential ideas of past sages."¹⁰⁵

Zhu belonged to the New Text School (*xinwen jing pai*) and advocated "governing the world and realizing usefulness" (*jingshi zhiyong*). Zhu believed in expounding the essence of the great principles of former sages and teaching the ideals of cultivating oneself and loving others. He "brushed aside the schools

¹⁰⁴ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.2. The translation is quoted from Lo Jung-pang, ed, *K'ang Yu-wei: A Biography and A Symposium*, p.23.

¹⁰⁵ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.11. The translation is based on that of Lo Jung-pang ed, *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.35.

of the Han and Song periods, going directly back to Confucius for the essential ideas of the sage".¹⁰⁶ Kang was attracted by Zhu's scholarship. As he put it:

"As I received his instruction, it was like a traveller finding a place of lodging or a blind man seeing light, and I emptied my mind and curbed my passions to devote myself wholeheartedly to study."¹⁰⁷

Much has been written about Zhu's thought and influence on Kang's ideas. I will not go over this again.¹⁰⁸ But I would like to note that, in political affairs, Zhu's view was very close to that of the *qingliu* group. For example, the Qing government sent Gou Songtao to England as China's first envoy in 1877. Never before had China sent ambassadors to foreign countries and Zhu was very angry with this news. He criticized Li Hongzhang strongly, saying:

"It is humiliating for China to send an envoy to England. ... Li Hongzhang, with the responsibility for national security, has gone so far as to deflate Chinese pride and to boost the barbarian's morale. The nation will be ruined!"¹⁰⁹

Zhu's attitude towards the West and against Li Hongzhang was very similar to the *qingliu* group. Kang, as Zhu's student, may well have been influenced by his teacher's political view.

Therefore, it seems surprising that Kang took leave of Zhu in 1879, after only two years at Zhu's school, and went to live in a cave in Xijiao Mountain to devote himself to Buddhist and Daoist self-cultivation. There was no clear reason for Kang's stopping his study under Zhu's instruction. It seems possible that Kang had psychological problems due to his grandfather's sudden death in a

¹⁰⁶ See Guang Zhongshu's "preface" in *Zhu Jujiang xiansheng ji* (Collected essays of Zhu Ciqi), p.2.

¹⁰⁷ Lo Jung-pang ed, *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.31.

¹⁰⁸ For discussion of Zhu's influence on Kang's thought, see Richard Howard "Kang Yu-wei 1858-1927, His Intellectual Background and Early Thought", in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett eds, *Confucian Personalities*, pp.300-2.

¹⁰⁹ *Zhu Jujiang xiansheng ji*, p.20.

flood in 1878, and to other factors. Kang had been close to his grandfather for a long time, and he described his grief as follows: "When I heard the news, I was so grieved that for three days I ate and drank nothing and for a hundred days I ate only pickled vegetables."¹¹⁰ On the other hand, his grandfather's death may also have affected his family's financial situation, because he is believed to have received some financial support from his grandfather. Kang had married and in the year after his grandfather's death his first daughter was born. As Kang put it in his autobiography:

"At that time (1880), the financial plight of our family was daily becoming more and more difficult. We could not travel or buy new books, and we could not even afford to buy brushes and paper."¹¹¹

However, one of the most important discouragements for Kang may have been the fact that he would now never be able to let his grandfather see the day of his success in the examinations. At the same time, his grandfather's death released him from the mental burden of taking the examinations. As he said later: "After my grandfather's death, I became quite independent. I would not write essays in the current style and would not take the examinations."¹¹² In the autumn of 1879, when Kang was living in the cave on Xijiao Mountain, he refused to take the provincial examination. His uncles severely reprimanded him and threatened to cut off his allowance. The above factors may have impelled Kang to take refuge in Buddhism and Daoism, which were a traditional way of escaping from reality.

Kang's stay on Xijiao Mountain was enlivened by his association with a visiting Hanlin scholar, Zhang Yanqiu. From Zhang he learned of important

¹¹⁰ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.9. The translation is based on that of Lo Jung-pang, ed. *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.32.

¹¹¹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.11..

¹¹² Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.10.

current events and intellectual trends in China, and of some of the influential figures. This information greatly influenced Kang's outlook on life. Also through Zhang, he was able to make friends with some famous scholars and, later on, to form contacts with some *qingliu* personalities.

Zhang Yanqiu (also known as Zhang Dinghua), a native of Panyu, Guangdong province, was born into a famous family of scholars. His grandfather, Zhang Weiping, whose works were then very popular in the southern part of China, was well respected.¹¹³ Zhang Yanqiu passed a government examination when he was only thirteen, and was therefore praised as a child prodigy.¹¹⁴ Later, he passed the examination for *jinshi* and held the title of Hanlin in 1877. During Zhang's service as an official in Peking, he had achieved literary fame in the capital and acquired many friends who were famous scholar-officials. Some of these were members of the *qingliu* group or later became members of the group. The first meeting between Kang and Zhang took place in 1879 when Zhang was visiting Xijiao Mountain with some of his friends. Kang won Zhang's approbation. Once Zhang remarked to his friends: "At Xijiao Mountain, I saw only a dirt hill but I met an extraordinary man".¹¹⁵ Through Zhang's introduction, Kang began to become known in scholarly circles in Guangdong and made some friends who were later to become very important political figures as *qingliu* members.

In Imperial China political relationships often mingled with personal friendships. Informal gatherings in scholarly circles and personal relationships

¹¹³ Wang Zongyan, *Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu* (Chronological biography of Chen Li), pp.11-12.

¹¹⁴ Sun Zentao, *Qingdai Guangdong cilin jiyao* (A brief account of leading Guangdong literati during the Qing period), pp.131-2.

¹¹⁵ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.11. The translation is based on that of Lo Jung-pang, ed. *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.35.

usually offered scholars opportunities to develop mutual contacts or even form networks of connections which formed the basis for later political alliances. Zhang Yanqiu and his friends belonged to an important and influential scholar-gentry social group in Guangdong. In the mid nineteenth-century, there were two famous teachers in Guangdong. One of them was Zhu Ciqi, Kang Youwei's teacher, and the other was Chen Li (1810-1882).¹¹⁶ Chen had lived as a family tutor in the home of Zhang Weiping, and was made superintendent of the *Xuehai tang* Academy in 1840. He held this position for about twenty years. In the autumn of 1867 an academy named *Jupo jingshe* was established at Guangzhou by Fang Junyi, then salt controller of Guangdong, and Chen Li was made its first director. He held this post until his death.¹¹⁷ Chen was very famous, not only because of his outstanding scholarship, but also because of the high success rate of his students at different levels of the civil service examinations. In the 1870s, a group of young scholars such as Liang Dingfen, Wen Tingshi and Yu Shimei were studying in Chen's school, and these young men participated actively in the social life of Guangdong gentry circles and later took on important political roles at a national level.

Zhang Yanqiu had a very close friendship and family ties with Chen Li and some of his students.¹¹⁸ There is evidence that Zhang Yanqiu was the first to introduce Kang Youwei to Liang Dingfen and Wen Tingshi, who later became famous *qingliu* members, and had an important political relationship with Kang in the reform movement in the 1890s. The reason why we focus on the personal relationship between Kang Youwei and Liang and Wen was that each of them played an important role in one or other of the political factions. The complicated

¹¹⁶ Sun Haipo, "Zhu Jujiang xueji", (Basic ideas of Zhu Ciqi) in *Zhongguo jin-sanbainian xueshu sixiang lunji*, (Collected articles on scholarship and thought in China during the past 300 years), p.411.

¹¹⁷ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, pp.90-1.

¹¹⁸ See Qian Ersun, *Wen Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, pp.7-9.

relationship between the three men could therefore offer some clues as to the broader relationship between the political factions, and its influence on the development of the reform movement in the 1890s. Kang's role in the reform movement is well known and we will not discuss it in detail. It is however necessary to outline the roles of both Liang Dingfen and Wen Tingshi.

(2) Kang Youwei and Liang Dingfen

Liang Dingfen, a native of Panyu, Guangdong, was one of the most outstanding students of Chen Li. In 1880, Liang obtained the *jinshi* degree and entered the Hanlin Academy when he was only twenty. During Liang's stay in Peking, he joined in many political activities of the *qingliu* group and became acquainted with many *qingliu* officials. Li Ciming, a famous scholar at that time, made the following comment about Liang "Liang was only a junior official but enjoyed criticizing state affairs in his memorials. He did so because he had an excess of animal spirits and because sending critical memorials was in vogue at that time."¹¹⁹ Along with many other *qingliu* officials, Liang submitted a memorial attacking the treaty of Livadia (between China and Russia) in 1881. However, what won him national fame was his memorial attacking Li Hongzhang, who was one of the most powerful and prestigious officials in the country during the Sino-French War. Liang accused Li of being an arrogant, imperious and treacherous official, and suggested that he be held responsible for the military reverses and be executed.¹²⁰ This memorial created a great shock at court, and Liang gained renown among the scholar-officials. Although Liang

¹¹⁹ Li Ciming *Yuemantang riji*, p.7996.

¹²⁰ Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu* pp.15-17.

was forced to resign, and went back to Guangdong, the importance of Liang's role in the late Qing political scene was not diminished by the event.¹²¹

Liang's memorial and his courage in criticizing powerful officials attracted the attention of Zhang Zhidong, and a close political relationship grew between the two and lasted for twenty years. It is not clear exactly when they first met. However, some clues in Liang's chronological biography suggested that they met in Peking in early 1885 when Zhang had left his governorship in Shanxi.¹²² Shortly afterwards, Zhang was appointed governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, and Liang also returned to Guangdong in September of the same year. Liang was immediately invited by Zhang to direct the *Duanxi* Academy and became a member of Zhang's *mufu*. Later Liang was made director of the *Guangya* Academy which became the biggest academy in Guangdong with Zhang Zhidong's support. To quote from Liang Dingfen's biography in the *Qingshi gao* (A draft history of the Qing dynasty):

"When Zhang Zhidong was in Guangdong as Governor-General of Liang-Guang, he invited Liang to preside over the *Guangya* Academy. After Zhang was transferred to the post of Acting Governor-General of Liang-Jiang, he made Liang director of the *Zhongshan* Academy. Liang again accompanied Zhang when Zhang returned to his post in Hubei as Governor-General of Liang-Hu. Liang had a hand in Zhang's administrative affairs throughout this period, and was in charge of educational affairs when Zhang pursued his new-style administrative programs."¹²³

Liang was one of the most important political associates of Zhang Zhidong. It even came to be said that:

¹²¹ Liang was demoted five ranks, which meant that he no longer qualified for a post in the Hanlin Academy.

¹²² Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.31.

¹²³ Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, p.12822.

"If one respects Zhang Zhidong, one must respect Liang Dingfen at the same time; if one spits on Zhang, one must also spit on Liang. Liang Dingfen seems just a little Zhang Zhidong, and Zhang Zhidong seems just a big Liang Dingfen."¹²⁴

Liang's special role in the political scene of the late Qing was not merely because of his close relationship with Zhang but also because of his friendship with Kang Youwei. The triangular relationship between Zhang, Liang and Kang is an important part of the background to the co-operation between Zhang's political faction and Kang's reform group in the reform movement of the 1890s.

It appears that the friendship between Kang and Liang lasted for many years, although it came to an end in 1898 because of political disagreement. The beginning of the Liang-Kang relationship can be traced to the friendship between Kang and Zhang Yanqiu in the late 1870s. It is possible that Zhang introduced Kang to Liang. Kang mentioned Liang in his farewell poem for Zhang when Zhang left Guangdong for Peking, accompanied by Liang in 1880.¹²⁵ Kang and Liang kept in close contact after Liang returned to Guangdong in 1885. They often exchanged poems and visited each other. One of Kang's poems, written for Liang, expressed appreciation of Liang's courage in criticizing Li Hongzhang.¹²⁶ In a list of Liang's lost poems, we find that he had dedicated a number of poems to Kang.¹²⁷ These poems are not longer extant, but in the collected poems of Huang Zunxian (*Renjinglu shicao*) there is an annotation which mentions that Liang described Kang as "a dragon crouching in Nanyang" [The nickname of Zhuge Liang, a famous hero and wise man of the Three

¹²⁴ See Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.9.

¹²⁵ Kang Youwei, *Kang Youwei shiwen xuan* (Selected poems and essays by Kang Youwei), p.123.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p.133.

¹²⁷ Wang Zongyan, *Chungbian Jiean xiansheng yishi mulu* (A Re-edited list of lost poems of Liang Dingfen), pp.10,14, and 16, in Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*. For some lines from Liang's poem for Kang, see *WXB*, Vol.2, p.643.

Kingdoms' period].¹²⁸ The close friendship between Liang and Kang is suggested also by the case of Jian Chaoliang, one of Kang's classmates from his days in Zhu Ciqi's school. In October, 1886, a false charge was brought against Jian in Guangzhou. Kang asked Liang to help his friend. Liang immediately visited his friend Yu Yinlin who was a director of the judicial department in Guangdong. Jian was soon released from prison because of Yu's intervention.¹²⁹ In view of the friendship between Kang and Liang during these years, it is not surprising that Liang should later have played a bridging role between Kang's group and Zhang Zhidong.

(3) Kang Youwei and Wen Tingshi

Wen Tingshi (1856-1904) was another man who had a personal relationship with Guangdong scholars and had a close relationship with Kang in the reform movement of the 1890s. Wen was a native of Pingxiang, Jiangxi province, but he grew up in Guangdong where his father had held an official position. He had shown scholastic talent at a very young age and became acquainted with many prominent young scholars in Guangdong. Wen and his friends often met in the Huyuan, a family garden of Chang Xu who was General of Guangzhou at that time.¹³⁰ Chang's son Zhi Rui and his nephew Zhi Jun hosted the gatherings and Wen, Zhang Yanqiu, Liang Dingfen and Yu Shimei were frequent visitors. This social circle became very important partly because the two daughters of Chang Xu later were selected as Emperor Guangxu's concubines (Jin and Zhen). Guangxu had little affection for Ci Xi's

¹²⁸ Huang Zunxian, *Renjinglu shicao jianzhu* (The poetic works of Huang Zunxian, annotated by Qian Ersun), p.301.

¹²⁹ Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.60.

¹³⁰ Qian Ersun, *Wen Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, p.69.

niece, who was made his consort in 1889, and found the companionship of the two sisters more congenial.¹³¹ The younger of the two, better known as the Pearl concubine, appears to have possessed unusual charm and intelligence. For this reason, her cousin, Zhi Jun, who had won his *jinshi* degree and Hanlin title in 1880, was favoured by the Emperor. His good friend in Guangdong Wen Tingshi had been a tutor to the sisters before they were summoned to the palace, and he too gained the Emperor's attention. Wen came out the top candidate in a special examination held for Hanlin scholars. On this occasion, the final results were arbitrated by the Emperor himself, and it was claimed that he allowed himself to be influenced by his concubines in the decision.¹³² Zhi Jun and Wen Tingshi were regarded the key members of the Emperor's Party which overlapped with the later *qingliu* group.

There are no exact indications as to when and how the friendship of Wen Tingshi and Kang Youwei was established. Wen was in Jiangxi in 1879 when Zhang Yanqiu first met Kang. Kang went to Peking for the *juren* examination in 1882, and Zhang, Wen and Liang were staying in Peking.¹³³ It is possible that Wen and Kang knew each other at that time, because they belonged to the same social circle. In 1886, Zhang Yanqiu returned to Guangdong after supervising the examinations in Fujian. Zhang went to stay at the Yanghu Tower in Guangzhou for a holiday, and Wen Tingshi and Liang Dingfen joined him there. Kang, as a friend of Zhang, often went to the Tower to visit Zhang.¹³⁴ According to Kang's autobiography, Zhang Yanqiu asked Zhang Zhidong, the Governor-General of Liang-Guang, to establish a translation bureau. On Zhang Yanqiu's recommendation, Zhang Zhidong intended to ask Wen Tingshi and

¹³¹ See Huang Jun, *Huasui resheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, p.606.

¹³² Qian Ersun, *Wen Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, p.17.

¹³³ *Ibid.* p.18.

¹³⁴ See Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.54 and Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.16

Kang Youwei to take charge of the project. Although the project was abandoned, Zhang Zhidong offered Wen and Kang positions in the Guangdong Academy.¹³⁵ Wen did not accept and gave his reasons in a letter to his friend.¹³⁶ Kang said that he declined the offer because he had heard that some people had spoken against selecting him for the job.¹³⁷ The above evidence suggests that the personal relationships among Kang and his Guangdong scholar friends were very close.

Although Kang did not pass the *jinshi* degree examination until 1894, which obstructed his way into orthodox scholar-official society and made it difficult for him formally to join a political faction in the government, his relationships with his many *mingshi* friends from Guangdong helped Kang to develop close contacts with *qingliu* officials. These *mingshi* friends' political views strongly influenced Kang. In later years, Kang extended his relationship with *qingliu* officials through examination ties in Peking, and he personally took part in the activities of the *qingliu* group. Kang's personal ties with *qingliu* officials developed into a political link which led to political co-operation between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group in the reform movement of the 1890s.

The Later *qingliu* Group's Background

The later *qingliu* group was not a formal political organization. Like the early *qingliu* group, it was regarded at the time as an amorphous grouping based

¹³⁵ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.16

¹³⁶ See Wen's letter to Yu Shimie, in Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.59.

¹³⁷ It is not certain that Zhang formally offered Kang a position because there is no other evidence, but Kang said so himself. Perhaps Kang only heard that someone had recommended him. See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.16.

on personal relationships. With regard to social background, there were no specific differences between the early and the later *qingliu* officials. Both groupings were based on the orthodox scholar-official class and represented the class's political views in such ways as asking that political power be more broadly shared and emphasizing the importance of "internal governance". Although both groups' members came from a similar social background and had loose links with each other, the later *qingliu* group was not simply a replica of its predecessor. The members of the later *qingliu* group came mostly from the lower Yangtze region and southern provinces such as Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang which were exposed to Western influence earlier than other parts of the country. As discussed in Chapter 2, the political views of these younger scholars, and their attitude towards the West, were significantly different from those characteristic of the early *qingliu* members.

Broadly speaking, there were two factions within the later *qingliu* group, their patrons being Weng Tonghe and Zhang Zhidong respectively. Weng Tonghe's group was the more important faction, and was based among scholar-officials serving in Peking. Zhang Zhidong's faction was based scholar-officials in the region of the lower Yangtze River provinces. Study of the membership of the early and the later *qingliu* groups presents similar problems. Identifying the members of the later *qingliu* group is as difficult as identifying those of the early one, or indeed more so. Rankin has suggested that some later *qingliu* members had been part of the scholarly friendship networks in the early 1880s, and that through these they had associated with one another and with some members of the early *qingliu* group.¹³⁸ As we know, the early *qingliu* group died out when most of its members were dismissed or demoted during or after the Sino-French War. On the one hand, some famous *qingliu* officials left the capital. Zhang

¹³⁸ See Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", pp.457-8.

Zhidong offered some of them posts in his personal staff or in local academies. On the other hand, it became hard for scholar-officials who still stayed in Peking when Empress Dowager Ci Xi gained complete control of the government since the mid-1880s to express critical opinions. The result was to inhibit *qingliu* officials from their characteristic activity of expressing their opinions on matters of public policy through memorials. Until *qingliu* criticism revived during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the views of the *qingliu* figures were more often aired in private discussions of current state affairs within their own social circle. For example, a number of scholars often met at the home of Sheng Yu, an early *qingliu* figure who appeared to have played an important political role by providing a place (*yi yuan*) where younger students and scholars gained reputations by discussing scholarly questions and current state affairs.¹³⁹ Many of these scholars were later regarded as *qingliu* officials after they had gained official rank and became followers of powerful and celebrated patrons.¹⁴⁰

(1) Weng Tonghe Faction

In the early 1890s, a number of elite scholar-officials in Peking formed a loose political faction, widely known as the Emperor's Party (*Didang*) which overlapped with the later *qingliu* group. After 1889, when Emperor Guangxu officially took control of the government, a key purpose of a number of orthodox scholar-officials was to bolster the emperor's position and to encourage him to act to solve China's problems.¹⁴¹ These officials hoped, by uniting with the emperor, to push institutional reforms and to remove corrupt

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.458. See also "Naitô Torajirô, 'Yiyuan huaijiulu' (Memoir about Sheng Yu), translated by Yoshikawa Kôjirô, in Zhou Kangxie ed, *Zhongguo jin-sanbainian xueshu sixiang lunji* (Collected articles on scholarship thought in China during past three hundred years), pp.500-2. According "Yiyuan huaijiulu", scholars who stayed at Sheng Yu's home included Wen Tingshi, Li Wentian, Zhang Jian, Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi.

¹⁴⁰ Qian Ersun, *Wen Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, p.14.

¹⁴¹ Hu Sijing, *Guowen beicheng* (Historical anecdotes) in *WXBF* Vol.4, p.278.

high officials. The emperor, in turn, was looking for young talents to use as allies against the Empress Dowager and the senior officials whom she controlled. Weng Tonghe, the tutor of Emperor Guangxu, emerged as a focal point of high-level factional rivalries, particularly in the 1890s, because of his close relation with both the emperor and *mingshi* scholar-officials. It is difficult to pick out those members of the Emperor's Party who were also *qingliu* adherents. Weng, winner of top place in the *jinshi* examination of 1856, was famous as a leader of scholar-officials, and had many *mingshi* friends and followers who were regarded as *qingliu* figures. As a result, many *qingliu* officials became members of the Emperor's Party.¹⁴² This is the reason that the two groups overlapped.

Anyway, Weng's faction came to be known as the Emperor's Party, and it would be wrong to ignore the *qingliu* characteristics of this political faction. It is worth noticing that many members of Weng's faction were *mingshi* scholar-officials at the time and most of them were famous for their outstanding record of scholastic achievement and for their criticism of the government's policy. take, for example, Zhang Jian and Wen Tingshi, two of the most important members of the Emperor's Party. Zhang won the first and Wen, the second highest honour in the Palace Examinations and both astonished scholar-officials by their bold critical memorials to the throne, qualifying them as typical *qingliu* figures at that time.¹⁴³ In short, although not all members of the Emperor's group were regarded as *qingliu* figures, many of them were so prone to *qingliu*-type political activity that the term *hou qingliu* (later *qingliu* group) was often used to characterize the Weng faction in this period of the late Qing. To be more

¹⁴² Qi Longwei, "Didang yu wuxu bianfa" (The Emperor's Party and 1898 Reform Movement) in Li Wenhui and Kong Xiangji eds, *Wuxu bianfa* (The Reform movement of 1898), p.352.

¹⁴³ See the preface to Naitô Torajirô's "Yiyuang huaijulu" in *Zhongguo jin-sanbainian xueshu-shi*, pp.498-9.

specific, a number of the members of Weng's political faction were only identified with the Emperor's Party because of their relation with Weng Tonghe or the Emperor himself. However, a large number of the members of Weng's faction were identified with both the Emperor's Party and the later *qingliu* group. In essence, the Weng faction clearly bore the social characteristics of the *qingliu*. It was called *Didang* because it took a pro-Emperor position in the power struggle, or in what was then called the discord (*buhe*) between Emperor Guangxu and Empress Dowager Ci Xi.

(2) Zhang Zhidong Faction

Although Zhang Zhidong had left the officialdom of Peking early in the 1880s, he still was one of the most influential figures among scholar-officials and in Chinese intellectual life in the 1890s. Zhang Zhidong was a thoroughbred Confucianist and a fine scholar. He had gained first place in the *juren* examination in Zhili in 1852, and third place in the palace examination for the *jinshi* degree in 1863. Zhang had himself been an important member of the original *qingliu* group in the 1870s and early 1880s. When Zhang served in a series of senior regional administrative posts, he still kept up his ties with old *qingliu* colleagues such as Li Hongzao, Chen Baosheng and Huang Tifang.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, many famous younger scholars such as Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi were invited to join Zhang's personal staff. According to Huang Jun, when Zhang Zhidong employed an official, he always put emphasis on such things as *mendi* (family status), *kejia* (title of civil service examinations) and *mingshi* (famous scholars).¹⁴⁵ Zhang Zhidong had stature both as a leading

¹⁴⁴ Bays, *China enters the twentieth century*, p.25.

¹⁴⁵ See Huang Jun, *Huasui resheng-an zhiyi quanbian*, p.140.

provincial official and as a leading ideological mentor among the orthodox scholar-officials of the 1890s. A large number of the *mingshi* gathered around him and formed a political faction which had many characteristics of the *qingliu* movement.

Because of Zhang's involvement in provincial *yangwu* projects over period of around two decades, when he was serving as Governor-General of Liang-Guang (Guangdong and Guangxi, 1884-1889), Liang-Hu (Hunan and Hubei, 1889-1894, and 1896-1902) and Liang-Jiang (Jiangsu, Jiangxi and Anhui, 1894-1896), he is often characterized as a leader of the *yangwu* movement. However, although Zhang can be regarded as an advocate of *yangwu* activities, it is unacceptable to characterize his political faction as a *yangwu* group. It should be emphasized that there was an essential distinction between the *yangwu* group led by Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong's political faction. It is interesting to note that Gu Hongming, who was associated with Zhang for a number of years, underscored Zhang's characteristic position by contrasting it with that of Li Hongzhang. According to Gu, one of the basic differences between the two men was that while Zhang had a profound respect for China's moral heritage, Li devoted his attention exclusively to matters of immediate, practical advantage.¹⁴⁶

As mentioned above, Zhang was a famous member of the *qingliu* group in the 1870s and adhered strongly to the traditional prescription of internal governance. When he began to serve in regional administration, especially as Governor-General of Liang-Guang during the Sino-French war in 1884, he quickly recognized the urgent necessity of strengthening Chinese military force and developing economic power, and that the best way to achieve these goals

¹⁴⁶ See Hsiao Kung-chuan, "Weng T'ung-ho and the Reform Movement of 1898", p.77.

was to adopt Western technology, as Li Hongzhang was doing. Although Zhang Zhidong was involved from the middle of the 1880s in many modern military and industrial projects, he never gave up the *qingliu* ideal of strengthening "internal governance". Zhang always felt that the most important thing for a strong China was the revival of Confucian moral teachings and of the Confucian social order. In order to establish Confucian scholarship and learning as the sole criterion for the selection of officials, Zhang established many traditional-style academies and schools.¹⁴⁷ For examples, Zhang established the *Jingxin* Academy in Hubei, the *Zunjing* Academy in Sichuan, and the *Liangde* in Shanxi. When he was Governor-General of Liang-Guang, he established the *Guangya* Academy which became the biggest academy in Guangdong. After he transferred to Wuchang in 1889 two of his most notable educational projects were the *Liang-Hu* Academy, and *Ziqiang* School.¹⁴⁸ It was said that the schools appeared in great numbers, like trees in a forest, when Zhang persuaded his new-style administrative programs.¹⁴⁹

Thus, as a leader of the orthodox scholar-official class Zhang Zhidong still stood with the *qingliu* group after the middle of the 1880s. However, Zhang was not dogmatic about adherence to the viewpoint of the early *qingliu* group, which maintained that Confucianism was a universal truth and were against all foreign things. As with the later *qingliu* officials Zhang recognized that the strengthening of China depended not only on the re-establishment of domestic order, but also on the adoption of Western technology and learning. Even though Zhang had advocated many policies similar to those of the *yangwu* group, after the middle

¹⁴⁷ Zhang Zhidong also encouraged the establishment of modern schools, especially after the Sino-Japanese War of 1895.

¹⁴⁸ Feng Tianyu, *Zhang Zhidong pingzhuan* (A critical biography of Zhang Zhidong), pp.301-6.

¹⁴⁹ Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, p.12822.

of the 1880s his faction, as a political force, was aligned with the later *qingliu* group.

Kang Youwei's Political Activities in Peking in 1888-89

Kang went to Peking in late 1888 for the *juren* examination. He made contact with some *qingliu* personalities during his stay in the capital from the autumn of 1888 till the summer of 1889. While Kang was in Guangdong, Zhang Yanqiu had invited him several times to visit the capital, but Zhang was seriously ill when Kang arrived in Peking and died a short time after Kang arrived. Zhang's death did not present an obstacle to Kang's making the acquaintance of many prominent contemporaries in Peking such as Sheng Yu, Huang Shaoqi, Tu Renshou and Shen Cengzhi who also were close friends of Liang Dingfen and Wen Tingshi. These scholar-officials were forming a new generation of *qingliu*.

After many early *qingliu* members were demoted or dismissed and their patrons left the inner circles of power during 1884-1885, metropolitan politics were dominated by two overlapping configurations. On one side were Li Hongzhang and his associates, and on the other the adherents of Ci Xi, such as Prince Chun, the Grand Councillor Sun Yuwen and Li Lianying, Ci Xi's favourite eunuch. The government, which was controlled by Ci Xi's adherents, suffered from low morale compared with previous regimes. Corruption among officials greatly increased. The government continued to sell a large number of official ranks to ease the state's financial crisis and meet expenditures on palaces and gardens. Kang late described the situation in Peking as follows:

"The construction of palaces and parks went on, and the graft and corruption of the officials continued unchecked. Sun Yuwen and Li Lianying dominated the government, while the officials not only kept their mouths shut but suppressed the expression of public opinion. The promotion of officials depended on offering bribes."¹⁵⁰

These practices not only threatened the *qingliu* officials' goal of reviving government morale, but continued to present obstacles in the careers of *jinshi* degree-holders. The situation created much antagonism among the orthodox scholar-officials and criticism revived in the late 1880s. After Kang failed to pass the *juren* examination, he decided to stay on in Peking, and endeavoured to make his debut on the political stage.

Kang Youwei entered directly into the *qingliu*'s political activities. His most famous action at this time was his attempt to send his own memorial to the throne. As a man not in the government and without a degree, Kang had to ask some high officials to transmit his memorial. With his draft in hand, Kang sought the assistance of some court dignitaries who were regarded as *qingliu* patrons, namely Weng Tonghe and Pan Zuyin. Kang's action was encouraged by some *qingliu* members. Kang wrote in his Autobiography: "Huang Shaoqi, a Hanlin Academy compiler, Shen Cenzhi of the Board of Punishment, and Tu Renshou, a censor, all voiced support for my proposals."¹⁵¹ Weng Tonghe and Pan Zuyin both refused to meet Kang, and Sheng Yu, who was president of the Imperial College (*Guozhi jian*), took Kang's memorial to Weng Tonghe to ask him transmit it to the throne.¹⁵² But Weng again refused to transmit Kang's memorial.

¹⁵⁰ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.21. The translation based on that of Lo Jung-pang ed, *K'ang Yu-wei*, pp.50-1.

¹⁵¹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.18.

¹⁵² Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben* (A typeset edition of Weng Tonghe's diary), Zhao Zhongfu ed, Vol.4, p.1566.

Kang stated that his memorial of 1888 was on "institutional reform" (*bianfa*).¹⁵³ This raised the question whether the above-mentioned *qingliu* officials supported Kang's reform ideas in 1889. The answer seems to be that they did not. In fact, the basic theme of Kang's memorial was not one of advocating specific reforms. Rather, in traditional *qingyi* style, it was a plea to the emperor, who was just about to be married and to assume personal rule, to solve China's domestic and foreign problems by fostering a dedicated spirit among the literati. Kang defined three problem areas he hoped the court would attack with vigor. These were institutional reform, improved communication between ruler and subject, and discretion in selecting the Emperor's personal staff.¹⁵⁴ Although Kang mentioned institutional reform in his memorial, he did not spell out what this might involve or how to implement it. He only urged the Empress-Dowager and the Emperor to issue a "proclamation of self-admonition".¹⁵⁵ Most of Kang's recommendations were a reiteration of what had been proposed in earlier *qingliu* members' memorials, such as encouraging public opinion and choosing the right scholar-officials (*zhengshi*) for posts. All in all, Kang's "reform" fell within the framework of "internal governance" which was the basic prescription of *qingliu* officials.

However, the authenticity of Kang's memorial is open to question. According to Huang Zhangjian, "the text" of Kang's memorial which we can read now is not the original one Kang wrote in 1888, and some important parts

¹⁵³ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.18.

¹⁵⁴ For Kang's memorial, see *WXBF*, Vol.2, pp.123-31.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p.131.

have been changed.¹⁵⁶ Liang Dingfen, who read Kang's original memorial, commented:

"I find that in the text (Kang's memorial) written in 1888, compliments for the Empress Dowager, come line after line, dazzling the eye at every point. The ostensible purpose is to discuss affairs of state, but the real intention is to seek favour".¹⁵⁷

Such evidence suggests that Kang's memorial in 1888 did not emphasize reform, as Kang later insisted, but rather represented the attempt of a degree candidate fumbling for a way into high society in Peking by following the prestigious *qingliu* group's political line. According to Kang, after he failed to have his memorial passed on to the throne, he threw himself into helping Tu Renshou, the most outstanding spokesman of the *qingliu* group to draft his critical memorials. Although in his autobiography Kang exaggerated his role in helping Tu to draft memorials, he had close contact with the latter during 1888-1889.¹⁵⁸ Tu was dismissed in 1889 because he enraged Ci Xi by his criticizing the project of building the Summer Palace. This stopped Kang's further *qingliu* activities in Peking. In conclusion, if one examines Kang's activities during 1888-1889, one can see that his close political links with the bureaucracy were made through the *qingliu* group.

Thus Kang's first dabbling in political expression in Peking ended in failure. One of the reasons was that the *qingliu*'s campaign of criticism which might have threatened dominant court and bureaucratic circles was again checked

¹⁵⁶ Huang Zhangjian observes that the text of this document is not the original one Kang prepared in 1888. See Huang Zhangjian, *Wuxu bianfa-shi yanjiu*, (Studies of the 1898 reform), pp.581-7.

¹⁵⁷ Liang Dingfen, "Bo panfan Kang Youwei shu" (An essay of censure against the traitor Kang Youwei) in *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.642.

¹⁵⁸ For an discussion of Kang's role in helping Tu to draft memorials, see Huang Zhangjian, "Lun Guangxu shisi-nian Kang Youwei dai Tu Renshou caozhe-shi" (On Kang Youwei in helping Tu Renshou to draft memorials in 1889), in *Dalu zazhi* (The Continental Journal), 40:2/48-60.

in 1889 at the time of the emperor's marriage and his assumption of personal rule. Weng Tonghe explained to Sheng Yu that he refused to pass Kang's memorial on to the throne because he thought Kang's suggestions would not help the situation.¹⁵⁹ Kang inferred later that Weng's refusal was intended to protect him.¹⁶⁰ Whatever Kang tried to do in association with the *qingliu* political line could not have succeeded because the situation for the *qingliu* group was hopeless at that time. After Tu Renshou was dismissed, Kang's *qingliu* friends advised him not to talk any more about state affairs.¹⁶¹

It is clear that Kang's major political ambition during 1888-1889 was to join the *qingliu* front and to make a name for himself. However, he was obstructed from entering the prestigious scholar-official group by his status as a mere government student (*sheng yuan*). Although Kang had the sympathy of some *qingliu* members, who believed in his sincerity and regarded him as a candidate for *qingliu* membership, Kang did not gain the patronage of the *qingliu* group. However, he had laid the foundation for his later political ventures. Kang became known in scholar-official circles in Peking. Many *qingliu* officials had formed a good impression of him. They were impressed by his boldness in criticizing others, and he was also able to make friends with many *qingliu* officials at both political and personal levels. For example, Kang's meeting with Shen Cenzhi in 1888 set up a friendship which lasted almost forty years.¹⁶² Kang also kept up a close friendship with Sheng Yu. When Kang again went back to Peking for the *juren* examination in 1894, he stayed first in Sheng Yu's home, which was a famous gathering place for prominent scholar-officials and

¹⁵⁹ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Zhao Zhongfu ed, Vol.4, p.1566.

¹⁶⁰ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.18.

¹⁶¹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.19.

¹⁶² Zheng Yimei, "Kang Nianhai tuichung Shen Meisou" (On Kang Youwei's respect for Shen Cenzhi) in *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* (Papers on Chinese Culture and History), (1979) 2/390.

celebrated younger scholars. Zhang Jian, a key member of the later *qingliu* group and the Emperor's Party, also became acquainted with Kang during 1888-1889. Zhang's son said in his father's biography:

"When my father was staying in Peking during 1888, Kang Youwei was there. They knew each other and often had contact. Kang wrote some poems for my father and expressed his respect for him."¹⁶³

In 1894, when Kang was impeached on the charge of deceiving and misleading young people with his book *A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period*, Kang's *qingliu* friends such as Sheng Yu, Shen Cenzhi, Huang Shaoqi, Wen Tingshi and Zhang Jian did what they could to help him.¹⁶⁴ The relationship between Kang and the *qingliu* officials in 1888-1889 served as a good base for later political co-operation between Kang's reform group and the *qingliu* group.

The Establishment of Kang's Reform Group

Kang's group was wellknown as "the reform group" at the time. Two points about the group's character must be noted. First, Kang's reform group was a political organization of members of the gentry outside of government. It did not include everybody who was reform-minded or who took part in reform activities. The group was one particular organization of radical reformers with Kang Youwei as its leader and a number of his disciples as key members. Secondly, the group was the first organization in nineteenth century China to have some of the characteristics of a modern political party. The members of Kang's reform group not only shared political ideals and goals, but also worked

¹⁶³ Zhang Xiaoro, *Zhang Jizhi xiansheng zhuan* (The Biography of Zhang Jian) in *WXBF*, Vol.4, pp.246-7.

¹⁶⁴ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.28

to advance their political purpose in a planned way. The term "*dang*" (party) was more often used to describe Kang's group (known as the *Kangdang*) than to describe any other political faction in documents of the late Qing.

Kang's reform group developed from a private school which had some of the characteristics of a study association. Traditionally, study associations had served as important centres of political activities for the literati outside of government. In the late Ming, they played an important political role in providing independent centres from which some scholars could carry on political protest and criticism of the court on a collective basis.¹⁶⁵ But from the second half of the seventeenth century on, the trend turned decisively against associational activities, largely owing to the strict Qing government ban on associations with a political orientation. Before the middle of the nineteenth century the academies were reduced largely to routine preparation for civil-service examinations. The winds of change blew strong in the southern treaty ports, with the Western impact increasing in the later part of the nineteenth century. As China faced the threat of foreign invasion, the interests of members of scholarly and academic circles in these area were focusing more on practical studies and on practical application of knowledge to current problems. For example, in Guangdong, Chen Li and Zhu Ciqi were two pioneers in the initiation of "substantial studies" (*shixue*). They emphasized that the essential core to Confucianism comprised studies with practical significance to the central question of moral and social responsibility. As a result, in many treaty port cities, the literati became concerned over the situation of the country and the academies took on a political colour, more so than in other parts of China.

¹⁶⁵ See Heinrich Busch, "The Tung-lin Shü-yuan and its Political and Philosophical Significance", *Monumenta Serica*, 14 (1949) pp.1-163, and also John Meskill, *Academies in Ming China: A Historical Essay*, (Tuscan, 1982)

Shortly after Kang Youwei returned to Guangdong, he found himself called on by two young scholars who had heard about his visit to the capital. His discourses, informative and eloquently delivered, won him instant admirers.¹⁶⁶ A small following formed around him, and in 1891 he founded in Guangzhou a small private school known as the *Wanmu caotang* (Thatched Hut among Ten Thousand Trees) for these young scholars. From the time of the school's establishment, Kang did academic work with a political intent. An essential point of his teaching work in the school was to carry forward the Confucian ideal of social responsibility and to foster the students political consciousness. Kang encouraged them not only to study the traditional learning of China and new ideas from abroad, but also to put greater emphasis on Western political experience and ideals than on specialized technical knowledge. Later development of the school proved that Kang intended to develop the academy as the base of a political faction.

Kang believed that learning should be closely related to current political affairs. The scholars, from whom the officials in the bureaucracy were drawn, had the responsibility to concern themselves with their country and their people if they were to be scholars in the true Confucian sense.¹⁶⁷ Kang believed that correct academic thought would create great statesmen, that perfect politics of a country depended on these great statesmen, and that statesmen should unite and act together to achieve perfect politics.¹⁶⁸ As Kang said later:

"For a long time it has been a fashion in China for men to assume an air of disinterest about the state of the empire. Cautioned by the prohibitions

¹⁶⁶ Ding Wenjiang, *Liang Rengong xiansheng nianpu changbian chugao*, (First draft of a detailed chronological biography of Liang Qichao), p.15.

¹⁶⁷ Lo Jung-pang ed, *Kang Yu-wei*, p.3.

¹⁶⁸ Su Yunfeng, "Kang Youwei zhuchi xia de wanmu caotang" (Thatched Hut among Ten Thousand Trees with Kang Youwei's Supervise) in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* (Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academies Science), Vol.3, p.429.

dating back to the Ming period against forming associations, men of the scholar class dared not congregate together for discussions. Consequently, it is very difficult to change their views. It is my belief that in order to modify social behaviour and to broaden the understanding of the officials and scholars, it is necessary to assemble large groups of people. Only by uniting many people can we be strong."¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, Kang Youwei clearly expressed his intention of forming a political faction by encouraging his students to win over more comrades. For example, when Liang Qichao, one of Kang's most outstanding students, went to Peking to marry a high official's daughter, Kang wrote to him the following lines in a poem, "Search out as friends outstanding people of high ideals,, Keep you heart warm and be prepared to save the suffering people".¹⁷⁰

Kang's reform group took shape in the mid-1890s among the students of Kang's private school. The school had started out with about 20 students, but by 1894 it had an enrolment of more than 100. Among the students, about twenty became involved in political activities or assisted Kang's reform project. These included Liang Qichao, Chen Qianqiu, Mai Menghua, Xu Qin, Long Zehou, Liang Chaojie, Ou Qujia, Ye Juemai and Han Wenju.¹⁷¹ These students formed the core of Kang's political following and were key members of the group. They participated widely in political activities such as the degree candidates' petition movement against the Sino-Japanese peace treaty in 1895, the organization of the Society for Self-Strengthening Studies in 1895, the Society for Protecting the Nation (*baogou hui*) in 1898, the establishment of newspapers and the dissemination of reform theories. As well as Kang Youwei and his disciples, the

¹⁶⁹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.34. The translation is based on that of Lo Jung-pang ed, *K'ang Yu-wei* p.71.

¹⁷⁰ Ding Wenjiang, *Liang Rengong xiansheng nianpu changbian chugao*, p.18.

¹⁷¹ Su Yunfeng "Kang Youwei zhuchi xia de wanmu caotang", in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* vol.3, p.448. For a list of Kang's students, see Li Yunguang, "Kang Youwei dizi xingming-lu" (A list of Kang Youwei's students) in *Dalu zazhi* (The Continent Journal), (1967) 5/244.

group also included a number of associates both from the scholar-officials and the local gentry class. Wang Daxie, who had close contact with Kang's reform group from 1895 to 1898, said in a letter to his brother Wang Kangnian, the general-manager of the *Shiwu bao* that:

"The line of demarcation within Kang's party is very strict. One group of members belongs to the *sidang* (core of members); while a second group could be regarded as the *mianzi dang* (outer circle of members). The latter include some eminent scholars who have close contacts with Kang."¹⁷²

It is worth emphasizing the fact that Kang's so-called *sidang*, including his disciples and also Tan Sitong and Lin Xu, had no high academic degrees or official ranks until the beginning of the hundred days reform in 1898.¹⁷³ In short, Kang's reform group was not a political faction among the truly scholar-official class.

As a scholar and member of the gentry, Kang represented, in many respects, the views and ideals of the gentry-literati class outside of the government. As crises multiplied in the later part of the nineteenth century, members of the elite outside the bureaucracy became increasingly concerned over the contemporary situation and were discontented with a government controlled by Ci Xi's adherents. Many historians in mainland China have characterized Kang's reform group as representative of the newly rising bourgeoisie.¹⁷⁴ Judging from Kang Youwei's personal career, he should be regarded rather as a leader of local gentry who rose in the political movements outside of the

¹⁷² Wang Kangnian *shiyong shuzha*, (Letters from his teachers and friends to Wang Kangnian), Vol.1, p.783.

¹⁷³ There are differences among disciples. Usually, the students who study personally under the teacher's supervision are called *shouyie dizi*. Others, who do not study personally under the teacher but respect him as a teacher, are called *baimen dizi* or *sishu dizi*. Tan and Lin were not Kang's *shouyie dizi*.

¹⁷⁴ For a representative statement of the theory, see Hu Bin, *Wuxu bianfa* (Reform movement of 1898), p.103-7.

bureaucratic structure. Kang himself took the county examination when he was only fourteen, but he did not achieve the *jinshi* degree until 1895, when he was thirty eight. Even then he did not become a Hanlin scholar, and he refused to accept a position in the government. Kang gained national fame in 1895 because he led more than a thousand provincial graduates gathered in the capital for the metropolitan examination to submit memorials protesting the terms of peace with Japan and calling for fundamental changes in the institutional structure. Though Kang's learning and political ability were acknowledged in intellectual circles, Kang did not have the status to be a leader of scholar-officials. Kang's reform group, in fact, was a faction of intellectuals outside of the government and of candidates for scholar-official status. Partly because of this nature of Kang's reform group, members of the group had more freedom to say what they felt in public. They felt less bound by their own words and worried less about personal losses than did the orthodox scholar-officials. This enabled Kang's reform group to advocate more radical reform of the government. On the other hand, because Kang's reform group did not have enough power to launch a reform movement within the government by themselves, they had to depend largely on the supporters of high or middle ranking officials in the government, namely, the later *qingliu* group.

CHAPTER FOUR

Co-operation Between the Late *qingliu* Group and Kang's Reform Group

Political Co-operation Between Kang's Reform Group and the *qingliu* Group During the Sino-Japanese War

The formal co-operation between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group started during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and developed into a reform movement of practical significance after the war. However, we will argue that the main trend of the co-operation both during and after the war can be seen as a continuation of the *qingliu* movement, and that Kang's reform group played an supportive role.

In the early 1890s, the conflict between China and Japan over the Korean issue was intensifying. When both China's and Japan's troops were involved in suppressing a rebellion in Korea in the summer of 1894, the situation became very tense. The Korean crisis divided the imperial court into two opposing factions, one of which strongly advised a cautious foreign policy, while the other urged war against Japan. The argument on the crisis also became a power struggle between the Emperor's faction and the Empress Dowager's faction.¹⁷⁵ As we have seen, the later *qingliu* officials placed great hopes in the young emperor after his assumption of personal rule in 1889. They expected to be able to change the composition of the Grand Council which was controlled by Empress Dowager's adherents. The *qingliu* group prepared for the emperor's

¹⁷⁵ Qi Longwei, "Didang yu wuxu bianfa" pp.353-4.

holding the real authority mainly by helping him establish his personal prestige. Victory over Japan would offer a great chance for enhancing the emperor's prestige. The *qingliu* officials actively opposed the capitulationist attitude toward Japan, which many Chinese scholars despised as a small island country, and pushed for a war with Japan. The emperor became a prowar symbol with the support of Weng Tonghe, Wen Tingshi, Zhi Rui and Zhang Jian, known as the war grouping. Although the *qingliu* officials were eager to fight and win the war to enhance the Emperor's prestige, they had very little influence on policy-making within the government. They could only rely on the emperor's limited power of command, seeking alliance with elements of the gentry outside the bureaucracy. As a result, the Sino-Japanese War not only set the stage for the *qingliu*'s revival but also presented an environment for political co-operation between *qingliu* officials and talented members of the gentry outside the bureaucratic structure.

In early 1894, Kang Youwei, with his student Liang Qichao, went to Peking again for the civil service examination. Kang injured his foot soon after he arrived and returned to the south of China, where he waited out a half-year period during which both he and his work were under official investigation.¹⁷⁶ Early in 1895, Kang proceeded to the capital for another attempt at the *jinshi* degree, and there he found himself engulfed in the emotionally charged atmosphere that was affecting all of officialdom. The Sino-Japanese war was being fought to its final phase, and peace was being negotiated in Japan. A wave of opposition to the peace treaty with Japan was rising in the capital. The *qingliu* group was the main force behind the surge of opposition against concluding a the peace treaty. During the war, the *qingliu* officials made new efforts at group organization. Wen Tingshi organized several meetings of members of the Hanlin

¹⁷⁶ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.28.

Academy to plan political strategy, and he and his associates also repeatedly made organized efforts to submit memorials with group signatures. For example, in September 1894, 57 Hanlin scholars headed by Wen signed a memorial requesting that Prince Gong be appointed to the Grand Council. Another memorial signed by 55 Hanlin scholars requested the impeachment of Li Hongzhang.¹⁷⁷

The anti-treaty scholar-officials formed a united front with degree candidates who were in Peking to take the metropolitan examination. The following passage is found in Wen Tingshi's work:

"Decisions made in the imperial court are kept secret. I was able to gain inside knowledge through one or two intimate friends, and always fought for opportunities to present my views to the emperor. At the same time I would spread my views among our followers so that we would all fight for them together".¹⁷⁸

It was probably not accidental if, as Kang claimed in his autobiography, he was among the first to learn of the conditions for peace dictated by Japan.¹⁷⁹ It is very possible that Kang got the information from Wen himself or from his *qingliu* friends. This is likely to be true because of Kang's previous close relation with Wen and his friends, and the development of political co-operation between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group as soon as the war ended. When Kang heard about the peace treaty conditions, he and Liang called a conference of the provincial candidates from different parts of the country at the wellknown meeting place in Peking, Songyun An, where both the early *qingliu* officials and Wen and his friends had often held political discussion meetings

¹⁷⁷ See Rankin, "Public Opinion and Political Power", p.469.

¹⁷⁸ Wen Tingshi, *Wenchen ouji*, in Shao Xunzheng ed, *Zhong-Ri zhanzheng* (The Sino-Japanese War), Vol.5, p.498.

¹⁷⁹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.30.

with members of the Hanlin Academy.¹⁸⁰ Kang drafted a "Ten Thousand Word Petition" which he persuaded twelve hundred degree candidates to sign. The petition expressed strong opposition to the peace treaty and suggested the following: first, rejection of the treaty; second, removal of the capital from Peking to Xian in the northwest so as to make it possible to continue the war; and third, the carrying out of institutional reform.¹⁸¹ This petition was known as the *Gongche shangshu*.¹⁸² According to Kang, the petition was rejected by officials of the Censorate. The manuscript, however, was not wasted, for it was soon reproduced in Shanghai under the title "*Gongche shangshu ji*" (An account of the petition project of the *juren*). By the end of 1895, several tens of thousand copies had been sold.¹⁸³

In his "Ten Thousand Word Petition", Kang Youwei strongly supported the *qingliu* group's "war policy", and expressed views on internal policy which were very similar to those of the *qingliu* group. On the question of peace or war, Kang wrote:

"Those who speak in favour of war unite the wills of the people and thus make energetic preparations for the empire's future. This insures survival. Those who speak in favour of peace impair the empire's solidarity and encourage the barbarians' ambitions. This will bring about ruin in an even shorter time [than would be possible by defeat in war]."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ See *WXBF*, Vol.4, p.311, and Schrecker, "The Reform Movement and the Ch'ing-i: Reform as Opposition" in Paul A. Cohen and John E. Schrecker, eds, *Reform in Nineteenth Century China*, pp.283-4.

¹⁸¹ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.30.

¹⁸² The term *Gongche*, meaning *juren* (literally, [riders in] state-owned carriages) dates from the Han Dynasty. At that time, it referred to the provision of official carriages for scholars travelling to the capital to take up posts in the imperial administration. Later, it was used for provincial graduates travelling to Peking for the metropolitan examinations.

¹⁸³ See Su Yu, *Yijiao congbian* (Collected writings in defense of the sacred writings), pp.466-7. (1970 Reprint in Taiwan)

¹⁸⁴ *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.133 The translation is based on Hsiao Kuang-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the reform movement of 1898", p.366.

Furthermore, the first two issues raised in Kang's petition, that is to say, the cession of Taiwan and the possibility of moving the capital, were at the heart of the argument between the Emperor's war faction and the Empress Dowager's cautious faction at that time. The plan of moving the capital to the interior had been proposed earlier by the *qingliu* memorialists during the war. Weng Tonghe also had suggested to the emperor in person that the capital be moved, and he rejected the condition of the ceding of Taiwan, but, his opinion was ignored.¹⁸⁵ This shows that there existed a agreement of views between *qingliu* officials and Kang Youwei. The reform issue in Kang's petition also had many ideological similarities with the *qingliu* group's ideas. Kang's recommendations, which included improving industry, agriculture, commerce, and education were not new and the only difference between his ideas and those of the *qingliu* group was that his tended to be bolder. However, the most important part of Kang's petition was addressed to political reform. In his petition, Kang not only reiterated the importance of communication between ruler and scholar-officials, but also paid more attention to communication between the throne and the subject population (in particular, the gentry-literati outside of the government). In order that elite opinion from outside government could be brought to bear on policy-making, Kang argued for setting up a group of policy consultants (*yilang*) who would be selected by the literati from among learned and capable intellectuals. (Kang suggested that one consultant be selected for each 100,000 households). These consultants would advise the emperor on state affairs and discuss all important policies on central and local administration.¹⁸⁶ This system of policy consultants would have been somewhat similar in function to a Western-style parliamentary system. Kang's suggestion shows that his reform group

¹⁸⁵ See Huang Jun, *Huasui rensheng zhiyi quanbian*, pp.595-8, also Shao Xunzheng ed, *Zhong-Ri zhanzheng* (The Sino-Japanese War), Vol.5, p.497.

¹⁸⁶ See Kang Youwei's memorial to the Emperor in *WXBF*, Vol.2 pp.176 and 184.

responded to the demand of the gentry-literati outside the government for more voice on state affairs.

After the Sino-Japanese War, Kang Youwei, with his reputation as the author of the now famous and controversial *A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period* (*Xinxue weijingkao* 1891), and as the leader of a movement against the peace treaty, became a prominent figure in gentry society outside of the government and a well-known reformer. Although he obtained the *jinshi* degree in 1895, he refused to serve in the government as a low official, which he considered too insignificant a position to be of interest to him.¹⁸⁷ The defeat by Japan created an atmosphere of enthusiasm for modernization and reform, and Kang's reform group began to formally appear on the late Qing political stage as a political faction. As we have seen, the Sino-Japanese War had served to lay the foundation of political co-operation between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group. The relationship between Kang and the *qingliu* officials became closer through their joint activities.

Co-operation between the *qingliu* Group and Kang's Reform Group after the War

The co-operation between the two groups on the issue of reform was based on their shared political and ideological interests. Both were serious in their wish to change the existing government leadership, and both sought more power within government for themselves. Both also stressed the need for reform and strove to promote the Emperor as the leader of the reform movement. The *qingliu* officials hoped that the reform would reduce the Empress Dowager's power by

¹⁸⁷ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.32.

doing away with some of the inept personnel and corrupt practices that existed under her rule, and, at the same time, enhance the Emperor's power and prestige by identifying him with a movement which would give prosperity and strength to the Empire.

Furthermore, *qingliu* officials believed that the reform would enable them to assume leadership in the government. Kang's reform group, which was mainly composed of local gentry, depended on the support of members of the bureaucracy and more especially the Emperor's support for their reform projects. Many *qingliu* officials, as we have seen, had close relations with Emperor and could play a bridging role between the Emperor and Kang's reform group. On the other hand, *qingliu* officials lacked enough strength and courage to push a reform which might offend the Empress Dowager and her followers. Kang and his disciples, who were untrammelled by the responsibilities of bureaucratic office, had more freedom to advocate reform in public. It was also necessary, for the *qingliu* officials to draw around themselves as many qualified persons to help with reform as they could. Many members of the reform group came from south China, in particular from Guangdong, where the scholarly and academic circles had developed considerably since the middle of the nineteenth century, and also were focussing especially on practical studies and Western learning. As a result, the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group needed each other and answered each other's needs. It is not surprising that the reform movement was the product of co-operation between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group.

(1) *Qiangxue hui* in Peking

TABLE 5
MAJOR MEMBERS OF PEKING QIANGXUE HUI

NAME	HONE DISTRICT	POLITICAL BACKGROUND
Kang Youwei 康有為	Guangdong	Reform Group
Liang Qichao 梁啟超	Guangdong	Reform Group
Mai Monghua 麥孟華	Guangdong	Reform Group
Chen Zhi 陳熾	Jiangxi	EP, Weng faction
Shen Cen zhi 沈曾植	Zhejiang	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Shen Centong 沈曾桐	Zhejiang	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Ding Lijun 丁立鈞	Jiangsu	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Wen Tingshi 文廷式	Jiangxi	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Wang Daxie 汪大燮	Zhejiang	Pro-Weng faction
Wang Pengyun 王鵬運	Guangxi	EP
Weng Binsun 翁斌孫	Jiangsu	Weng's grandson
Yang Rui 楊銳	Sichun	Zhang faction
Zhang Quan 張樞	Zhili	Zhang's son
Zhang Xiaoqian 張季謙	Henan	Li faction
Yuan Shikai 袁世凱	Henan	Pro-Li faction
Xu Shicahang 徐世昌	Zhili	Pro-Li faction
Chen Yangyuan 陳仰垣		Uncertain
Zhu Chengbao 諸成博	Zhejiang	Uncertain
Hong Liangpin 洪良品	Hubei	Uncertain

MAJOR SUPPORTS OF PEKING QIANGXUE HUI

Weng Tonghe 翁同龢	Jiangsu	EP, LQLG
Sun Jiania 孫家鼐	Anhui	EP
Zhang Zhidong 張之洞	Zhili	LQLG
Li Hongzao 李鴻藻	Zhili	QLG
Liu Kuanyi 劉坤一	Hunan	Governor-General of Liang-Jiang
Wang Wenshao 王之韶	Zhejiang	Governor-General of Zhili

EP=Emperor's Party LQLG=Later *Qingliu* Group QLG=*Qingliu* group
Weng faction=Weng Tonghe faction Zhang faction=Zhang Zhidong faction
Li faction=Li Hongzao faction

Date extracted from Zhang Yufa, *Qingji de lixien tuanti* (The Associations of Constitutionlists of the Late Qing Period), pp.179-84 and Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (Draft biographies of those involved in the 1898 reform), (enlarged edition), vol.2, pp.696-710.

The reform movement in 1895 called for the establishment of a study society that would create a new spirit of dedication among the scholar-officials and help them gain political influence. Kang's reform group, as the representative of the gentry outside the government, joined the movement. The major organizational effort of political co-operation between the *qingliu* group

and Kang's reform group after the Sino-Japanese War was the founding of the *Qiangxue hui* (Society for the Study of National Strengthening). The society was founded in Peking in September 1895, a Shanghai branch being established later in December 1895. Although Kang Youwei was involved in the society's projects in both Peking and Shanghai, and was counted as one of its original founders, it was not he and his disciples but the later *qingliu* group who played the leading role in the society.

The beginnings of the *Qiangxue hui* are quite obscure. Although Kang and Liang Qichao later claimed that the establishment of the society came from an initiative of Kang himself, this is probably yet another example of Kang and his disciples exaggerating their own role. According to many other sources, written by persons involved in the society, the *Qiangxue hui* developed directly out of an informal political discussion circle headed by Wen Tingshi and was joined by mostly *qingliu* officials during and after the war. According to Hu Sijing, an official in Peking at the time,

"Hanlin Academician Reader-in-waiting (*Shidu xueshi*) Wen Tingshi and Section Director of the Board of Punishments (*Xingbu langzhong*) Chen Zhi gathered famous scholars (*mingshi*) from all parts of China and established the *Qiangxue hui*".¹⁸⁸

In fact, a formal society founded in Peking could not have succeeded without support from high-ranking officials. As already noted, Wen Tingshi was one of the most distinguished members of the scholar-official's circle in Peking. He, at that time, was gaining the trust of both the Emperor and Wen Tonghe. Fei Xingjian, who joined Wen's political discussion circle, found that many officials were vying with each other to make friends with Wen, because Wen was said to

¹⁸⁸ Hu Sijing, *Wuxu lüshuan lu* in *WXBF*, Vol.1, p.372.

have gained a place in the Grand Council.¹⁸⁹ Zhang Yuanji, a young official and a friend of many *qingliu* officials at the time, when asked how the *Qiangxue hui* had been established, replied:

"We (a group of officials in Peking) often gathered in the *Taoran ting* to discuss state affairs. We only met every few days and did not give (the meetings) a name. Those whom I remember attending the discussions were Wen Tingshi, Huang Shaoqi, Chen Zhi, Wang Daxie, Xu Shichang, Shen Cenzhi and Shen Centong."¹⁹⁰

It is worth noticing that those who had joined Wen's discussion circle were almost all involved in the later project of *Qiangxue hui*. Thus, it seems that the *Qiangxue hui* was based originally on the political activities of those *qingliu* officials who were eminent figures in Peking's scholar-official circles. It was also to be expected that Wen would assume a prominent place in the organization and eventually be recognized as having been the leading spirit of the project.

In fact, it seems that Kang Youwei did not play an important role in the formation of the Qiangxue Hui, although the society's supporters included Kang and Liang. There is evidence as well to suggest that the relationship between Kang and Wen Tingshi was not harmonious at this time. It may be that Wen's attitude towards Kang was influenced by Li Wentian, a well-known patron of Guangdong's scholar-officials and one of Wen's closest friends, who detested Kang.¹⁹¹ In his later writings about this period, Liang Qichao hinted that the project had encountered problems. "The arrangements for a study society ran into some difficulty," Liang observed, "but there was no question that it would come through. The perseverance of Shen Cenzhi commanded great respect".¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Woqiu Zhongzi (Fei Xingjian), *Ci Xi chuanxin lu* (A truthful account of Empress Dowager Ci Xi), Vol.2, pp.94-5.

¹⁹⁰ Zhang Yuanji, "Wuxu zhengbian de huiyi" (Recollections of the coup in 1898), in *WXBF*, Vol. 4, p.323.

¹⁹¹ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.33.

¹⁹² Letter from Liang Qichao to Xia Cenyong in *WXBF* Vol.2, p.538.

It has been suggested that the 'difficulty' mentioned by Liang related to discord between Wen and Kang.¹⁹³ There is also important evidence from Kang's autobiography: Kang said that he had made up his mind to go home during June 1895 because the situation was very disappointing, but Shen Cenzhi and Chen Zhi urged him to remain in Peking.¹⁹⁴ There is reason to believe that Kang overcame his discouragement and played a more important role in forming the study society only after Wen Tingshi's departure from Peking in June, when he faced political revenge from the Empress Dowager's adherents. After Wen had left Peking, Chen Zhi and Shen Cenzhi became the leading figures in organizing the society. Kang had a close friendship with Shen, and also had established a new friendship with Chen Zhi. Liang Qichao said in a letter to a friend at that time: "I recently became acquainted with Chen Zhi, whose knowledge comes from Western learning. Chen is daring and full of noble aspirations, and has the ability to do important work."¹⁹⁵ Wang Bogong, an official in Peking at the time, also recounted that when he called on Chen Zhi one day in the autumn of 1895, he found Kang there and discovered that there was a close relationship between Chen and Kang.¹⁹⁶

Although Kang's influence in the planning of the study society increased after Wen's departure, the later *qingliu* group were still in control of the project. The patron behind it was Weng Tonghe. After Shen Cenzhi became a leading figure in the preparations, he frequently visited Weng Tonghe. For example, in the month before the society's formal establishment, Shen called on Weng at least three times.¹⁹⁷ It is also worth noticing that when Chen Zhi, who was on the staff of the Board of Revenue directly under Weng's supervision, visited

¹⁹³ See Kwong, *A mosaic of the Hundred Days*, p.97.

¹⁹⁴ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.33.

¹⁹⁵ Letter from Liang Qichao to Xia Cenyong, in *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.359.

¹⁹⁶ Wang Bogong, *Junlu suibi* in *WXBF*, Vol. 4, p.303.

¹⁹⁷ Weng Tonghe. *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.4, pp.1951,1962,1963,and 1971.

Weng in August 1895, he was accorded a courteous reception as a pillar of the state although he was only a mid-ranking official.¹⁹⁸

In September 1895, the *Qiangxue hui* was formally established in Peking. It had a total of over twenty members, who, roughly speaking, represented four different factions.¹⁹⁹ The main force in the society was Weng Tonghe's faction of the later *qingliu* group. Two followers of Weng, Shen Cenzhi and Chen Zhi were selected as Deputy Administrator and as Chief Administrator (*titiao*). Second in strength was Li Hongzao's faction also part of the *qingliu* group. After the early *qingliu* group dispersed in the Sino-French War, Li had been sent to a regional post. During the Sino-Japanese War Li had returned to Peking and was re-appointed to the Grand Council.²⁰⁰ Although the strength of the northern scholar-official group, which Li Hongzao headed as patron, had dwindled, Li's restoration to a position of power strengthened his faction's presence in the metropolitan political scene. Zhang Xiaoqian, one of Li's favourite disciples, was invited to be a deputy administrator. According to Kang: "Shen Cenzhi nominated Zhang in order to make sure that nothing would upset the society".²⁰¹ A few of Zhang's friends such as Zhu Chengbo and Zhang Zhongqi were invited to become members of the society. Two other members, Yuan Shikai and Xu Shichan, both from northern China, seem to have had a closer relationship with Li's faction than they did with other factions. The third internal grouping was Zhang Zhidong's faction within the *qingliu* group. Although this was not a metropolitan faction, some of Zhang's followers in Peking were involved in the *Qiangxue hui*. For example, Yang Rui, Wang Daxie and Zhang Zhidong's son, Zhang Quang became members of the society. The fourth faction was Kang's

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, Vol.4, p.1960.

¹⁹⁹ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (Draft biographies of those involved in the 1898 reform) (enlarged edition), Vol.2, pp.693-711.

²⁰⁰ Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, p.12367-8.

²⁰¹ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.35.

reform group. Kang himself did not gain any important post in the society, but Liang Qichao was selected as secretary. Mai Menhua, another of Kang's disciples, was involved in editing the news-sheet *Wanguo gongbao* (World Gazette), though whether or not this became an official broadsheet of the society is uncertain.²⁰²

The membership list of the *Qiangxue hui* suggests that the society was mainly composed of *qingliu* officials. Weng's faction and Li Hongzao's faction, both of the later *qingliu* group, played the leading roles in the society. Although Kang may be assumed to have been one of the original founders, Kang's reform group had very little power in the society. The strong *qingliu* character of the society is also shown by the following incident. After the society's establishment, Li Hongzhang approached it with the offer of a substantial contribution because he felt he would be isolated when some governors-general such as Liu Kuanyi, Zhang Zhidong and Wang Wenshao had established connections with the society. But Li, despite his long experience of handling Western affairs, was brusquely rejected.²⁰³ The unanimous decision to reject Li not only shows that there were old scores between the *yangwu* group and *qingliu* group, but also reflects the conflict between the Empress Dowager's faction and the Emperor's faction (Li belonged to the former and the *qingliu* group overlapped with the latter). Furthermore, the closing of the *Quangxue hui* was not the victory of conservative forces over Kang or over the course of reform, but was due to a retaliatory blow from Li Hongzhang.²⁰⁴

In mid-October 1895, Kang suddenly set out for the south. The reasons for Kang's departure from Peking remain unclear. However, it showed that

²⁰² See Kwong, *A mosaic of the Hundred Days*, p.95.

²⁰³ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.35.

²⁰⁴ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (enlarged edition) Vol.2, p.550.

Kang had been in political trouble. Kang said in his autobiography that his news sheet (*Wangou gongbao*) had become the target of widespread attacks from conservative circles, and the grand secretary Xu Tong and censor Zhu Chenbo had both indicated their intention to submit memorials impeaching him. Shen Cenzhi and Chen Zhi came to warn him and urged him to leave.²⁰⁵ It seems likely that he met opposition not only from the conservative circles but also from the *qingliu* officials, though Kang had his own explanations. When the *Qiangxue hui* was formally established, Li Hongzao's faction strongly pressed for Kang's exclusion from the society. Kang mentioned the conflict between himself and Zhang Xiaoqian and intimated that the Grand Councillor Li Hongzao was a political enemy of the *Qiangxue hui*.²⁰⁶ Yet Kang's accusation against Li lacked sufficient evidence. Tan Sitong, who was in Peking at the time, pointed out that Li Hongzao as a sympathizer of the study society and opposed the banning of the society.²⁰⁷ Why did Kang attack Li without strong evidence? Perhaps it came from a personal grudge due to the fact that Li's followers had refused to let Kang take on a more important role and had tried to push him out of the study society. On the other hand, some indirect evidence suggests that Weng Tonghe also was dissatisfied with Kang's radical reform ideas at that time. When Chen Zhi became a leading figure in organizing the society, he took an intermediate role between Weng and Kang.²⁰⁸ As Chen had frequent contacts with Kang and Liang, he took the side of the radical reformers. In a diary entry of September 1895, Weng had this to say about Chen:

"Today, ... I received a letter from Chen who blames me for being slow with reform. This man is sincere, his words are penetrating, and he has

²⁰⁵ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.35.

²⁰⁶ See *WXBF*, Vol.4, p.134.

²⁰⁷ Letter from Tan to Ouyang Zhonggao, in *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.568.

²⁰⁸ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.30.

independent ideas. But he is not mature enough; he would also be slow to action if he were mature."²⁰⁹

Weng's attitude toward Chen, in fact, shows that Weng was dissatisfied with the radical reform ideals. It is probable that Weng's dissatisfaction extended to Kang Youwei as well.

The Peking *Qiangxue hui* was the first manifestation of political co-operation between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group. It is true that Kang played an important role in this, but his role was not as great as he himself has suggested in his autobiography and elsewhere. The picture he painted, with himself always at the centre of events, was inconsistent with reality. Kang did not initiate the project of the Qiangxue Hui; also he was prevented by his social and political limitations from leading it. Kang's reform group only assisted and supported the reform movement, which was led by the *qingliu* group in 1895.

²⁰⁹ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.4, p.1973.

(2) Shanghai Branch of the *Qiangxue hui*

TABLE 6

MAJOR MEMBERS OF SHANGHAI BRANCH OF QIANGXUE HUI

NAME	HOME DISTRICT	POLITICAL BACKGROUND
Kang Youwei 康有為	Guangdong	Reform Group
Huang Tifang 黃體芳	Zhejiang	QLG
Chen Baoshen 陳寶琛	Fujian	QLG
Tu Renshou 屠仁守	Hubei	QLG
Huang Shaoji 黃紹箕	Zhejiang	LQLG, Zhang faction
Huang Shaodi 黃紹第	Zhejiang	LQLG, Zhang faction
Liang Dingfen 梁鼎芬	Guangdong	LQLG, Zhang faction
Kuai Kuangdian 蒯光典	Anhui	Zhang <i>mufu</i> member
Qiao Shunan 喬村桐	Sichuan	Zhang <i>mufu</i> member
Zou Daijun 鄒代鈞	Hunan	Zhang <i>mufu</i> member
Wang Kangnian 汪康年	Zhejiang	Zhang faction
Zhang Jian 張謇	Jiangsu	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Zhi Jun 志鈞	Imperial Clansman	EP, LQLG, Weng faction
Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲	Guangdong	Uncertain
Li Shuchang 黎庶昌	Guizhou	Uncertain
Zuo Xiaotong 左孝同	Hunan	Zuo Zongtang's son (左宗棠)
Jin Chunxuan 岑春煊	Guangxi	Jin Yuying's son (岑毓英)
Shen Yuqing 沈瑜慶	Fujian	Shen Baozhen's son (沈葆楨)
Chen Sanli 陳三立	Jiangxi	Chen Baozhen's son (陳寶箴)

EP=Emperor's Party QLG= *Qingliu* Group LQLG=Later *Qingliu* Group
 Weng faction=Weng Tonghe faction Zhang faction=Zhang Zhidong faction

Date extracted from Zhang Yufa, *Qingji de lixien tuanti* (The associations of constitutionalists of the late Qing period), pp.186-88 and Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (Draft biographies of those involved in the 1898 reform), (enlarged edition), vol.2, pp.714-722.

Kang went south in mid-October in 1895. It seems that Kang's major purpose in going to Nanjing was to consult with Zhang Zhidong about establishing a branch of the *Qiangxue hui*. Zhang was acting Governor-General of Liang-Jiang. Although Kang Youwei played an important role in the establishment of the Shanghai Branch of the *Qiangxue hui*, he had no real power in the Shanghai society, just as was the case with his role in Peking. The patron of the society in Shanghai was Zhang Zhidong, and most members of the society

belonged to Zhang Zhidong's faction of the *qingliu* group.²¹⁰ Probably more than any other high ranking provincial officials at that time, Zhang preferred an institutional reform in China. Zhang himself developed close and sympathetic ties with many reform-minded officials and scholars. In the post-war period, scholar-officials in the lower and middle Yangtze area also took steps to promote the study of reform and to organize study societies. For example, when the Qiangxue Hui was established in Peking, plans to establish a similar organization in that area was contemplated. A project of the *Zhonggou gonghui* (China Association) was initiated by Wang Kangnian, who had been a family tutor in Zhang Zhidong's home and later became a member of his personal staff.²¹¹

Although it is not clear whether Kang's visit to Zhang was pre-arranged, some signs show that Kang was helped by his *qingliu* friends when he went about drumming up support for his idea of the Qiangxue Hui. In June of 1895, when Wen Tingshi went to Shanghai and Nanjing, his visit to his old *qingliu* friends such as Liang Dingfen and Huang Zunxian was probably more than a personal reunion. Soon after Wen returned to Peking, Kang left for Nanjing. Kang was given a warm welcome by Liang Dingfen. The following passage is found in a letter from Liang to Zhang Zhidong at this time:

"When I hear that you are overcome with grief and sadness [one of Zhang Zhidong's sons had been accidentally drowned], I worry very much for you. Now I have an idea for diverting you from your grief. Changsu [Kang Youwei] is a brilliant conversationalist. You can receive him every day. In the afternoon when you finish handling routine matters, let Kang discourse on Chinese and Western learning and the current opinions of scholars. This will rejoice your heart."²¹²

²¹⁰ See Table 6.

²¹¹ Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* Vol.1, p.235.

²¹² Wu Tainren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu* p.115-16.

Although Kang said in his autobiography that intellectual differences between him and Zhang with respect to the New Text interpretation of Confucius's career emerged during their meetings, their differences were not so critical as to cause Zhang to refuse to patronize Kang's *Qiangxue hui* project. Certainly, Liang Dingfen helped Kang substantially in obtaining Zhang's promise to support the plan of founding the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui*.

Zhang's promise to support the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui*, however, did not mean that Kang directed or ran it. Wang Kangnian, Zhang's close political follower, was invited to lead the society.²¹³ Before Wang arrived in Shanghai, Kang went there first, accompanied by Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi. Liang and Huang spent about three weeks in Shanghai before returning to Nanjing. During their stay in Shanghai, Liang played a leading role in organizing the society in this period. According to Huang Zunxian, a famous scholar-official and expert on Japanese affairs, and Zhang Jian, the number one scholar in the *jinshi* examination of 1894, the invitations to join the society were signed by Liang Dingfen.²¹⁴ Most *mingshi* who were invited to join the society were Zhang Zhidong's followers or Liang Dingfen's friends.

The Shanghai *Qiangxue hui*, in fact, existed for only about one and half months. According to a membership list published in mid-December 1895, the society was mainly composed of *qingliu* officials. It included not only members of the early *qingliu* group such as Huang Tifang, Chen Baoshen and Tu

²¹³ Tang Zhijun proves that it was Zhang Zhidong's idea to invite Wang Kangnian to Shanghai. See his "Shanghai Qiangxue hui he Qiangxue bao" (The Society for the Study of National Strengthening in Shanghai and the Journal of the Society) in *Shehui kexue* (Social sciences) (1980) 3/114-24. Kwong says that the invitation because Kang was going to Guangdong. According to Kang's letter to Wang on november 16: "Nanping (Zhang Zhidong) has approved of the founding of two societies, one in Shanghai and one in Guangdong....I must hurry back to Guangdong and have therefore to rely on you for the undertaking in Shanghai". See Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days* p.98.

²¹⁴ See *WXBF* Vol. 4, p.247, and Huang Zunxian, *Renjinglu Shicao jianzhu* (The poetic works of Huang Zunxian, annotated by Qian Ersun), p.301.

Renshou, but also some later *qingliu*-figures such as Liang Dingfen, Huang Shaoqi, Huang Shaodi and Zhang Jian. Many other persons on the list, although lacking the distinction of being *qingliu*, were regarded as *mingshi* in the scholarly social circles of the lower Yangtze River area. For example, Huang Zunxian and Li Shuchang had both served as diplomats in Japan. These *mingshi* also included sons of both former and current famous high-ranking officials, namely, Zuo Xiaotong, son of Zuo Zongtang, the former Governor-General of Shang-Gan; Shen Yuqing, son of Shen Baozhen, the former Governor-General of Liang-Jiang; Jin Chenxuan, son of the then Governor-General of Yun-Gui; and Chen Sanli, son of the then Governor of Hunan province. Compared with the above persons, some members of the society such as Wang Kangnian, Kuai Guangdan, Zou Daijun and Wu Dexiao, may not have had such high social reputations or such illustrious family backgrounds, but they were regarded highly by Zhang Zhidong for their scholarly abilities or moral standing and had close personal ties with him. It is clear that Zhang's own faction predominated overwhelmingly in the society. By contrast, there were none of Kang's political followers or disciples on the society's membership list. Kang attempted to summon his disciples in Guangdong to come to Shanghai to join the society's work, but none had arrived before the society was banned in January 1896.²¹⁵

Although the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* seems to have been under Zhang Zhidong's supervision, Kang Youwei soon had an opportunity to put his own stamp on the society and made full use of it. In mid-December 1895, Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi, leaving Kang behind, returned to Nanjing. In the absence of Liang and Huang and before Wang Kangnian's arrival, Kang enjoyed autocratic control over the preparations for the establishment of the society. In early January 1896, Kang began to publish the society's newssheet, *Qiangxue*

²¹⁵ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* Vol.2, p.720.

bao (Journal of Self-strengthening Studies). In its first issue, a number of organizational documents were published, including a preface, a set of regulations, and a postface. The preface was signed by Zhang Zhidong. According to some sources, all these documents were written by Kang.²¹⁶ It is believed that Kang had discussed these documents with Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi, but it is uncertain whether or not Zhang or Liang had agreed that they be published at that time, and whether or not Kang revised these documents before publishing them.

On January 26, a notice originating from Nanjing appeared in the *Shen bao* (Shanghai Newspaper) to announce that the *Qiangxue bao* had been an unauthorized publication of the society.²¹⁷ From both Kang's account and other sources, it seems likely that Kang had published the documents without the agreement of the other organizers and Zhang Zhidong. Kang said in his autobiography:

"I discussed the regulations of the society with Huang Shaoqi and Liang Dingfen and then went to Shanghai to have them printed, but because of our differences on scholarly matters, Zhang Zhidong broke his promise and sent me a telegram asking me not to establish the society. I replied that the society was already established. It could not be stopped now".²¹⁸

The fact that Kang had "discussed the regulations" did not mean that he had gained permission from Liang or Huang to publish the *Qiangxue bao*. According to an article in an newspaper of three years later:

"Kang Youwei had published a news-sheet and expressed his own opinions in it without consulting with Liang Dingfen. Liang wrote many

²¹⁶ See *WXBF* Vol.4, pp.385-6. The editors of *WXBF* state that the preface ascribed to Zhang was actually written by Kang.

²¹⁷ Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao*, Vol.2, p.715.

²¹⁸ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.36.

times to Kang to argue with and to blame to him, but Kang refused to accept Liang's advice."²¹⁹

On the other hand, Kang's explanation for Zhang's dropping his support for the society is not tenable. If Zhang Zhidong broke his promise to support the society only for the reason that he had differences on scholarly matters with Kang, it would have been unlikely for Zhang to have agreed to ask Liang and Huang to come to Shanghai with Kang.

Therefore, the open conflict between Zhang and Kang must have been caused by Kang's activities after his departure from Nanjing. In his autobiography, Kang gave the following information:

"Zhang Zhidong did not accept my view that Confucius was an advocate of reform. He tried to persuade me to refrain from preaching this view, otherwise, he would not give me his support (for the *Qiangxue hui*). He also sent Liang Dingfen to see me about this." According to Kang, he said to Liang that "the theory of Confucius as a reformer is a great truth. How can I change it merely for the support of a governor-general of Liang-Jiang".²²⁰

The information at least shows that Zhang had put forward a condition for his support of Kang. It seems, as Kang implies, that he refused Zhang's condition. It may be that Kang was a man who held on very strongly to his beliefs, but how had he gained the promise of support from Zhang, and even Zhang's backing in organizing the *Qiangxue hui* in Shanghai if he had ignored Zhang's requirements? We would assume that at least a vague tacit agreement, if not a formal one, between Zhang and Kang had to be made when Zhang offered his support for Kang to proceed with his *Qiangxue hui* project. Although we lack source materials about this issue, when Liang Dingfen and Huang Shaoqi

²¹⁹ See *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.644.

²²⁰ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.36. The translation is based on that of Lo Jung-pang, ed. *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.74.

returned to Nanjing in early January 1896, it is possible that their proposal included reporting to Zhang about developments in the establishment of the *Qiangxue hui* and soliciting Zhang's support for their further arrangements.

During this time Kang published the *Qiangxue bao*, which included many documents of the society that did not have Zhang's or other organizers' approval or even their knowledge. For example, the publication date in *Qiangxue bao* was given in two forms. In addition to the customary and legitimate one (the title and year of the current Emperor), there was Kang's device that aligned Guangxu 22 with the year 2737 after the death of Confucius. The calendrical change meant that Kang insisted on his theory of Confucius as a reformer and a religious leader, and completely ignored Zhang's earlier advice. So, it seems that it was not Zhang Zhidong's, but Kang's behaviour that made political co-operation between him and Zhang difficult. After the short-lived co-operation on the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* issue, Zhang had no more personal contacts with Kang. Yet although Zhang disagreed with the theory of Kang's reform group, he regarded Liang Qichao highly and later recommended Liang to the Emperor for an official post. In 1897, Liang was accorded a very courteous reception when he visited Zhang in Wuchang.²²¹ All this suggests that Zhang Zhidong's withdrawal of support for the *Qiangxue hui* was due not only to political reasons but also to a personality clash.

Although the establishment of the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* mainly depended on the support of Zhang Zhidong's faction of the *qingliu* group, Kang successfully instilled his ideal into the society, using the power of Zhang Zhidong. Kang's radical reform theory could not be accepted by the majority of scholars or officials at the time, so it was impossible for them to let Kang keep

²²¹ Wang Bogong, *Juanlu suibi* in *WXBF* Vol.4, pp.301-2.

his power in the society. Although the folding up of the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* was mainly caused by a change of political climate in Peking, the conflict between Kang and Zhang had become so sharp that it would have been difficult to continue their political co-operation for the *Qiangxue hui* project in Shanghai. As Kang admitted later, even if Yang Chongyi had not impeached the Peking *Qiangxue hui*, the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* would still have had to be dissolved.²²²

Ideological Differences Between the Later *qingliu* and the Reform Group

In the reform movement of the 1890s, the later *qingliu* group and Kang Youwei's reform group, although differing on the question of the reform's nature, scope, method and content, joined hands as the main political force to push the reform. Certainly, the co-operation between Kang's reform group and the later *qingliu* group was not a harmonious process. Although agreed on the basic premise of change, the reform group and the later *qingliu* group had widely divergent political views and sharp conflicts of personal interest, and these divergences and conflicts influenced greatly the development of the reform in 1890s. It will be necessary to give a general introduction to the background of the two political factions before going into further discussion on the ideological aspects of the two groups.

The role of the later *qingliu* group in the reform movement in the 1890s has been a controversial issue. The group has sometimes been regarded as a force

²²² See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.36. Yang was a relative of Li Hongzhang. For his background, see Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao*, Vol.2, p.550-2.

promoting the reform, but at other times as a conservative group opposing it.²²³ We suggest that the ambiguous role of the *qingliu* group in the reform movement in the 1890s cannot be adequately understood without going into what went on underneath the political events on the surface; that is looking at the ideological differences between Kang's reform group and the later *qingliu* group. A good way to understand their ideological differences is to examine the views of some leading members of each group---Zhang Zhidong and Weng Tonghe for the later *qingliu* group, and Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao for the reform group. Zhang Zhidong's essential ideas about reform were presented in his widely-read book "Exhortation to Study" (*Quangxue pian*), which propounded a quite complete theoretical system. Weng Tonghe's ideas, which were very similar to Zhang's, appeared here and there in his diary, expressing his attitude towards reform. On the other hand, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao's reform theories are well known and, for our purpose, we will not need to mention them in great detail here.

In general, the later *qingliu* group agreed with Kang's reform group as to the necessity of reform. Both wanted to revitalize the old institutional structures which had proved inadequate for the self-strengthening movement. They both reacted strongly against the purely technological orientation of the *yangwu* group, arguing that to revitalize China as a nation political reform was even more important than the introduction of Western technology. If political reform was successfully carried out, they claimed, military and technological innovations would automatically follow, while mere technological innovations without political change would be a sheer waste of effort. In other words, they believed that reform should go beyond the mere adoption of Western technology and implements, and their reform programme asserted the primacy of political reform

²²³ See Schrecker, "The Reform Movement of 1898 and the Ch'ing-I." p.289.

over technological change. As Zhang Zhidong said : "In order to save the current situation we must begin with reform."²²⁴ And, reform, said Weng Tonghe, should "begin with the fundamentals of internal administration".²²⁵ On this point, there was no disagreement with Kang's reform group. Kang said: "We should first revise our codes of law and our bureaucratic system,"²²⁶ and Liang Qichao also said: "The most important part of reform is to change the governmental system".²²⁷ The members of the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group were united in combating the "no-change" opinion of the extreme conservatives. Kang was received by high officials at the *Zongli yamen* on January 24, 1898. The highlight of the meeting, as Kang related it, included the following exchange:

Rong Lu (a conservative minister): "The institutions of the ancestors cannot be changed". Kang: "The institutions of the ancestors are used to govern the realm that had been theirs. Now that we cannot preserve the realm of the ancestors, what is the use of their institutions?"²²⁸

However, it was Zhang Zhidong who best put the case for reform. He said in his *Quanxue pian* that he hoped Chinese scholars knew the essential points:

"Firstly: To understand what shame is. To feel shame because China is not equal to Japan, to Turkey, Thailand or Cuba. Secondly: To understand what fear is. To fear that China may become like India, like Vietnam, Burma, Korea, Egypt, and Poland. Thirdly: To understand what reform is. To understand that if customary practices are not changed then it will be impossible to reform the administration and its institutions, and that if the administration and its institutions are not changed then it will be impossible to reform materials and implements. Fourthly: To understand what is important. In Chinese learning the critical interpretation of old texts is not what is important. What is important is

²²⁴ Zhang Zhidong, *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.2736.

²²⁵ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben* Vol.5, p.2143.

²²⁶ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.42.

²²⁷ Liang Qichao, "Bianfa tongyi " (On reform) in *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.21.

²²⁸ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.42.

the study of things which are useful. Similarly, Western learning can be divided into that which is of no use, that is, Western technology, and that which is important, the social and political sciences. Fifthly: To understand what is fundamental. When overseas, do not forget your country. If you encounter strange customs, do not forget your upbringing. If you encounter cleverness, do not forget Confucius."²²⁹

Although almost all officialdom agreed that China had to change in the 1890s, the problem facing the pro-reform scholar-officials was to decide the nature and extent of the necessary reform. There were differences of opinion between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group on what kind of and how much reform was needed in certain areas.

The reform, in Zhang Zhidong's or Weng Tonghe's opinion, should still focus upon the concepts of *neizhi* (internal governance) and *zhengdun* (rectification and reorganization). As a later generation of the *qingliu* officials, they had agreed to adopt Western technology, and even some Western administrative methods including Western techniques in financial management, taxation and military preparedness. With Weng's and Zhang's strong Confucian background and their eagerness to avoid irritating the conservative-minded Empress Dowager, they cautiously promoted a moderate reform programme which would entail limited administrative reform along with the adoption of some Western implements, following the self-strengthening tradition. As Zhang Zhidong said:

"Now if we wish to make China strong and to preserve Chinese knowledge, we must study Western knowledge. Nevertheless, if we do not use Chinese knowledge to consolidate the foundation first and get straight in our minds what our interests and purposes are, then the strong

²²⁹ Zhang Zhidong, "Quanyue pian" (Exhortation to study) in *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* (Complete collection of Zhang Zhidong) Vol.6, p.3702.

will become rebellious leaders and the weak will become slaves of others (of the foreigners)".²³⁰

Reform should be nothing more than adopting some of the devices and equipments of the barbarians with which to defend the morally superior Chinese empire against foreign aggression, and refurbishing administrative practices so as to prevent the benefits of these Western methods from being lost in the notoriously inefficient and corrupt officialdom of Peking.

On the other hand, the radical reformers, for example, Kang Youwei and his followers, insisted that China could be saved only by a political upheaval.²³¹ This would include change in the structures of Confucian-style government and education, and the creation of a constitutional monarchy. Kang's recommendations concerning political reform went far beyond the *qingliu* group's idea of administrative reform. When Kang was summoned to appear in the *Zhongli yamen* on January 24, 1898,

Li Hongzhang asked, "Shall we, then, abolish all the Six Boards and throw away all the existing institutions and rules?" Kang gave the following bold answer: "At present, different countries exist side by side; the world is no longer a unified one. Our laws and governmental system are only institutions of one unified empire. It is these that have made China weak and will ruin her. Undoubtedly, they should be changed. Even if we could not abolish them all at once, we should modify them as circumstances require. Only so can we carry out reform."²³²

The reform Kang recommended seemed to be a radical project which would have largely changed old practices. In Kang's words,

"We cannot stick to old practices, it is essential to reform; we cannot reform slowly, it is essential to reform quickly; we cannot reform piecemeal, it is essential to have an overall reform".²³³

²³⁰ Zhang Zhidong, "Quanxue pian" in *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.3717.

²³¹ Lo Jung-pang's editorial introduction to *Kang Yu-wei*, p.2.

²³² See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.42.

²³³ See *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.197.

The crucial importance of the 1890s reform movement lay in the fact that a debate had been launched within the scholar-official class that had far deeper implications than the traditional debates between different schools of Confucianism or debates over practical reforms measures in the *yangwu* movement. These differences of opinion aired among scholar-officials never questioned the central values or institutions of the imperial Confucian state itself. Members of the *yangwu* group and the *qingliu* group took advantage of the new conditions to become more active politically within the traditional system, and were not yet ready to operate outside it. However, those values and institutions, even Confucianism, were brought into question in the course of debate between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group, and this caused major ideological conflict between the two groups.

There was a vital difference between the views of Zhang and Weng on the one hand, and Kang and Liang on the other hand. Kang and Liang had much less respect for the established imperial tradition (in both its ideological and institutional aspects) than Zhang and Weng, who had a profound respect for China's moral heritage and the Confucian tradition. The *qingliu* members thought that when they adopted foreign devices and implements which they believed had made Western countries strong and wealthy, some administrative reorganization would be necessary to raise efficiency, but the essential old order was not to be touched. As we have mentioned earlier, although Zhang had initiated many modernization projects during his tenure of office before the 1890s, he never advocated the alteration of basic Chinese institutions and moral teachings. In fact, it was his primary propose to perpetuate the established institutions and way of life, rather than to introduce progress and Western ideals.

Kang, as a radical reformer, chose another road to change political institutions and to recast China's social customs as a means of preserving and revitalizing the country. He believed that although the reform could be accomplished without wholesale abandonment of Chinese traditions at the initial stage, eventually it was necessary to change some of the basic features of Chinese civilization to meet the conditions of the modern world.²³⁴ Kang's reform group suggested to modifying the imperial system by widely taking advantage of modern Western experience in government, education, and the social system as well as in science and technology.

Kang Youwei firstly attempted to reinterpret Confucianism itself. He repudiated the accepted Confucian tradition of his own age, and insisted on going back to what he claimed were the true teachings of Confucius.²³⁵ In this way, he questioned some central values and beliefs of Confucianism and changed the accepted principles of Confucianism. Kang offered to replace that tradition with a Confucianism that was, in the words of Liang Qichao, progressivism instead of conservatism, a cult of universal love instead of personal cultivation, a doctrine of equality instead of authoritarianism.²³⁶ Kang developed his ideas in his two famous books. In *A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period* (*Xinxue weijing kao*, 1891), he tried to show that the Old Text classics were Liu Xin's forgeries and it was necessary to sweep away the cobwebs and incrustations that had grown around Confucian ideas and constrained the creativity of Chinese scholars.²³⁷ As Xiao Gongquan puts it,

²³⁴ See Lo Jung-pang's editorial introduction to *Kang Yu-wei*, p.2.

²³⁵ For more discussion, see Hsiao Kuang-chuan, *A Modern China and a New World*, Chapter 3 and 4.

²³⁶ Liang Qichao, "Kang Youwei" in *WXB*, Vol.4, p.15.

²³⁷ "The origins of the dispute between proponents of the 'new' and 'old' texts lay in the remotest period of the imperial past. In 213 B.C. Qin Shihuang (The first Emperor of the Qin dynasty) had ordered the destruction of the literature of the contending schools of the late Zhou period, taking the legalist view that private opinion was a divisive influence that could only be subversive to the unity of the state he had created. As a result, the Confucian texts which circulated in the former Han period (206B.C.-9A.D.) were reconstructions pieced

"Although Kang claimed that his merciless attack on the Old Text school was motivated only by a desire to rid Confucianism of "false ascriptions", he was implicitly attacking the entire neo-Confucian tradition which since Ming times had served as the foundation of the established imperial ideology."²³⁸

His attack, moreover, amounted to an assault not only on the followers of Zhu Xi but also on all Confucianists who did not subscribe to the doctrines of the Gongyang school.²³⁹ These latter would include Weng, Zhang and the majority of the scholars and officials of the time. Having brushed aside the orthodox view, Kang claimed in his second book, *A Study of Confucius as a Reformer* (*Kungzi gaizhi kao*, 1896), that Confucius had himself created, rather than merely edited, the principal classics as a means of invoking the authority of the antiquity to support his stand for institutional reform.²⁴⁰ In this book, as Lo Junpang said,

Kang Youwei "held that Confucius was not just a teacher but also a religious leader, not a pedant who looked to the past or a straight-laced formalist preoccupied with ceremonies, but a warm-hearted, progressive-minded man of action and a political reformer."²⁴¹

together largely from memory, and committed to writing in the "New style script" of the time. Toward the end of the former Han, however, unfamiliar versions of many of the classical texts appeared, written in the "old-style script" (*Guwen*) of the pre-imperial age. These texts, it was claimed, had been hidden away to save them from the bonfires of the Qin and only recently unearthed—some from within the walls of Confucius's old home. Among the champions of the *Guwen* texts was Liu Xin (48B.C.-23A.D.), an eminent scholar of the time who served as minister of state to Wang Mang; the Han official who usurped the imperial power and established a short-lived interregnum, the so-called Xin Dynasty." See *Cambridge History of China* Vol.11, pp.112-3.

²³⁸ Hsiao Kuan-chuan, "Weng T'ung-ho and the reform movement of 1898", p.356.

²³⁹ The *Gongyang-zhuan* was a commentary on the *Chun-Qiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*). The *Chun-Qiu* was the chronicle of the small feudal state of Lu for the period 772-481B.C. (although it also contains many references to the affairs of other states). Tradition has it that the *Chun-Qiu* was compiled by Confucius himself. The *Gongyang* school belonged to the New text school. It later elaborated on the theory of the Three Ages by describing them as those of Disorder (*juluan shū*), Approaching Peace (*shengping shū*) and Universal Peace (*taiping shū*).

²⁴⁰ See John K. Fairbank, *China: Tradition and Transformation*, p.373.

²⁴¹ Lo Jung-pang ed, *Kang Yu-wei*, p.6.

Kang also pointed out how Confucius alluded to events in the past to provide support for his political and social reforms. It is not surprising at all that many officials and scholars at this time accused Kang of desiring to sweep away the great principles and institutions of China that had been transmitted from one generation to another for thousands of years. In fact, what Kang attempted to do was to discredit the tradition of imperial Confucian philosophy and to make it into the ideological weapon of the reform group.

On the other hand, Zhang Zhidong and Weng Tonghe both showed appreciation of Zhu Xi and "imperial Confucianism"²⁴² which served as the orthodox ideology of the existing regime. They were repelled by Kang Youwei's interpretations of the Confucian classics, based on the *Gongyang* doctrines as Kang understood them. To Zhang and Weng, who had outstanding knowledge of the classics, Kang's 'new' Confucianism was decidedly unorthodox and therefore unacceptable. Weng expressed his views in a diary entry written at the time when he was reading Kang's *A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period*. Weng commented upon Kang's view as follows:

"(Kang Youwei) holds that every bit of the old text of Liu Xin who interpolated the six classics is spurious, and that all (commentators) after Zheng Kangcheng had been deceived (by Liu Xin). Truly a wild-fox meditator among the commentators of the classics! No end to my astonishment!"²⁴³

The title of "wild-fox" is itself sufficient evidence of Weng's negative attitude towards Kang's theory. Another example could be seen in Weng's diary, dated May 26, 1898:

"The emperor ordered me to have another copy made of the writings which Kang had previously presented to His Majesty and to send it in (as

²⁴² The term is used in Hsiao Kuan-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the reform movement of 1898", p.353.

²⁴³ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.4, p.1884.

soon as it was ready). I replied, 'I do not associate with Kang.' The Emperor asked: 'Why not?' I replied, 'This man's intentions are unpredictable.' The Emperor said, 'Why haven't you mentioned this before?' I replied, 'Your servant discovered this recently upon reading his "A Study of Confucius as a Reformer."²⁴⁴

Although Zhang Zhidong committed himself to no one single school of Confucian thought, he did not embrace the doctrines of the Gongyang school which Kang insisted were the only true Confucianism. As a matter of fact, Zhang detested the Gongyang doctrines so much that for a long time he had been consistently refuting them, regarding them as "a source for seditious subjects and undutiful sons."²⁴⁵ Kang visited Zhang Zhidong in 1895, and according to his account, for about two weeks, they met almost every day, and each time their conversation lasted till late at night. Zhang, however, did not accept the view that Confucius was an advocate of reform.²⁴⁶ In Zhang's later book, "Exhortation to Study", he sharply criticized Kang's "Confucianism" without explicitly naming him. Zhang claimed that the most dangerous part of Kang's Confucian theory was to change the nature of Confucianism. In his book Zhang strongly emphasized the "Three Bonds" (*sangang*: the relationships between prince and minister, father and son, husband and wife) as principles which he considered to provide the basic order of Confucian society. He wrote:

"If one recognizes the importance of the bond between prince and minister, the doctrine of democracy is untenable. If one recognizes the importance of the bond between father and son, then the theory that a father and his son may be equally wrong (instead of the conception that the father is always right) and the abolition of funeral service and sacrifices to ancestors are wrong. If one recognizes the importance of the

²⁴⁴ Ibid, Vol.5, p.2175.

²⁴⁵ See Zhang Zhidong, *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.4212.

²⁴⁶ See Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.36.

bond between husband and wife, then the doctrine of equal rights between men and women is wrong."²⁴⁷

Zhang's words meant that the Kang's reform idea went beyond a true academic interpretation of Confucian philosophical and moral teachings and had political implications that were decidedly dangerous.

The later *qingliu* officials and Kang's reform group members agreed on the need for better communication and solidarity between ruler and subjects. One of their political goals was to promote national unity and to achieve some form of participatory government. However, on the question of participation, there was a basic difference between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group. The right of participation, in the *qingliu* officials' opinion, ought to apply only to those who were already serving in the bureaucracy as scholar-officials. Therefore the concept of participation was to keep open the lines of communication between the throne and its subjects, appoint the right scholar-officials and give them more power. On the other hand, the radical reformers asked for fuller participation in politics by the nation's local gentry. The long-range goal of Kang Youwei's political programme included the establishment of a constitutional system in China. The goal quite clearly meant movement toward a representative system of government with the gentry leaders outside the government attaining some formal status within the political system. The term "*minquan*" (rights of the people) appeared frequently in the writings of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and others.²⁴⁸ This idea of *minquan* went far beyond the *qingliu* officials' moderate reform project. It implied a transformation of China's autocratic system into a constitutional democracy, and challenged the very foundation of the Chinese traditional institutions.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Zhang Zhidong, "Quanyue pian" (Exhortation to study) in *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.3710.

²⁴⁸ Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century*, pp.29-32.

²⁴⁹ See Hsiao Kuan-chuan, *A Modern China and a New World* p.213.

The reform that the *qingliu* officials advocated stopped short of tampering with traditional Chinese institutions, and certainly had no room for a constitution. Zhang Zhidong stated emphatically,

"China cannot be preserved unless she adopts Western learning, but the true purpose of reform must always remain the preservation of the Confucian tradition which alone makes China superior to all other countries. To impair or abandon that tradition would be to defeat the very aim of reform."²⁵⁰

According to the *qingliu* officials, reform did not mean the alteration of the established traditional system of the empire; rather, it meant the preservation of the tradition by wisely selecting and adopting elements of Western material civilization. In other words, reform was not a step toward Westernization but an indispensable means to ensure the continuation of the Confucian empire.²⁵¹ The concept of "rights of the people" implied destruction of the power of the central government which the orthodox scholar-officials were sharing, and destruction of the present order of society. Zhang Zhidong stated his opinion clearly, "The doctrine of 'rights of the people' will not bring us any benefit but a hundred evils."²⁵² He also warned that if the concept of "rights of the people" was implemented, "foolish people will surely be delighted; unruly people will rise up; the laws will not be carried out; great disorder will prevail everywhere".²⁵³ Ideologically speaking, the radical reformers' idea of "right of the people" was virtually revolutionary. It is to these reformers' credit that they found out that the established tradition, being largely outmoded, should be radically reconstructed. But, probably they failed to see that to achieve a political reform would have spelled the doom of the imperial system itself. Consciously, or perhaps

²⁵⁰ Zhang Zhidong, "Quanyue pian" in *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.3702.

²⁵¹ See Hsiao Kuan-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the reform movement of 1898 ", p.352.

²⁵² Zhang Zhidong, "Quanyue pian " in *Zhang Wenxian gong quanji* Vol.6, p.3715

²⁵³ Ibid, Vol.6, p.3715

unconsciously, the radical reformers waged war on the traditional scholar-officialdom and on what gave its shape and continued existence, thus causing the strong resistance of the scholar-officials' class and its representative political faction, the *qingliu* group.

Thus, the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group held different ideological positions when they advocated reform in the 1890s. The former wanted to cling to a refurbished tradition and the latter wanted to dismantle the old system. The *qingliu* officials were willing to modernize China in economic and military matters and to introduce a degree of efficiency and honesty into imperial officialdom as a necessary condition for modernization, but they were opposed to modifying the institutional structure or abandoning the traditional values of the empire. Compared with the moderate reform program of the *qingliu* group, the radical reformers called for more extensive changes in the existing system and a higher degree of Westernization. It may be argued that Kang's radical reformism was a better way to "save" China. However, for the historical circumstances prevailing in China in the 1890s China, Kang's idea was too advanced. The program of a full frontal assault on the imperial tradition and the setting up a Western-style political system would have led to the demise of the imperial system rather than its rescue. As was to be expected, the idea caused fear and resistance on the part of the majority of the scholar-officials who dominated the political scene at the time, and many of them acted to stop Kang's reform movement as soon as they understood its significance. It was worth noticing that the political co-operation between the later *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group in 1895-1896 did not last very long. One reason for this was that many orthodox scholar-officials became suspicious and fearful once they had acquainted themselves with Kang's radical reform theories.

CHAPTER FIVE

The *qingliu* Group and 1898 Reform Movement

Weng Tonghe's Faction of the *qingliu* Group and 1898 Reform Movement

The conflict between the Emperor and the Empress Dowager broke into the open towards the end of the Sino-Japanese War. The pro-emperor united front between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group became a threat to the Empress Dowager's power. The Empress Dowager Ci Xi and her adherents were rather disturbed by the co-operation between the two groups. Although the Empress Dowager and her powerful faction may have had enough power to attack the Emperor directly, they did not wish to do it at that time because they were afraid of creating a new crisis in the state. What they did was to break the relationship between the Emperor and his supporters, and to root out the officials associated with the Emperor. As a result, in a few years after the war, almost all the key members of the Emperor's faction were forced to leave government, and the *qingliu* networks were frozen out of the inner circles of power.

During the Sino-Japanese War, one of the most important attempts by the *qingliu* officials to reduce the Empress Dowager's power seems to have been to support Prince Gong's return to power. Prince Gong was one of Ci Xi's strongest political opponents. He had been forced to leave government in 1885 during the Sino-French War. Many members of the *qingliu* group had been favourably impressed by Prince Gong's tolerance towards the earlier *qingyi* movement, and hoped that, after his return to power, he would strongly support the assumption of real authority by the Emperor. After the first severe defeat of

the Chinese army and navy, a handful of memorials were submitted suggesting that Prince Gong be called back into government to replace Li Hongzhang as leader of the war against Japan. On September 27, 1894, amid the rising demand for Prince Gong's return, the Guangxu Emperor gave an audience to a Hanlin scholar, Lu Banzhong. Guangxu intimated to Liu that a collective petition from a larger number of officials might induce the throne to consider Prince Gong's appointment.²⁵³ Lu duly passed this information on to his colleagues, and Wen Tingshi immediately took action. He composed a draft memorial, and succeeded in procuring some 57 signatures for it.²⁵⁴ Unpleasant as it may have been to her, Ci Xi had to bow to this strong expression of elite opinion, and agree to appoint Prince Gong as chief-minister of the *Zongli yamen*. However, the outcome was not quite as *qingliu* officials had hoped. Prince Gong, knowing how dangerous Ci Xi could be, dared not challenge her power, and did not want to widen the chasm between Ci Xi and himself. He carefully kept to a middle position in the conflict between the Emperor and Empress Dowager. Prince Gong's reticence shifted the balance of power between the Emperor and Empress Dowager in favour of the latter.

The *qingliu* group's attempts to support Prince Gong had aroused Ci Xi's vigilance. Meanwhile, *qingliu* officials also contracted the enmity of Li Hongzhang. Revenge from Ci Xi and Li was only a question of time. After the Sino-Japanese war, the problems facing the Empire went beyond the growing pressure for reform, involving directly the struggle for leadership. Although the *qingliu* group had an alliance with Kang's reform group, all of the members of Kang's group were still scholars outside of the government in the mid-1890s.

²⁵³ Ye Changzhi, *Yuandulou riji chao* (Diary of Ye Changzhi), Wang Jilie ed, Vol.7 p.7.

²⁵⁴ See Qian Ersun, *Weng Yunge xiansheng nianpu*, p.27 and also Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days*, p.67.

The government could easily control them by rejecting their memorials. By contrast, most members of the *qingliu* group served in important departments such as the Hanlin Academy, the Censorate or the Six Boards. Some of them also had a close relationship with the Emperor himself and a high reputation in scholar-official circles. Thus, after the war, Ci Xi and her adherents firstly began to root out the *qingliu* officials from government.

The first move of the Empress Dowager's faction against the *qingliu* group was the dismissal of Wang Mingluan and Chang Lin. Wang and Chang were both Board Vice Presidents, and had served on special assignments connected with the Sino-Japanese War. Both had had very frequent personal contact with Emperor.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, Wang was also one of the most trusted disciples of Weng Tonghe, and a key member of the Emperor's Party. The official explanation of the dismissal was vague. An edict which was in the Emperor's name but clearly expressing the will of the Empress Dowager only indicated that their action came near to sowing discord between the Emperor and Empress Dowager.²⁵⁶ Weng Tonghe could not even elicit an exact explanation for the dismissal of the two officials from the Emperor, and a few months later was ordered to stop serving as the Emperor's tutor.²⁵⁷

At the end of 1895, the Empress Dowager and her adherents also dismissed or removed some other *qingliu* officials who had had a close relationship with the Emperor, such as Wen Tingshi and Zhi Jun. As already indicated, Wen's activities had incensed Li Hongzhang, and this caused the

²⁵⁵ Wang had eleven and Chang twenty four interviews with the Emperor during 1894. See Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days*, p.68.

²⁵⁶ Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, pp.12429-30.

²⁵⁷ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyin ben*, Vol.4, p.1989 and Vol.5, p.2005.

Empress Dowager's displeasure. After the war, Wen became aware of the danger from his political enemies. Acting on the advice of his friends he left Peking in July 1895. While he was staying in Shanghai, Liu Qixiang, a local official and a relative of Li Hongzhang, made a point of entertaining Wen in his official residence. While there some drafts of Wen's secret memorials (to the Emperor), which contained his vituperative remarks about Li Hongzhang, 'disappeared' from his room. It was believed that they then fell into Li's hands.²⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Li persuaded Yang Chungyi, whose daughter was married to Li's grandson, to impeach Wen and thus quickly brought about Wen's dismissal. Zhi Jun, a cousin of the Emperor's favourite concubine and a friend of Wen, was sent to a distant provincial post. The purpose of these actions by the Empress Dowager's faction seems not to have been the suppression of the reform movement, which was supported by the *qingliu* group and became popular after the war, but rather, in the context of the power struggle, to break the ties between the Emperor and the *qingliu* group. In Ci Xi's opinion, Weng Tonghe and his friends had too much influence over the Emperor. For their part, Li Hongzhang and his followers were on the defensive, and carried out reprisals against the *qingliu* officials with Ci Xi's support. In late 1895, Li was appointed special envoy to Russia to attend the Czar's coronation. When Li had his last audience with Ci Xi before his departure for Russia, he reportedly presented her with a blacklist of 57 officials, warning that these men should not be given any important posts.²⁵⁹

When Kang Youwei went to Peking towards the end of 1897, the issue of the Jiaozhou Gulf was coming to a head. Public opinion considered that China

²⁵⁸ Qian Ersun, *Weng Yunge xiansheng nianpu* p.35 and Hu Sijing, *Guowen bacheng* in *WXBF*, Vol.4, pp.83-4.

²⁵⁹ Zhang Xiaoro, *Zhang Jian nianpu* (The Chronological Biography of Zhang Jian), in *WXBF*, Vol.4, p.200.

was facing the possibility of dismemberment and that a reform of the political system was needed urgently to save the situation. However, the political strength of the *qingliu* group had been weakened considerably as a consequence of the attacks from members of the Empress Dowager's faction. Only Weng Tonghe, who had lost almost all of his political helpers in the purge, remained temporarily in his position. For the *qingliu* group, an open challenge to Ci Xi's power and the launching of a reform project was impossible. It is widely known that the Hundred Days Reform in 1898 was mainly led by Kang Youwei and his reform group, and strongly supported by the Emperor. However, Kang, still a man outside of the government at the time, was not in a position to establish direct contact with the Emperor. According to Xiao Gongquan, Weng Tonghe, the patron of the late *qingliu* group, was "chiefly responsible for giving Kang the opportunity to gain the emperor's unreserved confidence."²⁶⁰

The relationship between Kang and Weng has aroused a good deal of controversy among writers.²⁶¹ The greatest source of confusion is perhaps the mutually contradictory statements made by the two men. Kang Youwei emphasized in his chronological autobiography that Weng had been a firm supporter of reform since 1895 and gave the reformists a great deal of help during 1898. On the other hand, Weng firmly denied in his diary that he had any connection with Kang or recommended Kang to the Emperor. After examining some other contemporary sources, and comparing both Kang's and Weng's

²⁶⁰ Hsiao Kung-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the Reform Movement of 1898" p.362.

²⁶¹ See such works as Hsiao Kung-chuan, "Weng Tung-ho and the Reform Movement of 1898"; Ho Ping-ti, "Weng Tung-ho and One Hundred Days of Reform" in *Far Eastern Quarterly* (1951) 10/125-35; Wu Xianxian, "Weng Tonghe Kang Youwei guangxi kaoshi" (An analysis of relationship between Weng Tonghe and Kang Youwei) *Xueshu jikan* (1975) 4/1-12; and Hu Bin, "Lun Weng Tonghe yu wuxu bianfa de guanxi" (On the relation between Weng Tonghe and reform of 1898) *The Guangming ribao* (Guangming Daily) January 23, 1954.

accounts, I have come to the conclusion that neither Kang's nor Weng's version gives an accurate picture of the relationship between the two.

Kang Youwei's chronological autobiography is a record of the first forty-one years of his life. The book may have been written after the failure of the 1898 reform movement when Kang left China to seek political refuge in Japan.²⁶² It was not published in Kang's lifetime. Although it contains many useful facts, it was compiled against the background of the political struggles of the time, and therefore expresses views intended to serve certain political ends. When Kang was in exile in Japan, he raised the banner of "protect the emperor" (*bao huang*), in the hope that the Emperor would return to the throne and resume the process of reform. In an effort to defeat the pro-Ci Xi faction then in power, and to win the sympathy and support of the public, Kang and his followers started a propaganda movement. Liang Qichao, who was also in Japan at the time, began to publish his *Wuxu zhengbian ji* (An account of the coup in 1898).²⁶³ Although Liang has generally been recognized as the author of *Wuxu zhengbian ji*, it has come to light that Kang Youwei also had a hand in writing it.²⁶⁴ On the other hand, there are many similarities of viewpoint between Liang's book and Kang's chronological autobiography, and some descriptive passages are also similar. It is believed that Liang used the draft of Kang's autobiography when he wrote his book because he had been absent from many events of the reform movement in Peking during 1898. The interesting fact is that Liang later came to criticize his

²⁶² Kang's autobiography comprises two sections written at different times, the first presumably in early 1896 and the second in early 1899, in the wake of the Hundred Days Reform. Kang noted in his book that the first section was written before 1896, yet many events which mentioned in the first section happened after 1896. Such anachronisms detected in the text suggest later revisions, and if Kang's note appended to the first section is a clue, he may still have been working on the manuscript at in 1927, when he was 70 years old.

²⁶³ The series of articles first appeared in the *Qingyi bao* (The China discussion, a periodical launched by Liang and his friends in Yokohama). For more details see *WXBF*, Vol.4, p.593.

²⁶⁴ According to Kwong, at least one chapter of Liang's works was written by Kang Youwei. See Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days*, p.256, Footnote 1.

own work. In his *Zhongguo lishi yanjiu fa* (Research methodology for the study of Chinese history), he cited himself when illustrating a common historiographical fault, namely, exaggeration. Liang said:

"Such as *An account of the coup in 1898* which I wrote some twenty years ago, as subsequent writers on Qing history attempt to record this episode in 1898, who has not documentation? But to claim what it contains to be all reliable history is a view I no longer dare to entertain. Why so? It is because I became so emotionally involved and consequently exaggerated what had really happened".²⁶⁵

Liang had the courage to recognize his mistakes, Kang did not.

Kang reviewed his chronological autobiography in his later years, yet it still contains many exaggerations. In particular, Kang exaggerated his relationship with Weng Tonghe. For example, in the chronology of events for 1895, Kang devoted two long passages to the relationship between Weng and himself, obviously for the purpose of creating the impression that the reformists had all along enjoyed the support of Weng, and through Weng, as the Emperor's tutor, eventually of the emperor himself. But the passage describing the meeting and dialogue between the two men belie his own words. The passage records Weng speaking to Kang at their first meeting:

"Although we are meeting for the first time, we have known of each other for ten years. So we are actually like old friends. Now let me tell you a secret. The Emperor has no real power. The Empress Dowager is very suspicious of everything, so much so that even when the Emperor sends some cakes to his close ministers, she has had them sliced open to see if there are secret imperial orders hidden in them".²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo lishi yanjufa* (Method of Studying Chinese History), p.91.

²⁶⁶ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.33.

In a passage Kang is recorded as replying to Weng:

"This is the time for you to make the big decision to carry out reform. Don't lose the chance. If we now set up a new administration, discontinue the eight-leg essay style in the civil service examinations, and follow them up with a series of new measures, a great deal can be achieved within a month. By that time, the reform will last even if you are removed from your present post."²⁶⁷

In actual fact, the Empress Dowager's search for the secret edict from the Emperor, the abolition of the eight-leg essay, the new measures that took place within a month and Weng's removal from his post were all facts that did not occur until 1898, the year of the reform movement. How could it have been possible to forecast them in such detail three years before they occurred? Beside, Weng was known for his carefulness and prudence. It would have been quite out of character for him to say these things to a newly graduated *jinshi* such as Kang and thus expose himself to the danger of losing his head and the lives of his whole family. I believe that these two passages are not factual, and that any conclusion drawn from them regarding the relationship between Wen and Kang is unsound.

Kang's story is hardly credible, but the account in Weng Tonghe's diary of his relationship with Kang Youwei was also written at a later date. Some historians point out that Weng modified his diary, particularly those parts concerning his connection with Kang Youwei.²⁶⁸ Weng was dismissed from his post in June 1898. After the coup of September 1898, he was accused of having

²⁶⁷ Ibid p.37.

²⁶⁸ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (Draft biographies of those involved in the 1898 reform), (enlarged edition) Vol.1 pp.289-90.

aligned himself with Kang Youwei. But he firmly denied the accusation. In his diary entry for October 18, 1898, he wrote,

"Newspapers have always been absurd. The conversation of Kang, the traitor, published in today's paper, alleging that I had recommended [him to the Emperor] is particularly strange. Does he intend to implicate and ruin me because I had rejected him?"²⁶⁹

However, early the next year, an imperial edict, which was believed to represent Ci Xi's and her adherents' wish, confirmed the accusation. It read as follows,

"Last spring Weng strongly advocated reform and secretly recommended Kang Youwei, saying that this man's abilities were a hundred times superior to his, with the intention of making Kang an arbiter of all affairs of state".²⁷⁰

Although we do not know if the charge from government depended on Kang's or the Emperor's sources, the question of whether Weng supported Kang's reform projects or not remains unanswered.

The *qingliu* group had supported a moderate reform program and some *qingliu* officials had had close connection with Kang's reform group during 1895. However, there is no evidence to suggest Weng Tonghe had any special enthusiasm for Kang's reform projects or any special interest in Kang himself in 1895 like Kang described. Weng supported a moderate reform program to be controlled by his own faction. In fact, this was possible at the time. But when the situation changed, there are reasons to believe that Weng's interest in Kang's reform program grew and that he seriously considered supporting Kang during

²⁶⁹ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyin ben* Vol.5 p.2201. This translation is taken from Hsiao, "Weng Tung-ho and the Reform Movement of 1898", p.363.

²⁷⁰ See *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.112.

late 1897 and early 1898. Firstly, during late 1897, Weng was in charge of handling the Jiaozhou Gulf affair. He sensed the grave consequences of the issue and began to give serious consideration to reform. In a diary entry of December 1897, Weng made a reference to the court meeting, stating:

"The Emperor asked what should be considered first in the circumstances. He pointed out the urgent need for reform. I made several suggestions that reform should begin with the fundamentals of internal administration".²⁷¹

This shows that Weng felt the necessity of immediate reform and his attitude to reform was enthusiastic. Secondly, as indicated earlier, the late *qingliu* group had almost disintegrated due to the purge by Ci Xi and her adherents. Although Weng still had an important post at Court, he was finding himself increasingly isolated, and surrounded by political enemies. In such circumstances, it is not difficult to understand that Weng could temporarily ignore the differences between his and Kang's ideas on reform, and regard Kang as a possible ally in order to achieve a moderate reform programme. Lastly, Weng supported a reform programme which would gain political benefits for the state, the Emperor, and himself. Weng's interest in reform stemmed from his loyalty to the Emperor and the dynasty, but it was not unrelated to more selfish concerns. By endeavouring to put the empire on an even keel through reform he could not only extricate himself from his political predicament, but also achieve supremacy in the Peking officialdom. Weng was, after all, an ambitious high official involved in a power struggle with such other eminent reform-minded officials as Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong. Kang with his resourcefulness in ideas of reform might serve as a valuable ally who could conceivably help Weng to outwit his opponents in reform-mongering at court.

²⁷¹ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben* Vol.5, p.2143.

When Kang Youwei arrived in Peking in late 1897 he prepared to submit a memorial which contained his plea for reform. However, he could not find a sponsor to submit it to the Court. According to his late account, he then drafted some similar memorials for his Censor friends Gao Xieceng and Wang Pengyun. Gao and Wang submitted them to the throne under their own names. In the memorial under Gao's name it was suggested that China should send a delegate to attend a world disarmament conference in Sweden and he recommended Kang as Chinese envoy for the mission.²⁷² The throne considered the suggestion seriously. Weng Tonghe noted the matter as follows in his diary under 12th December, 1897,

"[the Court] received Wang Pengyun's and Gao Xieceng's memorials on the Jiaozhou crisis. The Emperor granted an interview [to us] for one hour. Gao's recommendation that Kang Youwei attend the disarmament conference in Sweden has been referred to the *Zongli yamen*." ²⁷³

For his part, in a note to a poem written after the coup d'état of 1898, Kang reminisced,

"I submitted a memorial on the Jiaozhou crisis, but it did not reach [the emperor]. I was packing for my journey home on 12 December. Before that, Weng Tonghe had already strongly recommended me to the emperor. Now, upon hearing that I had decided to leave, he came to the *Nanhai guan* [where Kang lodged]; I was still in bed when he came unushered into the *Hanmam fang* [Kang's room], and invited me to remain [in Peking]." ²⁷⁴

There is also a similar account in Kang's autobiography.

²⁷² Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.39.

²⁷³ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.5, pp.2134-5.

²⁷⁴ See *WXBF*, Vol.4, p.342.

"I prepared to go home on 11 December. My luggage had already been loaded on my carriage when Wang Tonghe came and asked me to stay. On the following day, Gao Xieceng submitted a memorial recommending me for an audience with the Emperor and requesting also that I be sent abroad under an official title. Weng Tonghe strongly recommended me in the emperor's presence; and so, at the Emperor's order, the memorial was referred to the *Zongli yamen* for discussion. Xu Yingkui spoke to Prince Gong opposing the appointment, and Weng Tonghe spoke again in favour of it. Prince Gong then said, 'I shall present the views of both your ministers to the Emperor.' The emperor thereupon summoned a meeting of the princes and ministers [the ranking members of the *Zongli yamen*] for a discussion in his presence."²⁷⁵

Kang here repeated that Weng had recommended him but did not give strong evidence of how he knew of this. It seems that Kang only conjectured that Weng recommended him to the Emperor because Weng went to his place to ask him to stay in Peking. Even if Weng really "recommended" Kang to the Emperor, it is possible that Weng commended Kang as an able man in support of Kang's appointment as envoy.

The above records suggests the conclusion that although we cannot confirm that Weng Tonghe made a formal recommendation, on behalf of Kang, he may have inclined to support Kang. Weng's support for Kang did not necessarily indicate that he supported Kang's reform ideas or his reform program: he may have been motivated by political reasons. However, because of Weng's position at the time, Weng's support would have been important for Kang to gain an opportunity to expound his ideas to the throne, and to gain the Emperor's attention and confidence.

²⁷⁵ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.39. These translation is based on Lo Juan-pang, *K'ang Yu-wei*, p.91.

As the reform movement gathered strength in early 1898, Weng became cold and suspicious towards Kang, and the relationship between them ended in Wang's attempt openly to discredit and to dissociate himself from Kang in April 1898. Weng was perhaps alarmed by Kang's radical views. It seems that he began to change his attitude towards Kang after he took part in the interview in the *Zongli yamen* on January 24, 1898. As far as Weng was concerned, it was absolutely unacceptable that Kang preached about a total transformation of the empire's institutions when answering the questions put to him by Rong Lu and Li Hongzhang.²⁷⁶ On the evening of the day of the interview, Weng wrote in his diary: "Summoned Kang to the *Zongli yamen*. Highflown talk on current affairs, with reform as the chief theme.....Unrestrained to the extreme. Returned in the evening; very indignant, very tired."²⁷⁷ The interview of January 24 may well have marked a turning point in the relationship between Weng and Kang.

After Kang's interview at the *Zongli yamen*, Weng took an increasingly negative attitude towards him. By May 1898, Kang came under fierce attack from the conservative forces. According to Kang, he wrote to Weng urging him to take up reform immediately. Weng, however, advised Kang to leave Peking and call an end to his reform activities.²⁷⁸ After a few days, Weng had several serious disagreements with the Emperor himself on matters concerning Kang. Weng told the Emperor that Kang was a dangerous person who had ulterior motives and therefore could not be trusted. The Emperor, however, was very enthusiastic about reform, and Weng's words made him very angry.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ See Chapter 4

²⁷⁷ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.5, p.2147.

²⁷⁸ Kang Youwei, *KYWN*, p.46.

²⁷⁹ For more discussion, see Chapter 4.

This probably represented the view of most *qingliu* members regarding Kang's proposed reform. Like Zhang Zhidong, who had maintained a vigilant concern with Kang's radical ideas since 1895, many *qingliu* members expressed disquiet and distrust about Kang and his followers and did not actively support the movement on the eve of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898. For example, in June of 1898, Zhang Jian came to the capital from Shanghai. Zhang, as a former political associate of Weng, frequently exchanged comments on the political situation with him. According to Zhang, he had this to say to Weng at the time:

"Reform [Kang's reform movement] definitely will not succeed, and no one can tell what would happen to those who go along with it." Zhang also strongly urged Weng not to become involved in the "rash movement."²⁸⁰

Huang Shaoqi, a *qingliu* friend of Kang Youwei, was in Peking during 1898. However, he hardly had any contact with Kang and his followers at the time, and personally submitted to the throne Zhang Zhidong's *Quanxue pian*, which strongly criticized Kang's radical ideas. As we have indicated above, many *qingliu* members had left Peking before 1898. They gave close attention to the situation in Peking, but showed little enthusiasm toward Kang's reform. A letter of Wang Daxie, who was a close friend of many *qingliu* members in 1898, to his brother Wang Kangnian, gives indications as to the true thoughts of some *qingliu* members on Kang and his reform:

"I only know", he wrote, "that Kang and his followers are very busy every day, but I do not find what they are doing. How dreadful! How dreadful!.....Zhongtao [Huang Shaoqi] and others have all come to detest and fear Kang very much. Kang's activities and purpose are in fact already very plain. A man like Kang Youwei is not content to live in

²⁸⁰ Zhang Xiaoro, *Nantong Zhang Jizhi xiansheng zhuanji* (A biography of Zhang Jian), *Wenxing jikang*, Series 1, p.64 .

obscurity. However, I say categorically that he cannot achieve success..... I give only an outline of the situation. You should pass it on only to Zipei [Shen Cengzhi] and Yunge [Wen Tingshi], and no-one else..... I, for my part, show your letters only to Zhongtao, Jüsheng [Zhang Yunji] and Jizhi [Zhang Jian]."²⁸¹

The people Wang considered could shown his or his brother's letters were key members of the late *qingliu* group, and almost all had earlier had contacts or had cooperated with Kang. However, from the way Wang spoke about Kang in his letter, it appears that Wang and his friends shared a basically negative attitude to Kang and on his reform. In fact, although most *qingliu* officials did not openly oppose Kang, they took a passive and distrustful attitude towards him, and did not cooperate with his group in the 1898 reform movement.

Kang gained some support from officials such as Song Bolu, Yang Shenxiu, Wang Zhao and Xu Zhijing in the 1898 reform movement, but almost none of his official supporters belonged to the *qingliu* group. Kang formed a temporary alliance for reform after he arrived in Peking during 1898. The reform alliance played an important role in the Hundred Days Reform. However, the alliance was formed in great haste. Many officials who co-operated with Kang in 1898 had had no connection with Kang before that year. During 1898, Kang also formed an alliance with Zhang Yinhuan, who was President of the *Zongli yamen* and had gained the Emperor's favour.²⁸² Not only was Kang able to keep in touch with the Emperor through Zhang Yinhuan, he also later established a direct channel to the Guangxu Emperor. Liao Shouhua, a secretary of the Grand Council, played a role of exchanging information between the Emperor and

²⁸¹ Wang Kangnien *shiyou shuzha*, Shanghai Guji ed, Vol.1, pp.783-6

²⁸² Zhang and Kang also came from same town in Guangdong. Zhang reached a high ranking position without a degree. For a discussion on Zhang's role in late Qing, see Ho Banli, "Zhang Yinhuan shiji" (Zhang Yinhuan's life and career) in Bao Zunpeng and other eds *Zhongguo jindaishi luncung* (Essays on modern Chinese history) Series 1, Vol.7, pp.91-114.

Kang.²⁸³ It is worth noticing that the most important support for Kang's reform was given by the Guangxu Emperor. The Emperor showed great enthusiasm for Kang's reform and gave full trust to Kang himself. As Chen Xulu, a contemporary historian in Shanghai, said in his paper "On the Guangxu Emperor", "In fact, it is no overstatement to say that the Hundred Days Reform of 1898 could not have happened without the Emperor's great courage and determination for reform."²⁸⁴

In contrast, almost none of the *qingliu* members who had a co-operative relationship with Kang during 1895-96 and had a close relationship with the Emperor was involved in the reform movement in 1898. The co-operation for the reform between the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group in the 1890s did not survive as long as 1898. The *qingliu* group, in fact, did not really take part in the Hundred Days Reform as a political faction. Weng Tonghe had been dismissed in June 1898. Because of the short period when Weng and Kang seemed to be working towards the same ends, it may seem as though an alliance between the *qingliu* group and the reformists was prevented by Ci Xi's action to bring down Weng. However, Weng's dismissal in June did not influence the further development of the reform along Kang's radical line, on the contrary, it seems to have helped that development. It appears that support for Kang came not from Weng but from others. After the coup of September in 1898, many *qingliu* members, openly or privately, condemned Kang. Weng Tonghe also wrote as follows in his diary:

²⁸³ See Su Jizu, *Qingting wuxu chaobianji*, and Hu Sijing, *Wuxu lüshuan lu* in *WXBF*, Vol.1, pp.335 and 375.

²⁸⁴ See *Wenhui bao* (The Wenhui Daily), October 27, 1980.

"Humbly, I recall that when the traitor Kang Youwei presented himself [to the emperor on June 16], I had already been dismissed. If I had remained with my colleagues [to serve the emperor], I would have never allowed this traitor to become so perverse. But I was punished for this [the attempt to expose Kang]. I have now only myself to blame".²⁸⁵

Reviewing the whole development of Weng's attitude towards Kang Youwei, we have no reason to question his sincerity in this indication that he would not have allowed Kang to have his way.

Zhang Zhidong's Faction of the *qingliu* Group and the 1898 Reform Movement

Zhang Zhidong was a solid and influential member of the established bureaucracy and a patron of the later *qingliu* group. The projects he promoted in Nanjing and after his return to Hubei in early 1896 gained him fame as a pro-reform provincial leader. Zhang was very close to the postwar reform movement, in which Kang's group played a important part. The relationship between Zhang Zhidong and Kang Youwei's reform group, although unsettled, was extensive. However, although Zhang Zhidong's faction of the *qingliu* group and Kang's reform group co-operated in the postwar reform movement, their different ideas about reform divided them into opposite political factions. Zhang promoted and supported a reform program that was his own and he expected to lead the reform by himself. He attacked Kang and his radical reform projects.

²⁸⁵ Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe riji paiyinben*, Vol.5, p.2253.

Between 1895 and 1898, the conflict between Zhang and Kang's reform group came out into the open. After the uneasy co-operation over the Shanghai *Qiangxue hui* between Zhang's faction group and Kang's group, a newspaper, the *Shiwu bao*, emerged out of the remains of the society in the summer of 1896. The newspaper was mainly created by Wang Kangnian, who became editor and business manager, and Liang Qichao also had the position of chief-editor. Both Zhang Zhidong and Kang Youwei paid great attention to the paper, each hoping that it would become the propaganda instrument of his own group. On hearing that Wang Kangnian would come to Shanghai, Kang wrote as follows to a friend:

"Zhang Zhidong recommends Xiangqing [Wang Kangnian] join us. Wang is a very good friend of Zhuoru [Liang Qichao] and Rubo [Mai Manghua], and they have similar views and interests. (The man, [Wang] who printed three thousand copies of the book of He Qi, must be a strong supporter of democracy.²⁸⁶).....It is wonderful that Wang is going to join us."²⁸⁷

On the other hand, Zhang Zhidong also placed hopes on Wang Kangnian who, as indicated in an earlier chapter, was a friend and political ally of Zhang.²⁸⁸ Zhang had stood firmly behind Wang since the beginning of the establishment of *Shiwu bao*. He provided considerable direct financial support for the *Shiwu bao*, and helped to boost its circulation in the Yangtze region. About a month after publication began, Zhang directed all officials and teachers in Hubei to read the paper, and he also arranged for a subscription to be given to every civil or

²⁸⁶ He's book which Kang mentioned is that by He Qi and Hu Liyuan, *Xinzheng zhenquan* (The true interpretation of new policies). The first edition of the book was printed in 1887, and the second edition, *Xinzheng lunyi* (The discussion on new policies) which had been supplemented with new discussion on administrative reform along with adoption of some Western methods such as constitutional system, was reprinted in 1895.

²⁸⁷ *Wuxu bainfa qianhou* --- *Kang Youwei yigao*. (Before and after the reform movement of 1898---The manuscripts of Kang Youwei) Shanghai Guji ed, p.236.

²⁸⁸ See Chapter 4, "Shanghai Branch of the *Qiangxue hui*."

military *yamen*, academy and school in the province. The provincial government paid the full cost of these subscriptions. At first, Zhang was so impressed with the manner of the paper that he commended it as "the first healthy and useful newspaper since the beginning of journalism in China".²⁸⁹

However, soon after the establishment of the paper, Wang Kangnian himself contributed an essay entitled "On the Benefits of China's Adoption of People's Rights".²⁹⁰ Wang described how national weakness stemmed from resting state power on only a few officials, whereas strength would come from massing the people together as the foundation of the state, as in the West. Zhang Zhidong was disgusted with the idea of *minquan* (people's rights), and was greatly offended by this piece. At Zhang's instruction, Liang Dingfen wrote a letter of complaint to Wang.²⁹¹ The implicit threat was clear, and at least partly because of it Wang never again praised the virtues of *minquan* in the *Shiwu bao*. Letters from Liang Dingfen arrived for Wang quite regularly during 1896 and 1897. Through this indirect leverage, Zhang was able to modify some articles by Liang Qichao, and to keep out Kang Youwei's writings entirely. Although the *Shiwu bao* still promoted progress and reform, it came to reflect the moderate reform views of Zhang Zhidong, as opposed to those of Kang Youwei. For example, when Kang organized the *Baoguo hui* (Society to Protect the Nation) in Peking in the spring of 1898, he sent a membership list to the *Shiwu Bao* for publication. At the urging of Liang Dingfen, Wang Kangnian refused to print it.²⁹²

Liang Qichao chose to leave the paper in the late summer of 1897 because his position was being made intolerable. He was said to have complained that he

²⁸⁹ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhanggao*, Vol.2, p.573.

²⁹⁰ For Wang's article, see *WXBF*, Vol.3, pp.147-9.

was being treated like a hired labourer.²⁹³ Thus, the struggle for the *Shiwu bao* had become one of the main points of dispute between Zhang Zhidong's group and Kang Youwei's group. The reform forces were divided on ideological issues and on organizational matters into sharply two divided wings: the radicals and the moderates.

With the dissemination of reform ideas and Zhang Zhidong's support for "self-strengthening", the reform movement developed widely in Hubei and Hunan provinces. However, the reform movement in Hunan, which was beyond Zhang's control, grew increasingly radical partly because of Kang's reform group's influence. In the summer of 1897, on the recommendation of Huang Zunxian, Liang Qichao was invited to be the chief lecturer in the School of Current Affairs (*Shiwu xuetang*) in Changsha, the provincial capital of Hunan. Three other young scholars from Guangdong were invited to be Liang's assistants. These were Ye Juemai, Han Wenju and Ou Qujia, all of them Kang Youwei's disciples.²⁹⁴ According to Di Chuqing's "A Brief Account of Liang Qichao",

"Before Liang went to take up his teaching post at *Shiwu xuetang*, he discussed with his friends methods and principle for carrying out reform in Hunan. They had different opinions on the methods for carrying out reform, between gradual advance and speedy advance; and on the principle of carrying out reform between constitutionalism and a revolutionary anti-Manchu movement. Liang, at the time, strongly preferred the second choice in both cases."²⁹⁵

Liang and his assistants gained the full co-operation of some Hunan gentry-literati who were ideologically sympathetic with Kang's party. Among them the

²⁹³ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhanggao*, Vol.1, p.80.

²⁹⁴ Ding Wenjiang, *Liang Rengong xiensheng nianpu changbian*, p.86.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, pp.87-8.

most famous and influential were Tan Sitong and Tang Caichang. In intellectual outlook they were close to Kang. Like Kang, they were avowed followers of the New Text School, believing in the centrality to Confucianism of the ideals of historical progress and institutional change. Both were also firm supporters of *minquan*.²⁹⁶

Tan and Tang assisted Liang by giving lectures to the students in the *Shiwu xuetang*. With Tan and Liang as leaders, these radical reformists formed a new political group. They also gained strong support from some provincial officials such as Jiang Biao and Xü Renlu, the old and new commissioner of education, Huang Zunxian, the salt commissioner and Chen Baozheng, the governor of Hunan.²⁹⁷ With the appearance of the new group centred on the *Shiwu xuetang*, the reform movement moved to a much more radical form of activity in late 1897 and early 1898. Liang, Tan and their assistants openly advocated Kang Youwei's controversial theories such as that of Confucius as a reformer, and talked of *minquan* and the establishment of a parliamentary system. Liang even submitted a memorial to Governor Chen Baozheng in the wake of the German occupation of Jiaozhou in the winter of 1897, suggesting that Hunan, if necessary, should declare its independence from the central government in Peking.²⁹⁸ The activities of radical reformers in Hunan alarmed both the conservatives and also those who until then had been supporters of many of the reform programmes. The result was a split within the ranks of the reformers. Moderates now joined forces with the conservative gentry officials to attack the radicals and try to check their zeal.

²⁹⁶ See Deng Tanzhou, *Tan Sitong zhuanlun* (A critical biography of Tan Sitong) and Tang Caizhi, "Tang Caichang he Shiwu xuetang" (Tang Caichang and the School of Current Affairs) in *Hunan lishiziliao*, (Historical materials of Hunan), (1958) 3/98-108

²⁹⁷ For more details on the reform movement in Hunan, see Charlton M. Lewis, "The Hunanese Elite and the Reform Movement. 1895-1898" *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 29, (1969) 11/35-42.

²⁹⁸ See *WXBF*, Vol.2, p.533

Zhang Zhidong came out and openly condemned the radical reformers in Hunan. Zhang had followed events in Hunan closely. He was very angry about some articles being published in the *Xiang xuebao* which was controlled by radical reformers. On May 11, 1898, he sent two telegrams to Hunan severely reprimanding the officials concerned.²⁹⁹ In a letter to a friend, Tan Sitong wrote:

"Zhang Zhidong orders *Xiang xuebao* to change their statement about Confucius being a reformer, and lets the editors admit openly their mistake. The Commissioner [of Education in Hunan] has to obey. The words used by Zhang are very severe, and he also indicates that he intends to impeach them on these grounds. He treats Hunanese so cruelly!"³⁰⁰

When the reform agitation reached its height in Peking and Hunan in late 1897 and early 1898, Zhang Zhidong gradually began to take the offensive as the movement became more radical. He began to use his political and personal leverage to bend the reform movement toward his own position. On the other hand, the conservatives started to enlist Zhang's force to put a stop to the reform led by Kang in Peking. In the spring of 1898, Zhang was suddenly summoned to an imperial audience. When he arrived at Shanghai on his way to Peking, however, he was instructed to return to Wuchang to deal with an anti-foreign incident in Shashi, Hubei.³⁰¹ According to some sources, it was Xu Tong, a leader of the diehard scholar-officials in Peking, who initiated the move to bring Zhang Zhidong to Peking, and the Empress Dowager who approved it.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Ibid, pp.609-10.

³⁰⁰ Tan Sitong, *Tan Sitong quangji* (The completed works of Tan Sitong), p.366.

³⁰¹ See *WXBF*, Vol.1, p.334.

³⁰² Weng Tonghe made an entry concerning it in his diary, [in 2nd day, third month, Guangxu 24 year] which reads as follows "Two telegraph edicts: one in reply to Governor-General in Guangdong..... the other ordering Governor-General of Hu-Guang (Zhang Zhidong) to come to the capital for imperial audience complying with the request of Xu Tong. (Xu's memorial) was submitted to the empress dowager, such is her majesty's wish." Weng Tonghe, *Weng Tonghe renji paijinben*, Vol.5, p.2167, and also see Huang Jun, *Huasui rensheng zhiyi quanben*, p.554.

The question is, why should Xu Tong, the mortal enemy of reform, undertake to bring Zhang to Peking. At the time, Kang was gaining the favour and support of the Guangxu Emperor. The Emperor had made up his mind to introduce reform following Kang's suggestions. The conservatives could hardly try to stop the reform directly without challenging the Emperor's authority. As a result, some conservatives did not directly oppose the reform but tried to deflect it. Zhang Zhidong, as we have seen, was a recognized advocate of moderate reform. To the conservatives, Zhang's brand of reform was a lesser evil than Kang's. It is therefore plausible to suggest that Xu Tong may have wished to see Zhang summoned to Peking because Zhang was the most suitable man to counteract Kang's influence on the Emperor and to direct the reform movement into a different channel. If Zhang had been in Peking in 1898, even if he had not supplanted Kang as leader of the reform movement, at least Kang's position would have been greatly weakened.

The anti-foreign incident in Shashi seems not have been the only reason for the cancellation of Zhang's audience in Peking. Although the Qing government paid special attention to foreign relations and dealt cautiously with foreign interests, the anti-foreign incident in Shashi was not a serious one. Furthermore, although the incident was quickly settled, Zhang's summons to Peking was not renewed. It seems to have been the case that the incident was deliberately used to stop Zhang's visit to Peking. According to Huang Shangyi, a scholar at the time, it was Weng Tonghe who engineered Zhang's recall to Hubei.³⁰³ Although there is no conclusive evidence that this is so, Weng probably had reason not to like the prospect of Zhang's visit, and he had the power to prevent it. As we have

³⁰³ See Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bienfa renwu zhuangao*, Vol.1, p.104, and Li Zongtong, "Yang Shujiao guangxu wuxu zhi Zhang Wenxian hanba" (Introduction: the letters from Yang Rui to Zhang Zhidong) in *Dalu Zazhi*, Vol.19, (1959) 5/119.

seen, Weng and Zhang were both famous patrons of the *qingliu* group and well-known supporters of moderate reform. In early 1898, Weng was considered as the most powerful and influential high-ranking official to direct the reform programmes in Peking. However, Weng lacked experience both of foreign affairs and of the practical administration of regional reform. Zhang was superior to Weng in both respects. Furthermore, Zhang had not only advanced many reform projects as Governor-General, first of Liang-Guang, then of Liang-Jiang, and later of Hu-Guang, but also created a theoretical justification for moderate reform in his well-known book *Quanxue pian*. If Zhang had come to Peking, then by virtue of his prestige and knowledge on reform, he would have challenged Weng's leadership in the metropolitan reform movement. The suggestion that Weng may have taken measures to prevent Zhang's visit is therefore quite plausible. Zhang himself seems to have had an inkling of Weng's motives. Zhang later mentioned his relationship with Weng in a introduction to his poem written for Weng's brother:

"After he [Weng Tongshu³⁰⁴] was sent to jail, I went to see him twice. Thus it appears that I have quiet a good friendship with Weng's family. However, when Weng Tonghe served later at the Court as Prime Minister [Weng held the position from 1897], he ruined me to such an extent that I barely escaped death. I really cannot understand what evil thoughts led Weng do so."³⁰⁵

Although Zhang Zhidong was absent from Peking in 1898, Weng Tonghe failed not only to become the leader of the reform movement but also to hold his post. As a result, Kang Youwei emerged as leader of the reform movement, with the Guangxu Emperor's support. In these circumstances, the conservatives gave

³⁰⁴ Weng Tonghe's elder brother, a provincial Governor of Anhui, who failed in the campaign against the Taiping rebels in 1861, and was dismissed and put into jail. See Zhao Ersun ed, *QSG*, pp.12263-5.

³⁰⁵ Zhang Zhidong, *Gongya tang shiji* (A poetic works of Zhang Zhidong), p.20.

up the hope that the reform would be controlled by moderate officials such as Zhang Zhidong, and explored coercive methods for ending the movement. At the same time, some officials still made final efforts to appeal to the throne to call Zhang Zhidong to Peking. For example, when Yuan Shikai, who was regarded at the time as a supporter of moderate reform, had an audience with the Emperor on September 16, he asked for an edict to be issued to bring Zhang to Peking and into the central organs of government.³⁰⁶ A few days later, Chen Baozheng, the Governor of Hunan, memorialized to the effect that Zhang would be the ideal man to help direct the reform. Part of the memorial read as follows:

"Institutional reform is a very major issue. It must be an experienced and prudent official who has had a long career in conducting state affairs and has a clear mind to join the decision-making group of the confidential work (on reform). I see that Zhang Zhidong, the Governor-General of Hubei and Hunan, whose loyalty to the throne and whose knowledge and courage are already well known to your Majesty, has studied and examined carefully the good and bad points of the administrative systems of both China and Western countries. It seems that the throne should quickly call Zhang to Peking to direct the reform".³⁰⁷

However, the action of Chen and others came too late. The conflict between the conservatives and the radical reformers had already reached a climax, and then on September 21 the *coup d'état* which ended both the Hundred Days' Reform and the Emperor's rulership, took place.

Because Zhang had had a period of co-operation with Kang's reform group in the mid-1890s, he was concerned about his own political fortunes after the

³⁰⁶ See WXB Vol.2, p.614.

³⁰⁷ Xu Tongxin, *Zhang Wenxiang xiansheng nianpu* (The chronological biography of Zhang Zhidong), p.122.

coup d'état. There is an interesting story which shows how Zhang tried to cover up the facts of his relationship with Kang's reform group:

"When Zhang Zhidong held the post of acting Governor-General of Liang-Jiang, he once went on a sight-seeing trip to Mount Jiao. While there Zhang wrote a poem for the *Songliao ge* (Silent Pine Pavilion). In the poem he expressed his feeling of partiality towards reformers [it is possible that he meant Kang]. The monks in the pavilion had the poem mounted, and put it up on the wall. When the coup erupted in September, Liang Dingfen went with a small warship in great haste to Mount Jiao. He asked to have the poem back on the pretext that Zhang wanted to add some notes to it. He brought it back [to Wuchang] and burned it."³⁰⁸

Conclusion

Historians usually focus their attention on Kang's reform group when their studies relate to the late Qing reform movement. Undoubtedly, Kang Youwei and his followers were central figures in the Hundred Days Reform in 1898. However, on reviewing the reform movement as a whole, we find that the *qingliu* group played a more important role than did Kang's group. The origins of the late Qing reform movement can be traced back to the years of self-strengthening movement in the 1860s and the 1870s. The *qingliu* officials began to advocate the idea of "internal governance", and many of them turned to the idea of moderate institutional reform after the middle of the 1880s. Moreover, the *qingliu* officials stood in a leading position when the reform movement developed from earlier 1890s. The *qingliu* group did more to support and in fact possessed more power in promoting such reform projects as the *Qiangxue hui* in Peking and Shanghai, and the *Shiwu bao* than did Kang's reform group. There is no denying that Kang's group was closely associated with these projects, and

³⁰⁸ Wu Tianren, *Liang Jiean xiansheng nianpu*, p.135.

played an important role in them. However, Kang Youwei, as a new *jinshi* degree-holder in 1895, and Liang Qichao, still an aspirant to the degree, were not recognized by scholar-officials in general as leading figures in the reform. Kang had been excluded from the *Qiangxue hui* in Peking and Shanghai, and Liang Qichao also had been pushed out from the *Shiwu bao*. Although Kang and Liang had a prominence in the ideological field through their books and propaganda on reform, they had no power to implement their theories. All Kang and his followers could do was to appeal to the throne to introduce reform, and to go about drumming up support from individual officials. Kang's group itself lacked enough power to launch the reforms. It seems a reasonable conclusion that the *qingliu* group was the main political force promoting the reform movement in 1890s, but it did this with assistance of Kang and his group.

The *qingliu* group and Kang's group united to promote reform in the 1890s. However, "reform" meant different things to either side. To the *qingliu* officials, reform meant only adjustments to the administration and they did not envisage major institutional change, while Kang and his followers had an ambitious reform program involving radical changes in the existing ideological and institutional system. In 1898, Kang's group won a transient victory in acquiring the Guangxu Emperor's support, and reform along the radical lines proposed by Kang's group was inaugurated in the Hundred Days Reform. With Weng Tonghe's dismissal in June 1898, the *qingliu* officials wished to bring Zhang Zhidong to Peking to replace Weng's position as leader of the late *qingliu* group. They also wished that the reform movement would develop in a moderate way. The action of bringing Zhang to Peking, however, came to a premature end. As a result, the battle line was sharply drawn between Kang's group and the diehard conservatives. Kang and his followers were soon overwhelmed by their

opponents, who rallied around the powerful Empress Dowager, and the reform came to nothing.

When the Empress Dowager and her adherents put down the reform, they did not miss the chance to eliminate *qingliu* officials from political life. A number of officials who had previously co-operated with Kang's group and were regarded as sympathizers or supporters of either Weng's or Zhang's faction of the *qingliu* group, were dismissed and forced to leave Peking. Even some *qingliu* officials who had been dismissed earlier, did not escape from a further vindictive blows. For example, Weng Tonghe, who had been instructed to retire to his home in Jiangsu, was now given heavier punishment. An edict of December 1898 ordered that Weng "be deprived of his ranks and offices, permanently barred from official appointment, and handed over to local officials, who were to put him under strict discipline."³⁰⁹ Although Zhang Zhidong, who immediately took a clear-cut stand in support of the Empress Dowager, still kept his post, the power of the throne in Peking rested firmly in the hands of Ci Xi and her adherents. As a result, few *qingliu* officials remained in important positions in Peking, and the *qingliu* group did not have enough strength to continue to exist in the officialdom as a political group. The decline of the *qingliu* group, which was composed of elite orthodox scholar-officials who had played the most important role in the bureaucratic structure, presaged the Qing Empire's collapse.

³⁰⁹ See *WXB* Vol.2, p.112.

Bibliography

Abbreviations of titles cited works are listed below.

KYWN	<i>Kang Youwei zibian nianpu</i>
QSG	<i>Qingshi gao</i>
WXBF	<i>Wuxu bianfa</i>
WTHR	<i>Weng Tonghe riji paiyin ben</i>
YWYD	<i>Yangwu yundong</i>

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Glossar

<i>baimen dizi</i>	拜門弟子
<i>bangyan</i>	榜眼
<i>baohuang</i>	保皇
<i>Baoguo hui</i>	保國會
<i>ben-mo</i>	本末
<i>bianfa</i>	變法
<i>bitieshi</i>	筆帖式
<i>buhe</i>	不和
<i>Chang Lin</i>	長麟
<i>Chang Xu</i>	長叙
<i>Changsha</i>	長沙
<i>Chen Baozhen</i>	陳寶箴
<i>Chen Li</i>	陳禮
<i>Chun (Prince)</i>	醇
<i>Ci An</i>	慈安
<i>Ci Xi</i>	慈禧
<i>Daoguang</i>	道光
<i>Di Chuqing</i>	狄楚青
<i>Didang</i>	帝黨
<i>Duanxi</i>	端溪
<i>Fang Junyi</i>	方濬頤
<i>Feng Guifen</i>	馮桂芬
<i>Fujian</i>	福建
<i>Fuzhou</i>	福州
<i>Gao Xieceng</i>	高燮曾
<i>Gong (Prince)</i>	恭
<i>Gong Zhaoyu</i>	恭煦

<i>Gongche shangshu ji</i>	公車上書記
<i>Gongche shangshu</i>	公車上書
<i>Gongyang</i>	公羊
<i>Guangxu</i>	光緒
<i>Guangya</i>	廣雅
<i>Guozi jian</i>	國子監
<i>Han Wenju</i>	韓文舉
<i>Han</i>	漢
<i>Hanlin</i>	翰林
<i>Hanman fang</i>	汗漫舫
<i>Hanyu pinyin</i>	漢語拼音
<i>Hou qingliu</i>	後清流
<i>Hu-Guang</i>	湖廣
<i>Huai (army)</i>	淮
<i>Huang Zunxian</i>	黃遵憲
<i>Huyuan</i>	壺園
<i>Jian Chaoliang</i>	簡朝亮
<i>Jiang Biao</i>	江标
<i>Jiang Qiling</i>	蒋琦齡
<i>Jiaozhou</i>	膠州
<i>Jin (concubine)</i>	瑾
<i>Jin Yuying</i>	岑毓英
<i>Jin</i>	晉
<i>jingshi zhiyong</i>	經世致用
<i>Jingxin</i>	經心
<i>jinshi</i>	進士
<i>Jizhi</i>	季直
<i>juanna</i>	捐納
<i>jungong</i>	軍功

junzi	君子	nei-wai	內外
juren	舉人	neizhi	內治
Jüsheng	菊生	Ou Qujia	歐渠甲
Kangdang	康黨	Panyu	番禺
Kangxi	康熙	pengdang	朋黨
kejia	科甲	Pingxiang	萍鄉
Kongzi gaizhi kao,	《孔子改制考》	Qiangxue bao	“強學報”
Li Fenbao	李鳳苞	Qiangxue hui	強學會
Li Hongzhang	李鴻章	Qianlong	乾隆
Li Lianying	李蓮英	qing	清
Li Zhen	李振	qingbai	清白
li	禮	qinggao	清高
Liang-Guang	兩廣	qinglian	清廉
Liang-Hu	兩湖	qingliu	清流
Liang-Jiang	兩江	qingya	清雅
Lin Xu	林旭	qingyi	清議
Lin Zexu	林則徐	qingzheng	清正
Lingde	陵德	ren	仁
Lishan	禮山	Rong Lu	榮祿
Liu Xin	劉歆	sangang	三綱
mendi	門弟	Shen Baozhen	沈葆楨
mensheng	門生	Shen bao	“申報”
mianzidang	面子黨	shengyuan	生員
mingshi	名士	shidafu	士大夫
minquan	民權	Shidu xueshi	侍讀學士
Mufu	幕府	Shiwu bao	“時務報”
Nanhai guan	南海館	Shiwu xuetang	時務學堂
Nanhai	南海	shiwu	時務
Nanyang	南陽	shixue	實學

shouyie dizi	授業弟子	Weng Tongshu	翁同書
sidang	私黨	Wo Ren	倭仁
sishu dizi	私塾弟子	Xianfeng	咸丰
Song Bolu	宋伯魯	Xiang (army)	湘
Songliao ge	松寥閣	Xiangqing	穰卿
Songyun an	松筠菴	xiangtu	鄉土
Sun Yiyan	孫依言	Xiangxue bao	“湘學報”
Sun Yuwen	孫毓汶	xiao	孝
Taiping	太平	xiaoren	小人
Tan Sitong	譚嗣同	Xijiao	西樵
Tang Caichan	唐才常	xin	新
tanhua	探花	Xingbu langzhong	刑部郎中
Taoran ting	陶然亭	xinwenjing pai	新文經派
ti-yong	體用	Xinxue weijing kao	“新學偽經考”
Ting Jiachang	田家昌	xinxue	新學
Titiao	提調	xiucai	秀才
tongnian chilu	同年齒錄	Xu Renlu	徐仁錄
tongnian	同年	Xu Tong	徐桐
Tongwen guan	同文館	Xu Yingkui	許應駙
Tongxiang hui	同鄉會	Xu Zhijing	徐致靜
tongxiang	同鄉	Xue Fuchen	薛福成
Tongzhi	同治	Xuehai tang	學海堂
Wang Daxie	汪大燮	Xunhuan ribao	“循環日報”
Wang Mingluan	汪鳴鑾	Yang Shenxiu	楊深秀
Wang Pengyun	王鵬運	yangren	洋人
Wang Tao	王弼	yangwu	洋務
Wang Zhao	王照	Yanhu lou	烟許樓
Wanguo gongbao	“萬國公報”	Ye Dehui	葉德輝
Wanmu caotang	萬木草堂	Ye Juemai	葉覺邁

Ye Zhichao	葉志超	Zhu Ciqi	朱次琦
yi	夷	Zhu Wen	朱溫
yi	義	Zhu Xi	朱熹
yijing	易經	zhuangyuan	狀元
yilang	議郎	Zhuge Liang	諸葛亮
yiren	夷人	zhuoliu	濁流
yiwu	夷務	Zipei	子培
Yiyuan	意園	ziquang	自強
Yongzheng	雍正	zongli yamen	總理衙門
Yu Shihei	于式晦	Zunjing	尊經
Yu Yinlin	于蔭霖	Zuo Zhongtang	左宗棠
Yuanming (park)	圓明	zuoshi	座師
Yunge	雲閣	zuozhu	座主
Zeng Guofan	曾國藩		
Zhang Dinghua	張鼎華		
Zhang Weiping	張維屏		
Zhang Yanqiu	張延秋		
Zhang Yinhuan	張蔭桓		
Zhang Yuanji	張元濟		
Zhen (concubine)	珍		
zhengdun	整頓		
zhengshi	正士		
zhengtu	正途		
zhi	智		
Zhili	直隸		
zhong	忠		
Zhonggou gonghui	中國公會		
Zhongshan	鍾山		
Zhongtao	仲弢		