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1 Introduction

1.1 Introductory remarks

Today the school subject geography is hardly the major channel through which knowledge about the nation, or the world at large, is gained, either in the West or in the East. But a century ago, a textbook in geography was one of few easily accessible sources for common people which provided systematized information about the world.

Geography textbooks of the early 20th century dealt with the physical features of the earth surface, geological conditions, climate, natural and political divisions, production and population. In that respect they did not perhaps differ significantly from the geography textbooks which are used today. However, geography during the early 20th century, even more than today, shared common ground with other fields of study such as history, sociology and anthropology, which was also reflected in the geography textbooks. Hence school geography offered a broader spectrum of “knowledge” than today, but on the other hand it was deeply coloured by racism, chauvinism and romanticizing about an imagined glorious past, besides having a strong faith in development and progress.

The mass production of textbooks and the popularization of general education for the broad masses during the late 19th and early 20th centuries helped to spread the idea that the inhabitants of a given state, although most of them had certainly never met each other, shared a common past (perhaps even a common destiny) as members of the same nation (or, to quote Benedict Anderson, they belonged to the same “imagined community”).

Undoubtedly, school geography played an important role in this process. That is, the geography textbooks taught schoolchildren in what respects they were similar to or different from people in foreign countries, or for that matter from peoples in other regions of their own nation.

In 1901 the Qing regime, in power 1644-1911, took wide-ranging measures to reform the Chinese empire, and fundamental changes were carried out within the field of education, resulting in the completion of China’s first modern educational system in 1904. Modern schools mushroomed across China with the abolition of the ancient examination system in 1905, and modern textbooks introducing new non-traditional knowledge became common reading in the classrooms, along with the Chinese Classics. Thanks to modern geography

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textbooks schoolchildren got a glimpse of the world outside their own local community and were informed about the circumstances in other provinces and, to some extent, about the conditions in countries beyond the empire. Thus geography textbooks gave them an idea of their own nation, in relation to the rest of the world, and were probably the closest most people ever came to a journey across their nation, not to mention a trip abroad.

This study deals primarily with issues that concern images of the peoples of the multiethnic Qing Empire, as encountered in a wide range of textbooks and other teaching materials on the school subject of geography that were used at various institutions of modern learning during the closing years of the Qing dynasty in the first decade of the 20th century. The main focus is on the Han Chinese majority of China Proper (i.e. the eighteen provinces), although this study also deals with the minorities of China Proper, as well as the ethnicities of Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan (at that time a Japanese colony) and the neighbouring countries of Korea and Japan. Korea and Japan are both countries which have been greatly exposed to the influence of Chinese high-culture, and they both belong to the same Confucian cultural sphere that shares the use of Chinese characters.

The images in Chinese geography textbooks from the early 20th century of the peoples of East Asia cannot be dealt with comprehensively without taking into consideration the large imprint Japan left on China, especially in the field of education, after Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The late Qing era was heavily influenced by Japanese approaches towards reforms and modernization, and new perceptions of the world in Japan did not pass Chinese educationalists unnoticed. Cultural impulses which had previously run eastwards from China to the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago went in the reverse direction at the end of the Qing dynasty, from the militarily strong Japan towards a weakened China.
1.2 Points of departure and aims of this study

Before more specifically addressing the aims of this study, I would first like to give a summary of some of the arguments of James Morris Blaut in his *The Colonizer’s Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, which has been a source of reflection throughout the writing of this thesis.

According to Blaut, “Eurocentric diffusionism”, that is, the idea that cultural processes proceed from a European “Inside” (Blaut counts other regions dominated by European culture, such as the United States, as “European”) towards a non-European “Outside”, has been a fundamental principle of European historical and geographical scholarship. During the middle of the 19th century, European schoolchildren were taught that Africans and Asians were fallen heathens because they had been unwilling to embrace the true God. People outside of Europe were considered to be less intelligent, less upright and less brave than Europeans, if not altogether less human. Indians and Chinese possessed “barbaric” civilizations, but since these peoples were non-European pagans, their civilizations had also long been in a state of stagnation or degeneration. Only Europeans possessed true civilization, while the Indian and Chinese high cultures were “Oriental despotisms”, freedom being an unknown concept to these non-Europeans. Everything of importance was considered to have been taken place in “Greater Europe”, that is geographical Europe and the Bible Lands, the latter imagined as the ancient cultural cradle of Europe, and hence seen as something of an extended part of Europe of ancient times (but not of modern times). It lay somewhere in the south-eastern part of “Greater Europe” where the Garden of Eden had once stood and where human history began when God created Adam and Eve.

During the late nineteenth century, education in Europe became more secular and the above narrative was given an evolutionary touch, but the Eurocentric perspective remained the same, all developments of importance still being placed in “Greater Europe”. Cro-Magnon, the European cave man, was seen as the first “true man”, and the invention of agriculture was located somewhere within “Greater Europe”, that is, continental Europe or the Bible Lands. The torch of civilization was seen as having been passed on from the Semites of the Bible Lands, the inventors of cities and empires and the first makers of history, to another

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3 Ibid., 3.
Caucasoid people, the freedom-loving Indo-Europeans, who gave rise to superior Greek and Roman civilizations, and finally the civilization of modern Europe. Thus history was imagined as having progressed from the Bible Lands towards continental Europe. The images of Africans and Asians largely remained the same as during the mid-nineteenth century, but by the turn of the century, a theory arguing that non-Europeans, under European guidance (i.e. under European colonial tutorage), could be “helped” to proceed towards more advanced forms of development and perhaps even reach the realms of “real” civilization, had become standard within the framework of the world geography taught to schoolchildren.4

If we consider “Eurocentric diffusionism” to be a discourse underlying more or less all explanatory models for understanding the world in historical and geographical scholarship, how then did Chinese educators, when introducing modern geography as a subject in the new schools, deal with China implicitly being placed in a peripheral and recipient “Outside”? I find Blaut’s points of view rather convincing and largely accept his arguments that modern historical and geographical scholarship is to a great extent based upon a Eurocentric worldview. I nevertheless believe that there are good reasons to assume that the Chinese educators were unwilling to be subjected to the Eurocentric paradigm. The starting point for my investigation is that geography, as a modern subject in the new schools, had to be re-interpreted in order to better fit the new environment.

As pointed out by Blaut, “Eurocentric diffusionism” sometimes appears as a model of the world in which mankind is divided into different zones representing the different degrees of supposed inventiveness and progressiveness, the classical division being “civilization”, “barbarism” and “savagery” — with European civilization constituting the explicit centre.5 But did Chinese geography textbooks employ the same (or similar) divisions, and how then were the imagined different stages of human development introduced to young Chinese people? Is Europe simply described as the cradle of civilization where everything had once upon a time begun, and is China, and the rest of Asia for that matter, merely described as a passive recipient, or do the teaching materials suggest an alternative, non-Eurocentric worldview? Blaut notes that racism and environmental deterministic theories have commonly been employed in order to explain the alleged unique or superior qualities of Europe and Europeans.6 How then were these issues dealt with in Chinese textbooks?

4 Ibid., 4.
5 Ibid.,14.
6 Ibid., 61.
This study is, however, complicated by the fact that the Chinese textbook compilers did not only deal with ideas that sprang from European interpretations of the world. Rather, they first and foremost had to face a complex Japanese worldview in which the conceptions of China, although largely based on originally European ideas of China as a stagnant and hopelessly backward Empire, also mirror Japanese constructions that similarly place China in an unfavourable position relative to an allegedly superior Japan. In order to satisfactorily answer the questions put forward in this thesis, it is therefore necessary to consider the implications this context suggests.

In my view, to overlook the Japanese influences on China during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and altogether to ignore the extent to which scholarship of originally Western origin usually passed through a Japanese filter before being adopted in China, is indeed a highly Eurocentric (and hence far from objective) approach, when analyzing the history of ideas found in Chinese textbooks during the closing years of the Qing dynasty. Thus this study deals to a great extent with the ways in which Chinese educators, from a native perspective, responded to early modern Japanese interpretations of the world. More specifically, it examines what kind of worldview, and what kind of Chinese self-images this response generated. However, this study also aims at examining how Chinese educators sought equality with the West and Japan, when faced with a discourse in which China was always placed in an inferior position. I assume that the general picture of the Han people in Chinese textbooks to a great extent mirrors originally foreign preconceived ideas about Asians in general and the Chinese in particular, although this predominantly negative picture, which came along with the adoption of modern human geography, is nevertheless balanced with testimonies of alleged Chinese meritorious, sometimes even superior, qualities.

The Qing Empire was far from being a culturally or linguistically homogeneous entity. Nevertheless, the Han majority shared similar customs and practices, and the literate part of the population of China Proper shared the same written language. As revealed by Wolfram Eberhard, Chinese regional stereotypes can often be traced far back in Chinese history, and it is very likely that many of the textbooks’ notions of what supposedly distinguishes the inhabitants of the different provinces from each other are of native origin. But what then are the stereotypes one comes across in the textbooks? Is it possible to discern a pattern behind the ways in which people in the different parts of China are imagined? Furthermore, what are the pictures painted of the many non-Han groups that also inhabit China Proper?

The rulers of the Qing dynasty belonged to a non-Han minority, the Manchus. The Manchus were admirers of Chinese culture, both before and after the seizure of China, and after the invasion during the 17th century, they largely stuck to old Ming ideology and ways of governing. The crème of educated men continued to be the Confucian civil servants who, although now dependent on the Manchu rulers, functioned as the very representatives of the Middle Kingdom (and civilized ways in general). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, educated men who were oriented towards modernization were not necessarily anti-Manchu but instead often willing, if not even eager, to preserve the dynasty. However, although the Manchus were unquestionably strongly sinicised, a process which had progressed with increasing strength ever since their seizure of power, they de facto had a cultural background different from their subjects, the ethnic Chinese. During the late Qing period, anti-Manchu racism was a common theme in the propaganda forwarded by the revolutionaries who sought to overthrow the dynasty, and the Chinese students who studied in Japan, an increasingly influential segment of the educated youth as formers of public opinion, tended to glorify the legacies of ancient China before the Mongolian and Manchurian conquests.

How then are the Manchus described in the textbooks compiled by educators from the Han majority? And what about the other peoples of the Inner Asian Zone such as Mongols, Tibetans and Uighurs, all of whom have their own languages and distinct non-Han cultures?

Interactions between individuals and groups within pre-modern Chinese society were dictated by what might be referred to as the correct codes of conduct (i.e. li, often translated as “rituals”, “etiquette” or “decorum”), which set the rules for correct behaviour in terms of dominant-subordinate relations based on the premises of status, age and gender. Chinese

9 The famous statesman Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), for example, might be regarded as something of a “Confucian patriot”, who harboured deep concern for China, unconscious of any conflicting loyalties in serving the Manchu throne while trying to uphold the independence of China and the Chinese people. Liu Kwang-ching, “The Confucian as Patriot and Pragmatist: Li Hung-changs’s Formative Years, 1823-1866”, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 30 (1970), 43. Another example is the famous scholar Kang Youwei (1858-1927), who although forced to exile in Japan after his failed attempts to reform and modernize the Qing Empire in 1898, never questioned the legitimacy of the regime.
diplomatic practices followed a somewhat similar pattern. That is, Chinese foreign policy strongly emphasized the importance of *li*, here in terms of the correct codes of conduct between China and foreign countries. This order implied the supremacy of China as the civilized centre over a more or less barbarian periphery. Much of China’s interactions with the outer world were administered through the so-called tributary system, stressing the dominant position of China as the Middle Kingdom and the subordinate role of the more or less civilized tributaries. The degree to which China’s tributaries were sinicised varied, but Korea had accepted Chinese culture most extensively, so its status was high, the Korean envoys frequenting the Chinese court more than those of any other tributary during the Ming and Qing dynasties. After its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Qing lost all influence over its former vassal state Korea, which was now declared an independent imperial power. In reality, this meant that Korea was lost to Japan, a country which hitherto had been of little concern to most Chinese, but which from now on became the focus of interest for progressive intellectuals. How then are Korea and the Koreans described in the textbooks at a time when China’s traditional pattern for foreign relations had become completely invalid? And what is the image given of Japan, a country which functioned as the main source of inspiration in the attempts to reform China during the late Qing period, although, at the same time, it was emerging as an alarming threat in the northeast? Japan had expanded its territory during the 19th century, colonizing the island of Hokkaido in the north, incorporating the former kingdom of the Ryukyu Islands (now a Japanese prefecture under the name Okinawa), and turning Taiwan (ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War) into a Japanese colony. How are the ethnic groups of non-Japanese origin within the Japanese Empire, such as the Ainu people of Hokkaido and the Taiwanese aboriginals, described in the Chinese textbooks? 

As pointed out by Blaut, textbooks, more than other written documents, are valuable sources for understanding what the opinion-forming elite in a given culture wants their youth to accept as true about the past and the present world. In short, this study attempts to increase the understanding of what the Chinese opinion-forming elite, or the Qing authorities for that matter, wanted their young people to know about the past and the world. The intellectuals during the end of the Qing dynasty can largely be categorized as either revolutionaries, who wanted to overthrow the Manchu rule, or reformers, who sought to

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14 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 118-119; Howland, 15.
15 Blaut, 6.
change the empire through politically more moderate ways. While the former promoted Han-Chinese nationalism and only advocated the “preservation of the race and the state” (i.e. the Han-Chinese majority and a Chinese state without Manchu suzerainty), the latter advocated a “greater nationalism” (da minzuzhuyi 大民族主義), which included all “yellow people” within the empire, and sought to “preserve Confucius and the emperor”. Some of the textbook compilers might indeed have sympathised to a greater or lesser extent with the revolutionaries, but since the Qing regime set the educational policies and controlled the educational system, it must be assumed that it is mostly reformist ideas that are voiced through the textbooks, and that any criticism of the ruling dynasty is presented in a rather subtle way.

The Shanghai-based Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan, founded in 1897), the leading publishing house on the textbook market during the early 20th century (more about that below), had an editorial office which supported the idea of constitutional reform of the monarchy, and it might be assumed that this stance was also reflected in the textbooks published by that company. Nevertheless, fervent revolutionaries and more moderate reformers alike all wanted change towards a strong, modern and united China.

Textbooks for schoolchildren offer rather simplified worldviews, and the self-images and the images of foreign peoples presented tend to be highly stereotypical. The images, both those of their own nation and those of foreign peoples, do not necessarily reflect the general worldview at the time the textbooks were published. Rather, as already suggested above, they indicate what leading educators and/or the authorities find is correct or suitable for youngsters to know. Geography and history are the school subjects in which knowledge of the world is usually communicated. Unlike history textbooks, however, geography textbooks primarily present images of peoples, cultures and societies by passing judgments on the present state of affairs, with the perspective of here and now. Hence, old geography textbooks provide us with frozen pictures of how the opinion-forming elite, or the political establishment for that matter, at a certain point in history, wanted the young generation to perceive the world.

It is likely that some aspects of Chinese identity-making are not covered in this study. In order to get an all-inclusive and thoroughly comprehensive picture of all the images of the peoples of the Qing Empire presented to young Chinese people within the framework of the new educational system of the early 20th century, it would be necessary to consider all the

16 Frank Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China (London: Hurst & Company, 1992), 97.
teaching materials, in all school subjects at all school levels, produced at the time. This is however beyond the scope of this thesis.

1.3 Previous research

To my knowledge, there is no previous research on the Chinese self-images in the first modern geography textbooks used within the framework of China’s first national educational system during the early 20th century. As for studies on Chinese geographical works from the mid-19th century originally based on Western accounts on geography, there are two major ones: Jane Kate Leonard’s famous study on Wei Yuan’s *Haiguo tuzhi* (Gazetteer and maps of the maritime world, 1847), and Fred Drake’s research on Xu Jiyu’s *Yinghuan zhiliüe* (A brief description of the ocean circuit, 1848).\(^\text{18}\)

Numerous works have examined Western images of China, such as Jonathan D. Spence’s *The Chan’s Great Continent: China in Western Minds*, Raymond Dawson’s *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization*, Colin Mackerras’ *Western Images of China*, and Kenneth Nyberg’s *Bilder av Mittens rike: Kontinuitet och förändring i svenska resenärers Kinaskildringar 1749-1912* (Images of the Middle Kingdom: Continuity and Change in Swedish Travelers’ Accounts of China, 1749-1912).\(^\text{19}\) The national images of China, as encountered in Western and Japanese textbooks, have been more or less thoroughly analyzed in a number of different studies, such as Ruth Miller Elson’s research on American schoolbooks of the 19th century, Lena Olsson’s research on Swedish geography textbooks 1870-1985, Harold J. Wray’s research on Japanese school textbooks of 1903 and 1941-5, and Takeuchi Keiichi’s writings on the views of foreign countries in Japanese textbooks 1868-1986.\(^\text{20}\) The Chinese response to foreign images of

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\(^{20}\) Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964); Lena Olsson, *Kulturkunskap i förändring: Kultursynen i svenska...*
China appears nevertheless to be a somewhat neglected theme within the field of East Asian studies — and in particular the Chinese reaction to Japanese images of East Asia.

At an early stage of writing this thesis, Geography and National Identity, edited by David Hooson, and Geography and Empire, edited by Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, turned my interest towards geography as a tool for nationalistic and political purposes, while The Role of Japan in Liang Qichao’s Introduction of Modern Western Civilization, edited by Joshua A. Fogel, attracted me to the idea of further examining the links between Japan and China during the early 20th century. Ishikawa Yoshihiro’s chapter “Liang Qichao, the Field of Geography in Meiji Japan (1868-1912), and Geographical Determinism” more specifically directed my attention towards the nationalistic Japanese geographer Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), whose ideas, as will be shown in this thesis, had a great impact on the school geography of the late Qing period.

Marianne Bastid’s Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century initially opened my eyes to the extreme extent to which China during the early 20th century was influenced by Japanese (and not in the first place by European) patterns of reform during the attempts to modernize education in the Qing Empire. As pointed out by Bastid, new Western influence on education reached China entirely via Japan and the missionaries influence on educational reform was, at least until 1912, extremely limited. Qing officials and the Chinese gentry admired the accomplishments of Japan, a nation supposedly culturally close to China, and which had managed to modernize and withstand the Western powers, but not on the expence of giving up its ancient ways. Officials and gentry were not interested in what the Western missionaries had to offer:

Proud of their status as scholars, they were not willing to be treated scornfully as heathen. They were suspicious of the missionaries’ political motives and considered, justifiable, that the majority of missionary schools were not worthwhile from an intellectual point of view and, since China was seeking the development of material

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23 Ibid., 44.
culture, that it was better to look elsewhere. Finally, the missionaries stressed the importance of the individual and not one’s duties towards the state; this went against both the gentry’s Confucian sensibilities and their ideas of current national needs. One must not be deceived by the treaty port newspapers, which are always cited because they are the most accessible; by the missionary pamphlets; or by biased historiography.  

Insights gained from Douglas R. Reynolds’ *The Xingzheng Revolution and Japan* also held back my first impulse to understand the contents in the Chinese geography textbooks as Chinese interpretations of European texts, coloured by European “Orientalism” and brought to East Asia by Western missionaries. Yue Him-Tam’s observations on the heavy Japanese influences on China’s first modern educational system and Wang Feng-Gang’s dissertation *Japanese Influence on Educational Reform in China, from 1895 to 1911* have also contributed to convincing me that I should once and for all abandon my initial, one-eyed approach.

As emphasized by Yue-him Tam, the Qing government’s educational reforms were carried out by inspiration drawn from Japan, something which has largely been overlooked as a subject of research and has hardly been seriously dealt with since Wang Feng-Gang presented his dissertation in the early 1930s. Wang Feng-Gang’s work contains the following observation, which suggests that Japan’s role in China’s educational reforms has been deliberately toned down:

> The repeated but unjustified opinion that the modern educational system of China was copied directly from Occidental nations was the result of the propaganda of the missionaries and the Chinese prejudice against the Japanese. Western missionaries in general have the natural tendency to overrate their own educational influence in China; while the Chinese in general, on account of their disappointment in the policy of the Japanese government and their own reform efforts, have underestimated (or have been ashamed to speak about) Japanese influence on educational reform in their own country. As has been remarked, Japan’s acts of aggression in Manchuria had aroused resentment in China, and the Revolution of 1911 had turned the attention of China’s leaders from Japan to the republics of the west. When the “Twenty-one Demands” were made public, the suspicion and hatred that arose in the hearts of patriotic Chinese have persisted through all the subsequent years.

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24 Ibid., 49.
27 Tam, 62, 77 note 2.
28 Wang Feng-Gang, 159.
Reynolds, who mentions Wang’s dissertation as an important initial source of inspiration, follows a similar train of thought, arguing that the late 19th century and early 20th century was something of a “Golden Decade” of close Sino-Japanese relations. He suggests that the bitter memory of the Japanese invasion between 1937 and 1945, alongside a lingering sense of guilt on the Japanese side, still hampers both Chinese and Japanese scholars from gaining a better understanding of the period in question.\(^{29}\) Reynolds stresses the important role played by the many, albeit rather anonymous intellectuals who rendered large numbers of Japanese books into Chinese during the end of the Qing dynasty, despite the rather poor quality of their translations.\(^{30}\)

According to Reynolds, of all the books translated classroom textbooks had the strongest and most lasting influence on Chinese thinking and Chinese society.\(^{31}\) Further on, the story of the publishing house which totally dominated the textbook market during the early 20th century, Commercial Press — a Sino-Japanese joint venture 1903-1913, “befits the theme of a Golden Decade forgotten, with emphasis on forgotten”.\(^{32}\)

The textbooks examined in this thesis, many of which were published by Commercial Press, do not belong to the category of direct translations. Nevertheless, one cannot close one’s eyes to the Japanese influence. Christopher A. Reed’s recent work *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* fully reveals the tremendous importance of Commercial Press during the early 20th century, but also draws attention to the Japanese interests in the company. Reed notes than Jiang Weiqiao (b. 1874), who had a prominent position at the company as the textbook editor, carefully avoids mentioning in his memoir “Bianji xiaoxue jiaokeshu zhi huiyi, 1897-1905” [Reminiscences of editing primary school textbooks, 1897-1905] (1957) the Japanese presence at the editorial meetings which were held to discuss the textbooks’ contents and design. In fact, the meetings were also attended by representatives from the Japanese publishing house Kinkōdō, which held half the shares of the publishing house.\(^{33}\) Jiang’s unwillingness to discuss the Japanese influences on the textbooks, it might be suspected, were likely to be due to the general desire to repress the memory of Sino-Japanese cooperation in the field of education during the late Qing period. This close Sino-Japanese cooperation was, as pointed out by Reed, probably one of the main formulas for the success enjoyed by the Commercial Press during the closing years of the Qing dynasty:

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\(^{29}\) Reynolds, 6.  
\(^{30}\) Ibid., 123.  
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 117.  
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 121.  
\(^{33}\) Reed, 198.
Between 1904 and 1911, the Commercial Press became unstoppable. It utterly dominated the previously unmined and indeed largely undiscovered textbook market. Textbooks on a wide range of topics, including specialized books for normal schools and girls’ schools, followed. The Sino-Japanese editorial office may have been just as vital to the strength of the Commercial Press as had been its reorganization as a joint-stock limited liability company.³⁴

Taking into consideration the impact Japanese ideas had on Chinese educators, and the extent to which Japan played a role within the sphere of modern education in China during the early 20th century, knowledge produced in the field of Japanology is of great benefit when analysing the national images presented in Chinese geography textbooks. Stefan Tanaka’s *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Past into History*, T. Fujitani’s *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney’s *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* are examples of some of the works which have given me important insights into the mechanisms behind the formation of national identities in Japan during the Meiji period.³⁵

James Reeve Pusey’s *China and Charles Darwin*, Frank Dikötter’s *Discourse of Race in Modern China* and *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Frank Dikötter, have greatly contributed to my understanding of the Chinese intellectual environment during the early 20th century, when stale ideas, based on Social Darwinism and racism, were largely accepted by leading educators.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., 199.
1.4 Primary material

The Chinese teaching materials on geography examined in this study range from textbooks used at the lowest levels in the new educational system to those used at the highest level. Perhaps it is needless to say that textbooks aimed at small children, in that they avoid all too abstract and theoretical reasoning, differ from teaching materials used at higher levels of studies. Originally, my intention was to focus on textbooks used in elementary education. However, in order to get a better understanding of the ideas mirrored in the primary textbooks, I started to examine teaching materials used in middle schools, normal schools and at the university level, and finally decided to also include this material in my study.

In my analysis, I will focus on the sections in the teaching materials which discuss human geography, especially descriptions concerning progress, race, temperament, customs, religion, government systems, social structures and education. The extent to which human geography is discussed varies from textbook to textbook, so some of the textbooks are consulted more frequently than others.

Since this thesis also touches upon Japanese images of different peoples in various parts of East Asia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, I will, for obvious reasons, also refer to relevant passages in a range of Japanese geography textbooks. The main focus, however, is never on the Japanese textbooks but on their Chinese counterparts.

As already mentioned above, a large part of the textbooks examined consists of various textbooks published by Commercial Press, China’s most prominent publishing house and the main supplier of classroom literature recommended by the Qing school authorities. 37 Although entirely written in Chinese, some of the textbooks published by Commercial Press have been given additional English titles, which I use (sometimes in abbreviated forms) when referring to them. The Chinese textbooks examined are as follows:

Chen Qiansheng 陳乾生 (1879-1942), Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian 小學萬國地理新編 [A newly compiled primary school geography of all nations], published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1902. Two volumes. Chen Qiansheng is the school name of Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), one of the earliest Chinese Marxists who, together with Li Dazhao (1889-1927), founded the Chinese Communist party. This popular textbook was largely based on Japanese

37 See section 2.5 below.
teaching materials in geography which Chen had encountered during his studies in Tokyo. The textbook was apparently compiled before Chen had turned into a fullfledged revolutionary and still believed in constitutional monarchism as a means to modernize China.

*Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu* 高等小學地理教科書 [A geography textbook for the higher primary school]. This textbook was published in Beijing by the Ministry of Education’s section for translating and editing textbooks (Xuebu bianyi tushuju 學部編譯圖書局) in 1910. Although the Ministry of Education (also referred to as “the Board of Education” at the time) had been established as early as December 1905, it obviously did not edit its first geography textbook for the higher primary school until five years later. The textbook is of rather poor quality compared with the textbooks published by Commercial Press and appears to have been put together in a rush. Notably, this textbook in four volumes altogether ignores the cultural diversity of China, hardly touches upon human geography and gives no detailed descriptions of the many peoples within the Empire. The absence of themes related to ethnicity is most likely explained by the sensitivity of these issues to the Qing government. Nevertheless, the textbook passes judgement on the peoples of Korea and Japan in the lessons on these countries, which to a great extent appear to have been based on the corresponding lessons in Xie Honglai’s geography textbook for the higher primary school (see below). Many employees at the Ministry of Education’s textbook section had studied in Japan, among them Chen Baoquan 陳寶泉, who supervised the compilation of the textbooks.

*Guan Qi* 管圻, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu* 初等小學中國地理新教科書 [New geography textbook on China for the lower primary school]. Three volumes. This textbook, compiled in accordance with the regulations issued by the authorities, was published in Shanghai in 1906 by the publishing house Lequn tushu bianyiju, and was used at the third, fourth and fifth years in the lower primary school (schoolchildren about 9-11 years old). Each volume corresponds to one year of study, provided that one lesson is given each week. If two classes of geography are taught each week, the first hour should preferably be spent on explaining details on the maps and letting the school children draw maps themselves.

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38 Anne Shen Chao, *Chen Duxiu’s Early Years: The Importance of Personal Connections in the Social Intellectual Transformation of China 1895-1920* (PhD diss., Rice University, Houston 2009), 84 note 3, 96-97.
40 Ibid.
In order to arouse the interest of the schoolchildren, and thereby stimulate the memorizing of geographical knowledge, this textbook was written in the form of a travelogue.

Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa 初等小學中國地理新教科書教授法 [A teaching manual for New geography textbook on China for the lower primary school]. This is the teacher’s manual to the textbook listed above, also published by Lequn tushu bianyiju in 1906. Three volumes. The manual gives an idea of what the schoolchildren might have been taught by their teachers in the classroom, in addition to what they read in their textbook. Most of the teachers were unfamiliar with modern education, and the manual’s explanatory passages, which match the lessons in the textbook, were probably of great help to them.

Han Pucun 韓樸存, Jingshi yixueguan yudixue jiangyi 京師譯學官輿地學講義 [Capital college of translation’s lectures on world geography]. Published in Beijing by Jingshi yixueguan in 1905. This textbook was aimed at a highly educated and privileged group of young men, about 20-24 years old, who studied at Beijing’s most prestigious school of languages (5 yrs of study). Much of the contents is very similar to, or identical with, what is found in Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi [The Imperial University’s lectures on Chinese geography], compiled by Zou Daijun (see below).

Hou Hongjian 侯鴻鑾, Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu 中等地理教科書 [An intermediate geography textbook]. The compiler explains that, when researching geography in Tokyo, he got hold of various teaching materials compiled by the Japanese geographer Yazu Masanaga (1863-1922). After Hou’s return to China one year later, he started to work as a higher primary teacher in geography and began to put together his material in order to suit schoolchildren (about 14-15 years old) in the third or fourth year in the higher primary school. However, many of the accounts in Hou’s textbook in fact reveal such strong similarities with what is found in Shiga Shigetaka’s writings on geography that the only conclusion that can be drawn is that much of the contents in the textbook came originally from Shiga. According to the information on the cover and on the last page, this textbook was published by Wenming shuju in Shanghai in the year of Yiwei 乙未 (here the ancient system which combines “Heavenly Stems” and “Earthly Branches” to design years has been employed), which roughly corresponds to the year 1895. In the foreword, on the other hand, the compiler
mentions that he studied in Japan in the year of Guimao, which roughly corresponds to 1903. Moreover, the foreword is concluded with a remark which clarifies that it was written during the winter of Bingwu, i.e. towards the end of 1906. Since for obvious reasons this book cannot have been put together before the compiler became familiar with modern geography in Japan, the only possible conclusion is that it must have been published after the compiler wrote his foreword in 1906.

Hu Shidan 胡師澹, *Lujiang gongli zhongxuetang dili jiangyi* (Sine loco, sine anno, probably published during the opening years of the 20th century). This teaching material accompanied a series of lectures which also includes lectures on history and physiology (*Lujiang gongli zhongxuetang dili jiangyi lishi jiangyi shengli jiangyi*), aimed at students (15-20 years old) who studied at the middle school (5 yrs of study after the higher elementary school).

*Shijie dili* 世界地理 [World geography]. This textbook was compiled and published in 1902 by the publishing house Zuoxinshe, located in the English concession in Shanghai but was printed by Shūeisha Kabushiki-Gaisha in Tokyo. The publishing and printing dates are given in accordance with Japanese chronology, which states that it was first published in Meiji 35 (i.e. in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of the Meiji Emperor). One of the main forces behind the publishing house Zuoxinshe was the anti-Qing society Xingzhonghui (Revive China Society) founded by Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen, 1866-1925), which probably explains why the publishing and printing dates are not given according to Qing chronology (the textbook was published during the reign of the Guangxu Emperor). This textbook, apparently aimed at higher education, is, according to the introduction, a compilation of translations from different sources put together for the special purpose of meeting the needs of a Chinese textbook, so it is allegedly different from textbooks directly translated from foreign languages. It claims that while Western geography textbooks often overlook the Orient, this textbook gives more emphasis to Asian countries. All non-East Asian place names are written in Japanese *furigana*, alongside the Chinese characters, to give the Japanese pronunciations. The locations of many Chinese cities are explained by references to Japanese locations at the same latitudes. This textbook takes a pro-Japanese stance in matters concerning Japan’s foreign

41 Reed, 52.
policies (especially in the chapter on Korea) and describes Japanese interests in China in great detail.

Sun Qingru 孫清如, Waiguo dili 外國地理 [Geography of foreign countries]. This textbook was published in Tokyo by Liuxuesheng tongxuehui (an association for Chinese students in Japan) in 1908. Aimed at female students in women’s normal schools in China, it was, according to the Chinese compiler/translator, an abbreviated and shortened version of the accounts of the Japanese geographer Kawakami Kiichi, put together by Yamagami Banjiro and originally used in the Japanese normal schools and girls’ schools for higher learning. Since Kawakami’s textbook includes accounts on China but not on Japan, Sun Qingru compiled a chapter on Japan based on the works of other Japanese geographers such as Yazu Masanaga and Tsuji Takeo, and omitted China. The accounts on Japan and Korea found in the textbook are so similar to what is found in the publishing house Zuoxinshe’s Shijie dili that the only possible conclusion is that the chapters on these countries must be based on the same sources.

Tan Lian 譚廉, Gaodeng xiaoxue yong zuixin dili jiaokeshu xiangjie 高等小學用最新地理教科書詳解. English title: Chinese Common School Notes on New Geographical Readers. Published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1909. These four volumes provide detailed explanations for every lesson in Xie Honglai’s elementary textbook (see below), and give a clue to what Chinese schoolchildren about 11-15 years old were taught in the classroom in addition to what they read in their textbook. Tan Lian appears to have consulted the earlier textbook Shijie dili during the compilation of the book.

Tong Zhenzao 童振藻, Jianyi dili kebenshu 簡易地理課本書 [A simplified geography textbook], published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1906. This textbook contains an abbreviated version of the standard course in geography. It was aimed at children who were too poor or too old to enter the primary school. The first thirty lessons concern Chinese geography, while the last ten discuss the five continents, this in order to provide the reader with some basic understanding of both Chinese and foreign matters. The whole course covers altogether eighty hours of lessons, so the course can be finished within one semester (half a year), provided that two lessons are taught each week (each lesson takes two hours).
Tu Ji 屠寄 (1856-1921), Zhongguo dili jiaokeshu 中國地理教科書. English title: Chinese Middle School Geography of the Chinese Empire, 11th ed., emended/revised (jiaoding 校訂) by Zhuang Yu 莊俞 and published by Commercial Press in Shanghai in 1911. This textbook was first published in 1905 and was approved by the Chinese authorities to be used in middle schools and normal schools. The compiler was a professor of geography and history at the Imperial University in Beijing, and the textbook was the result of his intention to prepare a geography book which, in contrast to those compiled by foreigners, was suitable for Chinese students. The textbook is mentioned in an appendix over some of the most popular textbooks in China between 1905 and 1929 in Cyrus H. Peake’s dissertation Nationalism and Education in Modern China (1932). Some of the passages on the population of the Chinese empire is similar to what is found in Shijie dili, and it seems rather plausible that Tu Ji had borrowed some of his material from this somewhat earlier textbook, which in turn was based on Japanese sources on geography.

Wang Bangshu 王邦樞. Chudeng Zhongguo dili jiaokeshu 初等中國地理教科書 [A primary textbook on Chinese geography]. This textbook consists of two thin volumes published in Shanghai by Nanyangguan shuju in 1907.

Xie Honglai 謝洪賚 (1873-1916). Zuixin gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu 最新高等小學地理教科書. English title: Commercial Press’s New Common School Text Books: Lessons in Elementary Geography with Illustrations and Maps, 7th ed. This textbook in four volumes (the first two volumes are on the geography of China, while the latter two concern foreign countries, in particular Japan and Korea) was published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1906 (first published in 1905). It provides a full course in geography for all the four years of higher primary school (entered at the age of 11), provided that one lesson is taught every week. The preface states that the schoolchildren already have some basic knowledge of geography, acquired in the lower elementary school, and explains that the intention is, by means of stimulating texts, to further enlarge the schoolchildren’s span of knowledge, especially in the field of world geography, so that all those who do not continue to middle school will not end up too unenlightened. The preface acknowledges that since ancient times China has produced various records on geography, which, although valuable as sources for

42 Cyrus H. Peake, Nationalism and Education in Modern China (PhD diss., New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 190.
research, can hardly be used in elementary education. It is also observed that the task of translating and compiling geography textbooks is in an initial phase, so there is still much to be done. In order to avoid too flagrant errors, the textbook is based on a variety of books, largely Japanese geography textbooks. Many passages in the textbook are reminiscent of what is found in Chen Qiansheng’s earlier elementary textbook *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*, so it seems plausible that Xie Honglai drew inspiration from this textbook.

Xie Honglai, *Zuixin gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu* 最新高等小學地理教科書. English title: *Chinese Common School Advanced Geographical Readers*, 23rd edition, published in 1910. This textbook is a revised version of the textbook discussed above, although now with a new English title on the cover. Small but not necessarily insignificant changes have been made in the ways some of the peoples in various parts of the Empire are described. The textbook is marked with the approval of the government: “Approved by the Board of Education of China”.

Xie Honglai (alphabetic transcription of the compiler’s name on the cover: Zia Hong Lia), *Zuixin zhongxue jiaokeshu yinghuan quanzhi* 最新中學教科書瀛寰全志. English title: *Complete Geography with Coloured Maps designed for Advanced Classes in Schools and General Readers*, 8th edition, published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1906. This textbook, first published in 1903, was, as its Chinese title implies, above all to be used in middle schools. According to the textbook’s preface, it was based on Eastern (i.e. Japanese), Western and Chinese sources. The textbook is mentioned in Peake’s appendix over popular textbooks in China 1905-1929. Peake, who observes that Xie Honglai (referred to as “Zai Hong Lai”) was a member of the Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, fails to notice the textbook’s Japanese influences: “It had the approval of the Imperial official who was in general charge of school affairs at that time. In his introduction the author informs us that he has selected his material from a number of books on Chinese Geography published both in China and in the West”. Already in the book’s “General Remarks”, which follow from the introduction, the textbook compiler quotes the nationalistic Japanese geographer Shiga Shigetaka to argue the importance of studying geography.

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43 During the end of the Qing dynasty “east” (dong 東) often carried the meaning of Japan, as in the compounds dongren 東人 (easterner, i.e. a Japanese person), dongwen 東文 (eastern language, i.e. the Japanese language) and dongshu 東書 (eastern books, i.e. Japanese books).

44 Peake, 190. “Zai Hong Lai” and “Zia Hong Lia” are probably misprints for “Zia Hong Lai”, which roughly corresponds to the Shanghainese reading of the characters謝洪賚. See Tang Liyi 湯立儀 and Zhang Xiaojuan 張小娟, *Shanghaidua 上海話* [Shanghainese] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2003), 23, 25.
Xu Nianci 徐念慈 (1874-1908), Zhongguo dili 中國地理 [China’s geography]. Published in Shanghai by Commercial Press in 1906. This textbook was used in the junior normal school (5 yrs), which educated students (15-20 years old) who aspired to be lower and higher primary teachers. Xu Nianci, versed in both Japanese and English, was a well-renowned educator, translator, editor and author.45

Zou Daijun 鄒代釗 (1854-1908), Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jixue jiangyi 京師大學堂中國地理學講義 [The Imperial University’s lectures on Chinese geography] (sine loco, sine anno, probably published in Beijing some time between 1898 and 1908). These lectures belong to a series of lectures held at the University on Chinese geography and economics (Jingshi daxuetang Zhongguo dili jingjixue jiangyi 京師大學堂中國地理經濟學講義). The compiler was a geographer and an advocate of new reforms who taught at the university on his return to China after having studied in Europe.46 Jingshi daxuetang was founded in 1898 as a result of the so-called Hundred Days’ Reform the same year and would become the first national university in China. The school was renamed Beijing Daxue (Beijing University) in 1912.47

Zuixin chudeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu 最新初等小學地理教科書. English title: Commercial Press’s New Primary School Text Books: Lessons in Primary Geography with Illustrations and Maps, 4th ed. Four volumes. This textbook was first published in 1905, and was emended/revised (jiaoding 校訂) by Zhang Yuanji 張元濟 (1867-1959), a famous Hanlin scholar and publisher of the Commercial Press. It was favoured by the Ministry of Education, and was in 1905 printed in 90,000 copies.48 It was used in the third and fourth years in the lower primary school (schoolchildren about 9-10 years old), each volume containing lessons for one semester (half a year), provided that two lessons were taught each week. The first

45 Zhongguo jin-xiandai renming dacidian 中國近現代人名大辭典 [A comprehensive biographical dictionary of China’s modern and present-day eras], ed. Li Shengping 李盛平 (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo chubanshe, 1989), 572.
48 John Darroch, “Chinese Textbooks”, Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 37 (1906), 210. The textbook is here mentioned under the English title Geography for Elementary Schools (its Chinese title is nevertheless the same).
three volumes deal only with the geography of China, whilst the last one gives a very brief introduction to the geography of foreign countries. The textbook is written as a travelogue for the pedagogical purpose of catching the interest of the young reader.

1.5 The general outline of this thesis

The following chapter (2 Background) discusses the extent to which Chinese politicians, intellectuals and educators were exposed to Meiji Japanese ideas. It aims at locating the textbooks in their right context, a premise for an accurate interpretation of the images of China and the rest of East Asia in Chinese textbooks.

Chapter 3 draws a broad picture of how the world at large was perceived and how Asia - China in particular - was seen in comparison with other parts of the world, the general worldview being heavily influenced by Social Darwinism. Chapter 4 examines how the climate and landscape were believed to influence man, geographical-deterministic reasoning being commonly combined with discussions on social evolution and progress. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the general picture of the Chinese Han majority. Chapter 5 primarily analyzes the image of the Chinese as utterly backward, and presents what, according to the textbooks, ought to be done in order to make the Chinese to pull themselves out of their alleged stagnation. Chapter 6 examines the image of the Chinese as an originally superior people, an image that often runs parallel to the otherwise rather unflattering portraits of the Chinese. Chapter 7 more specifically examines the supposed regional differences between Han people in different parts of China Proper and also the images of the various non-Han ethnicities within the Qing Empire. Chapter 8 discusses the images of Korea and Japan and how these were employed for the political purpose of spurring change and reforms in China. Chapter 9 summarizes the major conclusions I have drawn from my study.
2 Background

To understand the messages put forward in the new textbooks which accompanied the educational reforms in China during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, it is crucial to have some understanding of Japan’s move towards modern education during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Not only was China’s first modern educational system modelled on that of Japan, the textbooks used in new schools throughout China were often compiled with inspiration drawn from Japanese textbooks, which in turn reflected the agenda of the Japanese government (i.e. to imbue Japanese youth with nationalistic sentiments). Thus the Chinese textbook compilers had to relate to sources which expressed the Japanese government’s definition of what it meant to be Japanese, and, for that matter, what it meant to be Chinese. Before more specifically examining how Chinese officials and educators dealt with the new impulses from Japan, I will first give an introduction to the new educational policies in Japan during the Meiji period.

2.1 New educational policies in the East

Japan witnessed China’s humiliating defeat in the Opium War of 1842 and how Western nations took advantage of China’s weak position, and it was quick to take measures to avoid a fate similar to China’s. Japan abandoned her isolationism and old feudal system for a new policy in which the emperor was turned into the symbol of national unity. In 1868, the first year of the new era – the Meiji period – Emperor Meiji proclaimed in the Charter Oath that “Evil practices of the past shall be abandoned, and actions shall be based on international usage”, and that “Knowledge shall be sought all over the world, and the foundations of imperial rule shall be strengthened”.\textsuperscript{49} At the end of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) Japan had received knowledge about the world through works brought to Japan by Dutch merchants

(the only Westerners then allowed to trade with Japan), as well as imported books written in Chinese such as Wei Yuan’s *Haiguo tuzhi* and Xu Jiuyu’s *Yinghuan zhilüe*, geographies based on information gained from Protestant missionaries in China. With the new guiding principles from the Meiji government, however, Japan now begun to actively seek knowledge by sending delegations abroad, primarily to North America and West Europe, and by employing foreign experts in various fields of sciences, technology and arts.

After the collapse of the Shogunate, Japan was indeed greatly reformed, with inspiration drawn from the West. However, the indiscriminate borrowing of things foreign was followed by a conservative reaction to the ongoing “Westernization”. The Great Principles of Education, issued in 1879, which ostensibly expressed the opinions of the Emperor although in fact they were composed by the Confucian scholar Motoda Eifu (1818-1891), marked a desire to return to more traditional values. Japanese subjects were criticized for having gone too far in their adoption of a foreign civilization “whose only values are fact-gathering and technique”, so they had started to violate “the rules of good manners” and bring “harm to our customary ways”. The alleged problem of abandoning the old evils of the past and the studying of foreign knowledge, referred to in the Charter Oath of 1868, was that it had an unwelcome side-effect. People no longer considered the Confucian virtues of benevolence, justice, loyalty and filial piety to be of the same importance as before, so people might forget their obligations as subjects and filial sons. If the “evil practices of the past” mentioned in the Charter Oath of 1868 had implied anti-foreignism and stale conservatism, “evil practices” gradually came to signify a lack of appreciation of traditional values and the worship of everything *nouveau*. It was these “evil practices” which were now to be eliminated.

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52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 This new stance was reflected in the Japanese textbooks. A secondary geography textbook published in 1896 remarks, in the name of objectivity (by referring to allegedly foreign points of views) that the Japanese are honourable, loyal, true, and in the possession of a martial spirit, but also active, clever, equipped with a great capacity of thinking, and endowed with a bold and enterprising mind-set. It is also noted that Japanese art has become world famous because of the Japanese skills in various techniques and fine arts. The textbook does however point out that foreigners have noticed certain shortcomings, visible at a closer second glance. One alleged flaw is the tendency amongst the Japanese towards thoughtlessly, without any sense of self-respect, pursuing what is new out of curiosity, and then quickly abandoning it for something even more novel. Thus, it is argued, the Japanese give up good old practices on the premises that they are old and outdated, so they are sneered at by foreigners. Other shortcomings which foreigners allegedly had spotted was that the Japanese intellect constantly fluctuates, seemingly uncontrolled by any fixed norms, and that the Japanese are prone to seek petty gains near at hand, not focusing on matters of eternal importance, quick to follow up an advantage, but despairing as soon as they encounter some difficulties. It is concluded that despite all the virtuous and beautiful qualities the Japanese have been endowed with by nature, they are looked down upon by
By the late 1880s, conservatives dominated the political scene. Traditional Confucian ethics regained much of its former status as the basis for moral education and Japan experienced a renewed interest in native traditional arts, literature and history. In order to balance the heavy foreign influences (especially those from Great Britain and France), other foreign (i.e. German) ideas were introduced with the intention of giving prominence to the merits of traditional native qualities. Japan, which for some twenty years had abandoned “evil practices”, was in need of a national identity for the citizens to associate themselves with. The key to national unity was Meiji-style nationalism:

Primarily nationalism, as it developed in Japan, was the domain of nationalist elites and the state. After the overthrow of the Tokugawa regime in 1868, Meiji elites ‘invented’ the tradition of the emperor system upon the foundations of familism and State Shinto and used this tradition as a mean of creating and enhancing national identity and solidarity. The Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 emphasized the ‘historical’ vision of the unbroken lineage from time immemorial and projected the Volk view of nation by stating that the emperor presided as the head of the main family, from which all Japanese families subsequently branched out. The state was the main agent in creating nation and nationalism, exerting firm control over moral education in schools.

After the nationalistic and conservative reaction in the 1880s, the obsession with Anglo-American education started to cool off. Instead followed a period during which chiefly German ideas on education were borrowed, this at a time when measures were also taken to prepare for the acceptance of a highly centralized, Prussian-style, constitutional monarchy which would strengthen the weakened Japanese nation, allowing her to rid herself of the burden of the unequal treaties the Western powers had forced upon her. In order to popularize their ideas within a modern framework the conservatives looked for Western ideas which might give credibility to the Confucian moralism they advocated. The Prussian educational system and its state-centred school values were to become the new sources for inspiration in the remoulding of the Japanese educational system. In 1880, the Ministry of

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57 Isao Nishimura, Western Influences on the Modernization of Japanese Education, 1868-1912 (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1972), 371, 374.
Education, by the issue of the Revised Ordinance, underlined the importance of moral instruction and practicality. It is quite likely that the Revised Ordinance had drawn inspiration from the Prussian Lehrgegenstände der Volksschule (The Course of People’s Schools) of 1872, or from similar ordinances issued during the mid 1870s in other German states. However, if the German ideas did not serve their purposes, they were abandoned, and inspiration was drawn from other sources.58

Under the supervision of Mori Arinori (1847-1889), Japan’s first Minister of Education from 1885 until his assassination by a fanatic Shinto nationalist in 1889, the early Meiji school system patterned after the American model was altered in favour of a Prussian-style system, which was to become the model for the school system to follow. According to the new system, the elementary schools trained loyal subjects of the Emperor, while the middle schools, above all the higher middle schools, which after 1894 became the so-called higher schools, prepared youngsters for the universities (there was only one such institution before 1897, the Imperial University, i.e. Tokyo University). The university in turn fostered the future leaders of Japan and taught them the advanced Western learning considered necessary for the modernization of Japan. Although not a Christian himself, Mori found certain ethical aspects of Protestantism appealing, but he was also highly influenced by the ideas of Herbert Spencer (for example in his promotion of military-style physical exercise in the place of

58 Ibid., 376-377, 379. The following passage in a Japanese geography textbook (first published in 1901) describes the development of the Japanese educational system, and how native scholarship was combined with Western-styled education as an allegedly winning concept. Within the field of education, Germany, above any other country, was deeply admired: “[…] After the Restoration, an educational system was established in a haste, and with the increased diplomatic contacts [Japan was] overflowed with Western culture. Scholarship of the East and the West were combined, and now Japan’s new education rose, experiencing the remarkable advancements of today. Schools are the fountainheads of [all] education, and there are in all 28 000 schools, small and large ones included, with [altogether] 4 500 000 students. There are 27 000 elementary schools, 200 middle schools and 49 normal schools spread all across the whole nation, so there will not be any uneducated people [in Japan in the future]. Besides school education, libraries have been opened everywhere to facilitate people’s reading. There is also the widespread publishing of books, magazines and newspapers, which are easily accessible and can be purchased for the purpose of pursuing knowledge. This is also a good way to acquire education. [Japan] can not be compared with Germany, [the nation] in the whole world which has done the most to promote and spread education, and one should know that while we only have two universities, they have more than 20. We should however not simply envy this, but instead spare no efforts in trying to surpass it.” ([…]) 藤井宏弘, 教育の制俄かに整ひ、外交益益開けてより、泰西の文物、滔滔として流れ入りしかば、東西の學問を融和して、茲に、日本的新教育は興り、今日目ざまし進歩を見る。學校は教育の源にして、大小合すれば、二萬八千校、生徒四百五十萬人あり、其の中、小學校は二萬七干、中學校二百、師範學校四十九なり、共に全國に普及して、國に不學の徒ならしめんとす。學校教育の外、諸方に圖書館を開きて、衆庶の觀覽に便にし、又、圖書、雜誌、新聞の出版盛んなれば、容易に、購讀勵學とすを得、是、亦、教育の好き方便なり。凡、宇内に教育の最振張せは、獨逸に如くはなく、我に、唯ニある大學は、彼に、二十餘あるにても知るべし、吾等は唯之を襲むのみならず必ず、之を凌駕せむことを怠るべからず。)” Ishikawa Hiroshi 石川弘, Chūtō kayō Nihon chiri 中等科用日本地理 [Japanese geography for the secondary school], 3rd ed. (Tokyo: Tanuma shoten, 1902), 57-58.
school-gymnastics). Under the direction of Mori, the institutions which educated teachers, the so-called normal schools, came to resemble military camps where teachers-to-be were virtually fostered into military-style officers under the watchwords junrō shinai iji (順良信愛 威重), borrowed from the leading principles of “Dignity, Friendship and Obedience” of the Swedenborgian Thomas Lake Harris’s utopian Christian colonies in New York. Mori had in 1867 witnessed their followers’ total obedience to God through their submission to the sect leader Harris. In the Japanese normal schools, however, these values had been stripped of all Christian undertones and were simply honoured as a militaristic slogan. With Mori, the educational system started to become increasingly militaristic, and after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) both boys and girls in elementary and secondary schools had to participate in military training courses.

Even though the watchwords of the normal schools were of non-Confucian origin, they somewhat matched the Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety advocated by scholars such as Motoda, and although there were fundamental differences between what were considered by some people to be Mori’s all too “liberal” or Western-influenced ideas and Motoda’s “traditionalism” (so hence there also existed disagreements on educational policies), both standpoints emphasized the importance of a strong state and nationalistic loyalism.

As pointed out by Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, many statesmen and scholars in Japan during the 19th century were fascinated by the spiritual cohesion that the unity between the church and state supposedly gave rise to in the West. Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909), one of the

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59 Ivan P. Hall, “Mori Arinori”, in Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 5: 249; Shimbori Michiya, “Modern education”, in Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 2: 176. The aims of the Japanese educational system, as articulated in Noguchi’s geography textbook from 1896, were to teach the schoolchildren enrolled in primary school (小學校) “the essence of moral virtues” (倫道德の要領) and to make the children understand their "duties as citizens" (國民の義務), besides providing them with "common knowledge and skills" (普通の智識技能), and thereby turning them into good citizens able to take on a wide range of jobs. The normal middle school (尋常中學) was to produce "citizens above the middle-class" (中流以上の國民) by providing the schoolchildren with a “somewhat more advanced general education” (稍稍進みたる普通の教育), while the higher schools (高等學校) and various professional training schools (各專門學校) provided the students with the necessary techniques and skills (技能) which the occupations they aspired for demanded. The role of the university was to produce fine and outstanding scholars in large numbers, exclusively initiated into theoretical studies, who could compete with the scholarly circles of other civilized countries. Noguchi, Chūtō kyōiku Chirikyōkasho: Honpō no bu, 114-115.

60 Nishimura, 418-419; Herbert Passin, “Mori Arinori”, in Imperial Japan 1800-1945, 151; Kaigo Tokiomi 海後臣, Naka Arata 仲新 and Terasaki Masao 寺崎昌男, Kyokasho de miru kingendai Nihon no kyōiku 教科書で見る近現代日本の教育 [Japan’s modern and present-day education viewed through school textbooks] (Tokyo: Tokyo shōsei kabushiki kaisha, 1999), 71.


62 Imperial Japan 1800-1945, 147.

most important Meiji oligarchs and the main architect of Japan’s Prussian-style authoritarian constitutional system, made the following remark a couple of months before the promulgation of the constitution in 1889:

In Europe, constitutional government has had over thousand years since its inception. Not only are the people thoroughly familiar with it, religion serves as a “linchpin” for them. [Religion] has seeped deeply into the people’s hearts; their hearts and minds are united in this faith.\(^6^4\)

Ito argued that, although Buddhism in ancient times had brought together people from different levels of society, it had now lost in importance, and as for indigenous sectarian Shinto, the followers only adhered to the various traditions of the sect founders and could not be employed for any national unifying purposes either. Only the imperial house remained as the single institution which might function as a national unifying power in Japan. What Japan needed to withstand foreign encroachments was united and loyal subjects, and it was hence considered to be of crucial importance to have some sort of state-religion which would fill a function similar to what Christianity supposedly did in the West. The Imperial Rescript of Education of 1890, which followed the promulgation of the constitution, embodied this idea in the form of an emperor-centred state-cult (State Shinto).\(^6^5\)

The Imperial Rescript of Education was to have a tremendous influence on Meiji society as a whole, but also on educational policies in China during the late Qing period, and is hence cited in its entirety below:

Know ye, our Subjects: Our Imperial ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education.

Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends be true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect your moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergence arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the

\(^6^4\) Quoted in Wakabayashi, 143. The introduction of Christianity in Japan, after the ban on it was lifted in 1873, paradoxically reinforced the “holiness” of the Japanese emperor, the emperor being elevated to a similar status as that of the Christian God. Ben-Ami Shillony, “Emperors and Christianity”, in The Emperors of Modern Japan, ed by Ben-Ami Shillony (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165.
\(^6^5\) Wakabayashi, 143-144.
prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all attain to the same virtue.66

In short, the Rescript taught Japanese schoolchildren to be loyal to the Emperor, honour Confucian moralism, study hard, be law-abiding, promote common good and to be ready to sacrifice themselves for the nation in a spirit of martyrdom.67 It stressed the values which the Meiji regime wanted to instil in the minds of the Japanese people, and it appeared, although sometimes in abbreviated versions, at the beginning or end of all textbooks.68 The Rescript was learnt by heart by all schoolchildren and was worshipped alongside the portrait of the Emperor, which the Ministry of Education had begun to deliver to schools in the early 1880s; by 1897, all lower elementary schools were duly equipped with such photographs.69

As early as 1883, the Ministry of Education had started to strengthen its influence over curricula and the content of textbooks and had begun the removal of too liberal or otherwise inappropriate texts from the classrooms. In 1886, the control of textbooks became the responsibility of the central government. During the early Meiji era, the Japanese texts used in schools had for the most part been translations of Anglo-American books, although sometimes adapted to Japanese circumstances. However, the new textbooks for Japanese language, history and geography were by now no longer translations of Western works but instead composed by native Japanese authors who used Japanese sources and propagated nationalism and reverence for the Japanese Emperor, while toning down the importance of Western history. From 1903, the only textbooks allowed in elementary schools were those issued by the Ministry of Education.70 The Japanese state had grasped the entire initiative of defining to Japanese schoolchildren what it meant to be Japanese.

67 Similar virtues were glorified in the Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors (1882). The first precept emphasizes the essential duty of loyalty. This duty is allegedly “weightier than a mountain” while death is “lighter than a feather”. Ibid., 706.
2.2 The “Japanese spirit”

The middle of the 1880s not only marked a change in how textbooks were compiled. It was on the whole a time when decisive changes in Japan’s modernization process took place. It was the dawning of an era of expansionist ambitions, a period characterized by a reaction against what was considered to be ongoing Westernization, accompanied by greater stress on the alleged mystique and divinity of the Mikado, attitudes captured in the epigram “Japanese spirit and Western learning” (wakon yōsai 和魂洋才). Paradoxically, however, the slogan was a derivation from the similarly sounding wakon kansai 和魂漢才, which expressed the more traditional position that a “Japanese spirit” can be effectively combined with “Chinese learning”.\(^1\)

Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), one of the most famous novelists in modern Japanese literature, satirizes the ill-defined concept of an imagined “Japanese spirit”, or Yamatodamashii, in his work Wagahai wa neko de aru (I am a Cat) from 1905 (the same year that Japan defeated Russia). In one episode the Cat’s master (a school teacher) recites a poem he has composed. The poem describes how all kinds of Japanese citizens, regardless of occupation or social standing, refer to a common “Japanese spirit”. The “Japanese spirit” has even created a great sensation abroad, where lectures are held on the topic in England, and a play has even been set up on the theme in Germany. When asked to identify the meaning of the “Japanese spirit” more specifically, however, nobody seems to be able to define it.\(^2\) Since Yamato-damashii is a spirit, the poem hints, it is by nature blurry. Moreover, by suggesting that the “Japanese spirit” is perhaps a Tengu goblin (a mountain spirit portrayed as winged and having a long nose), the poem even implies that “the Japanese spirit” is after all merely an expression of a vain, puffed-up and conceited attitude.\(^3\) Boasters and braggarts are often referred to as Tengu in Japan. Although the concept of a “Japanese spirit” lacked clear-cut definition as a blurry, nationalistic catchword, it was, as implied in Natsume’s satire, nevertheless widely accepted since it flattering suggested that the Japanese were somehow equipped with superior qualities.

In an interpretation by the scholar and educator Nitobe Inazo (1862-1933), whose portrait was formerly found on Japanese 5000 yen notes, the “Japanese spirit” is identified

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\(^1\) Takeuchi, “How Japan Learned about the Outside World”, 9.
\(^3\) Ibid.
with the alleged virtues of *Bushido* (武士道 the Way of the Warrior), the samurai code of conduct, which Nitobe projects on the Japanese population as a whole. Nitobe had studied in both the United States and Germany, and his influential *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*, published first in English in 1900 and later translated into eight languages, was widely read by foreigners who sought an answer to Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905.

Broadly grasping the sentiments in Japan at that time, this book is full of Japanocentric and nationalistic undertones. Nitobe, although a Christian, alludes to the mystique and holiness of the Mikado, almost ascribing Messianic properties to him:

To us the country is more than land and soil from which to mine gold and to reap grain— it is the sacred abode of the gods, the spirit of our forefathers: to us the Emperor is more than the Arch Constable of a Rechtsstaat, or even the Patron of a Culturstaat—he is the bodily representative of Heaven on earth, blending in his person its power and its mercy. If what M. Boutmy says is true of English royalty—that it “is not only the image of authority, but the author and symbol of national unity,” as I believe it to be, doubly and trebly may this be affirmed of royalty in Japan.

The tenets of Shintoism cover the two predominating features of the emotional life of our race—Patriotism and Loyalty. Arthur May Knapp very truly says: “In Hebrew literature it is often difficult to tell whether the writer is speaking of God or the Commonwealth: of Heaven or of Jerusalem: of the Messiah or of the Nation itself.”

Nitobe’s interpretation of the virtues of *Bushido* (which he also refers to as “Knighthood”) apparently echoes the ideal citizen as defined in the Rescript on Education of 1890. In Nitobe’s understanding, however, the virtues honoured in the Rescript are not mere ideals but factual qualities of the Japanese people, which allegedly had made it possible for them to defeat China in 1895:

The universal politeness of the people, which is the legacy of knightly ways, is too well known to be repeated anew. The physical endurance, fortitude, and bravery that “the little Jap” possesses, were sufficiently proven in

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74 Martin C. Collcutt, “Bushidō”, in *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1: 223. Nitobe’s work was one of the most influential studies which tried to define “Japaneseness” during the latter half of the Meiji period. Other important works were *Nihon fūkei ron* (Theory of Japanese Landscape, 1894) written by the geographer Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), and *Kokuminsei jūron* (Ten Theses on National Character, 1908) written by the scholar of Japanese literature Haga Yaichi (1867-1927). Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 168. Both Nitobe and Shiga had graduated from Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaido (now Hokkaido University), founded in 1876 as a milestone in the government’s colonization of the island. Nitobe, although never using the term “geography” in any of the titles of his books, was nevertheless an important author of geographical works in Japan during the end of the 19th century. Keiichi Takeuchi, “Nationalism and Geography in Modern Japan, 1880s to 1920s”, in Geography and National Identity, ed. David Hooson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 106, 109.

the Chino-Japanese war. “Is there any nation more loyal and patriotic?” is a question asked by many: and for the proud answer “There is not,” we must thank the Precepts of Knighthood.76

In Nitobe’s understanding of the Sino-Japanese War, it was the “Japanese spirit”, manifested in the soldiers’ loyalty to the Emperor and their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the nation, rather than Western weaponry and the modern school system (i.e. “Western learning”) which made it possible for Japan to defeat China:

It has been said that Japan won her late war with China by means of Murata guns and Krupp cannon: it has been said that the victory was the work of a modern school-system: but these are less than half-truths. Does ever a piano, be it of the choicest workmanship of Ehrbar or Steinway burst forth into the Rhapsodies of Liszt or the Sonatas of Beethoven, without a master’s hand? Or, if guns win battles, why did not Louis Napoleon beat the Prussians with his Mitrailleuse, or the Spaniards with their Mausers the Filipinos, whose arms were no better than the old-fashioned Remingtons? Needless to repeat what has grown a trite saying, - that it is the spirit that quickeneth, without which the best of implements profiteth but little. The most improved guns and cannon do not shoot of their own accord: the most modern educational system does not make a coward a hero. No! What won the battles on the Yalu, in Corea and Manchuria, were the ghosts of our fathers, guiding our hands and beating in our hearts. They are not dead, those ghosts, the spirits of our warlike ancestors. To those who have eyes to see, they are clearly visible.77

Nitobe’s book as an international bestseller not only influenced the way Japan and the Japanese were perceived in the West. The news about the Japanese Geist also received the attention of the Chinese, the very targets for the Murata guns and the Krupp cannon, which in Nitobe’s eyes were operated with the help of clearly visible, and by no means blurred or fuzzy ghosts.

Liang Qichao (1873-1929), one of China’s most influential intellectuals at the time, who introduced many foreign ideas to China through his numerous publications written during his long exile in Japan, discusses the importance of embracing a martial spirit in his article “Lun shangwu” 論尚武 (On the exalting of a martial spirit), published in the journal Xinmin congbao in 1903. Liang argues that China, although the first country to rise from barbarity, is in need of a warrior mentality compatible with that of less refined people, and mentions, as an example of the might of raw strength over sophistication, how the barbarian German tribes managed to defeat the civilized Roman Empire. Liang also discusses the harsh and militaristic lifestyle of the ancient Spartans in lyrical wording, and attributes the rise of modern Germany

76 Ibid., 175.
77 Ibid., 187-188.
to the system of general conscription and the indoctrination of the people through militaristic education. As for the Russian Empire, Liang observes that it is only half as civilized as Europe and the United States but on the other hand is populated by warlike and fierce Slavs, who, although rather primitive, have managed to expand westwards and eastwards, and even threaten to take the place of the Teutons as the dominant people of the world.78 Calling for a change in the deeply-rooted, negative Chinese attitudes towards everything related to the military, Liang mentions Japan as the good example of East Asia, emphasizing the extent to which Japan has gained strength due to the importance the Japanese authorities have attached to fostering warlike qualities among the common people:

[…] not only the various countries of Europe do so [exalt a martial spirit]. Our eastern neighbour Japan has a population merely one tenth of ours, but its people are fierce, agile and look lightly upon death, and with each passing day they have come to display and glorify what they call Bushido, the soul of Japan [alt. the Japanese spirit]. Formerly, when [Japan begun] to conscribe people for military service, there were still those who cried, wept or deserted, and those who unjustly sought to avoid [being enrolled]. Today, the recruit flags [have slogans like] “we pray we will die in battle”, “we will follow the army to the front”, “we wish we will not return alive”, “we will fight courageously in a heroic manner”, and “for the unity of the whole nation”. Besides, the bravery, the vigour and the great force with which the Japanese army carried out its military actions during the Boxer Rebellion was unmatched and ranked supreme amongst the joint forces, which made the white men bow their heads in admiration. In recent times, [the Japanese authorities] focus on the development [of the nation’s] physique, ensuring that all citizens will be equipped with military skills and develop a soldierly spirit. That Japan, [a nation of] three small islands, has risen to prosperity just [within the short period of] thirty years, but nevertheless was able to defeat us in one blow, [now] holding might and influence, in firm position of [military] supremacy, standing impositiously, erect and firm [like a mountain] in the Eastern Sea, can only be said to be the result of the exalting of a martial spirit.79

In Liang’s Zhongguo zhi Wushidao [China’s Bushido], published in 1904, one finds similar reasoning. This book is a collection of various Chinese classical texts, mainly from the periods of Spring and Autumn (BC 770-476) and Warring States (BC 475-221), which aims at exalting a martial spirit (shangwu) among schoolchildren in the higher primary

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78 Liang Qichao 李鶴超, “Lun shangwu” 論尚武 [On the exalting of a martial spirit], in Liang Qichao jingdian wen lun 李鶴超經典文論 [The Classical works of Liang Qichao], ed. Hong Zhigang 洪治綱 (Shanghai: Shanghai daxue chubanshe, 2003), 53-54.
79 Ibid., 54-55. (且非獨歐洲諸國為然也,我東鄰之日本,其人數僅當我十分之一耳,然其人剽疾輕死,日取其所謂武士道大和魂者,發揮而光大之。故當其征兵之始,尚有哭泣逃亡,曲求避免者;今則入隊,祈其戰死,從軍之什,祝勿生還,好武雄風,舉國一致。且庚子之役,其軍隊之勇銳,戰鬪之強力,且冠絕聯軍,使白人賴首傾倒,南京岌岌於體育之事,務使國民皆具軍人之本領,皆蓄軍人之精神。彼日本區區三島,興立僅三十年耳,顧乃能一戰勝我,取威定霸,屹然雄立於東洋之上也,曰惟武士道故。)
school and the middle school. Bushido, Liang explains in his introduction, is a Japanese term which corresponds to what the Japanese also refer to as Yamato damashii 大和魂 (“Japanese spirit”, alt."Japan’s soul”). 80 It was this kind of “guts” which Liang wanted to foster in the young generation of China. That is, inspired by the modern example of Japan, China was to regain her former glory by means of the revival of ancient martial virtues, which were to be instilled in the schoolchildren by recalling their alleged warlike heritage.

A similar message was also presented in Guomin bidu 国民必讀 [What the people should read]. This textbook was issued by the local educational authorities of Zhili, and recommended to the students in the province by the viceroy Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) who was a strong supporter of modern education. The book, compiled by two returnees from Japan and printed in one hundred thousand copies in the first edition, stressed the virtues of loyalty and bravery, and taught that the people and the dynasty were one, so the people, forever indebted to the Empire, should be ready to sacrifice their lives for it, in a spirit similar to that of the soldiers of Germany and Japan, loyal to their states unto death. Drawing parallels between the Chinese military spirit of ancient times and that of modern Japan, it called for the revival of the Chinese martial virtues of times past. 81

A ghost in the shape of nationalistic loyalism and militarism was indeed to cast its hazy shadow over China’s attempt to modernize during the early 20th century. China’s first modern educational system was modelled on that of Japan’s, which was considered best fitted for an autocratic monarchy, and curricula and textbooks during the early 20th century stressed the obligation of loyalty and readiness to sacrifice one’s life for the sake of the nation. 82 As pointed out by Henrietta Harrison, militarism as an ideology began to gain popularity in China at the beginning of the century as a result of the new influences of Social Darwinian ideas, which voiced the need for a nation in arms to withstand Western aggressions, this in spite of the low status the military traditionally had had in China. 83 Chinese living in Japan witnessed

80 Liang Qichao, Zhongguo zhi wushidao 中國之武士道 [China’s Bushido] (Beijing: Zhongguo dangan chubanshe, 2006), 1. (武士道者，日本名詞，日人自稱大和魂，即此物也)
81 Peake, 58-59.
82 Ibid., 155.
83 Henrietta Harrison, China (Inventing the Nation series, ed. Keith Robbins) (London: Hodder Arnold, 2001), 120. The idea of fostering militarism must nevertheless still have appeared somewhat strange to the mainstream Confucian literati. Traditionally, civilization tended to be associated with scholarly achievements (wen 文) rather than with warfare (wu 武). This tendency can be traced to the Confucian inclination to stress the superiority of civil enlightened rule (wangdao 王道 i.e. the rule of right), over military strength (badao 霸道 i.e. the rule of might). In Mengzi, for example, military rule is described as inferior to kingly rule (i.e. benevolent and righteous rule): “Mencius said, ‘One who uses force while borrowing from benevolence will become leader of the feudal lords, but to do so he must first be the ruler of a state of considerable size. One who puts benevolence into effect through the transforming influence of morality will become King, and his success will not depend on the size of
the official support militarism enjoyed there, and many were even impressed by how the
Japanese state enshrined war dead and paid memorial services to them at a national shrine in
Tokyo, especially dedicated to those who had sacrificed their lives for the Japanese empire.
Harrison maintains that the extent to which Chinese visitors approved to the practice of giving
soldiers a posthumous heroic status, one of many means employed by the Japanese state to
promote militarism as an ideology, gives a clue of the degree to which also the Chinese
assented to the idea of fostering soldierly virtues among the common people by presenting
soldiers as model citizens.84

What the Chinese visitors to Japan witnessed was what Saya Makito refers to as “the
Fate of the Dead”, a manifestation of Japanese nationalism which reached extreme
proportions with the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), when memorial services were held at
Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo.85 During the Sino-Japanese War Japanese journalists, through the
media of modern newspapers, began to present to the broad masses images of the common
Japanese soldiers, especially those lost on the battlefield, as war heroes.86 Reports from the
front, with adhering descriptions of valiant Japanese soldiers, loyal to the Japanese emperor
and the Japanese nation until death, broke with traditional descriptions of war as combat
between famous commanders, in which little attention was paid to the heroism of the common,
low-ranked soldier.87 The descriptions of ordinary soldiers as war heroes, which also found
their way into Japanese schoolbooks, made it easier for common people to identify
themselves as equal members of the Japanese nation. The Sino-Japanese War gave rise to a
stronger sense of national identity amongst the Japanese population, especially amongst the
young generation, who experienced the enthusiasm over the war through a range of different
channels, such as children’s literature and board games, and not only through what they
learned in school.88

his state. T’ang began with only seventy li square, and King Wen with a hundred. When people submit to force
day do so not willingly but because they are not strong enough. When people submit to the transforming
influence of morality they do so sincerely, with admiration in their hearts. An example of this is the submission
of the seventy disciples of Confucius.” Quoted in Mencius, transl. D.C. Lau (Chinese Classics: Chinese English
Series) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984). Vol 1, 63. As suggested by Patricia Ebrey, the ruling
elite during the Song period (960-1279) deliberately cultivated the image of the refined scholar to stress the
contrast between the Chinese and warlike enemies in the north, such as Turks, Khitan, Jurchen and Mongols.
84 Harrison, 121.
86 Ibid., 39.
87 Ibid., 67-68.
88 Ibid., 57-58, 67-68, 101-102, 128-139.
The Japanese journalists’ description of China and Korea as totally backward promoted a self-image which implied that the Japanese nation was the very antithesis to continental backwardness, and hence superior in all her modernity. By advancing the idea that Japan was the only progressive nation in Asia, Japanese war-journalism also fostered the thought that Japan ought to take the position as the civilized leader over an otherwise underdeveloped East Asia, which supposedly was in dear need of Japan’s enlightened tutorage. The Sino-Japanese War experience had however more far-reaching consequences than just having fostered a sense of national consciousness among the common Japanese citizens:

The damage Japan inflicted on its neighbours in the course of the Sino-Japanese War was considerable — but the subsequent idealization of Japan was equally problematic. As a result of the war, Japan became a model for other East Asian nations to emulate and they would all strive to remake themselves in Japan’s image. Herein lies the world-historical significance of the Sino-Japanese War.

According to Saya, the idea of nationhood and nationalism was brought to China by the many thousands of Chinese students who rushed to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War. Saya mentions Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) in terms of an “interpreter” who managed to translate Japanese nationalism into a Chinese version of it. However, not only the revolutionaries were inspired by what they heard and saw in Japan. Consider for example the first verse in the song “A Song in the Military Camps” written by Huang Zunxian (1848-1905), counsellor to the Qing legation in Tokyo between 1877-1882 and a strong supporter of Meiji-style reforms in China during the 1890s. The song was sent to Liang Qichao in 1902, together with some other marches Huang had composed for the purpose of promoting a spirit of patriotism among soldiers, and it exalts the supposed beauty of loyalty unto death, thus clearly echoing the militant nationalism of Meiji Japan in which the combination of courage and self-sacrifice were considered to be absolute virtues:

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

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89 Ibid., 35, 42-43.  
90 Ibid., 162.  
91 Ibid., 161-162.  
92 Quoted in Kamachi, 253.
2.3 The cry for reforms

After having repeatedly lost national prestige on the international arena since the defeat in the Opium War, the Chinese regime started to take measures aiming at strengthening the country in order to hold back the militarily stronger Western countries, which with increasing intensity infringed upon Chinese soil. However, the actions taken to modernize China were proven to be insufficient. China lost the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 against a neighbouring country to which China hitherto had paid little attention. With her victory over China, Japan made her first moves towards imperialism and had joined the other powers in the race for dominance in East Asia. By the turn of the 20th century Japan had been transformed into an independent military power based on a conscript army, which in 1905 managed to defeat Russia and thereby took over Russian interests in Manchuria.

The experience of the loss against Japan in 1895 came to totally change the general Chinese attitude against Japan, which, as pointed out by Samuel C. Chu, at the time of the Sino-Japanese War was still coloured by a sense of Chinese cultural superiority:

Most Chinese, if they thought about Japan at all, probably assumed that they knew all there was to know about it. Thus China had always harboured an avuncular attitude toward its island neighbour to the east. The Chinese knew about Japan’s presumed mythical origins, and how it belatedly borrowed Chinese culture and institutions wholesale. They were only too often reminded that China had given Japan its writing script, government framework, religious and philosophical traditions, literature, art, and even pastimes. To the Chinese, the Japanese appeared quaint, amusing, possibly clever, but never to be taken seriously. The Japanese ability to select elements of Chinese culture and modify them to suit their own temperaments and situations was seen only as evidence of their failure to model themselves upon the Chinese more perfectly. By contrast, the Koreans had been more slavishly faithful to the Chinese model, and were thereby regarded by the Chinese as obviously superior to the Japanese.

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93 One measure to strengthen the country was to establish a number of government schools, arsenals and navy yard schools. On the Chinese government’s attempts to introduce modern education prior to the Sino-Japanese War, see Knight Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Government Schools in China* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961).

94 The Chinese official Li Hongzhang did, however, already in 1863 point out that Japan had modernized its military methods, and suggested that China should do the same. Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West: A Documentary Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 71.

With the loss in the Sino-Japanese War the Qing regime became increasingly aware that change and modernization were crucial to her survival and was forced to reconsider her position in relation to other countries. During the hundred days of reforms in 1898, Kang Youwei (1853-1927), a Confucian scholar and the leader of the reform movement (in which Kang’s disciple Liang Qichao was also an important partaker), saw the national reconstructions of Peter the Great and the Meiji Emperor as models for China to follow. Both Peter the Great and the Meiji Emperor had borrowed new technology and new skills from the West to improve the conditions in Russia and Japan respectively. Many of the reform advocates in China disliked and distrusted Russia, and believed that Britain and Japan would make better allies than the tsardom. Japan, above any other nation, was seen as a possible partner of cooperation in the fields of culture and international relations, despite the consequences of the Sino-Japanese War. Inspired by the Japanese Meiji Restoration twenty years earlier, Kang urged the Guangxu Emperor (1871-1908) to declare the abandonment of old and evil practices, besides pushing for other measures in order to reform China. Kang was convinced that the Japanese model could be effectively applied to Chinese circumstances because of the similar cultural and ethnical background supposedly shared by China and Japan. 

96 Luke S.K. Kwong, A Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics, and Ideas of 1898 (Cambridge, mass. & London: Harvard University Press 1984), 130, 133, 192, 207, Richard Howard, “Japan’s Role in the Reform Program of K’ang Yu-wei”, in K’ang Yu-wei: A Biography and a Symposium, edited with translation by Jung-pang Lo (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1967), 293-294. The idealized picture of Peter the Great was also a Japanese import. Peter the Great and Napoleon were seen as “makers of history” by certain Japanese intellectuals, such as the famous samurai Sakuma Shōzan (1811-1864). Sakuma praised the tsar for having unified Russia, adopting Western technology, building a navy, and for having elevated the status of Russia by strengthening the formerly so backward and impoverished tsardom, and hence preventing it from being colonized. See H. D. Harootunian, Toward Restoration: The Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press 1970), 179-181. Peter the Great’s modernization of Russia was also honoured by Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of Japan’s most influential intellectuals and educators, in his Sekai Kunizukushi (World Geography) of 1869: “Up to two hundred years ago Russia was a petty and rustic country in the north where scholarship was undeveloped, and the emotional mood of the people was rough and the customs violent. However, at the end of the seventeenth century (during the Genroku era) a clear-sighted monarch called Tsar Peter emerged and in a trice reformed the country. He copied alt. studied] the ways of civilised countries such as England, France and Holland and founded schools and built up the navy and the army. Protecting itself from within while launching attacks without, Russia not only managed to join the ranks of the European countries, but also managed to lay the foundation to an impressive power, up to this very day well renowned worldwide.” (二百年以前までは、魯西亜も小國にて、且北方田舍國なれば、學問も開けず、人氣暴くして殺伐なる風俗なりしが、千六百年代の末 元禄年中 平土留帝といえる英明の君出て、一時に國を改革し、英、佛、和蘭等の如き文明の國の風にならひ、學校を設け海陸軍を健て、内を守り外攻め、歐羅巴諸國と並び立つののみならず、堂堂たる一大國の基を聞き、今日に至るまで、威名を世界中に轟かせり。) Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, Sekai Kunizukushi 世界国尽 [World Geography], reprinted in Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshū 福沢諭吉選集 [Fukuzawa Yukichi’s collected works], ed. Tomi Masafumi 畠田正文 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1981). Vol. 2, 145.
After the loss against the new constitutional monarchy of Japan, the idea that China also should reform its political institutions gained support, even among court circles. Many Chinese besides attributed Japan’s success and war victories to its educational system, and were convinced that if only China modelled its education system after Japanese patterns, China would experience the same story of success as Japan. However, the attempts to reform China in 1898 failed due to the intervention of the conservative clique within the imperial court, led by the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), who managed to totally outmanoeuvre the Guangxu Emperor. It would take another two years and foreign soldiers on the streets of Beijing, who had arrived in the Chinese capital to quell the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, before reform was considered a real alternative.

During the reform movement of 1898 Kang Youwei had suggested that China ought to adopt constitutional monarchy as a means to strengthen China, a proposition which shocked the conservatives. Cixi and her clique, whose position had been considerably weakened after the Boxer uprising, nevertheless had to reconsider their initial aversion towards the idea of constitutional monarchism. Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905 was in China largely seen as the triumph of modern constitutional monarchy over backward autocracy, and there was a strong public opinion that China also ought to adopt constitutional monarchy à la Meiji Japan. The Meiji oligarchs had early drawn the conclusion that an authoritative constitutional monarchy might spare the state from the “harms” of republicanism, and likely, it was this aspect of Meiji constitutionalism which made it appear as a possible

97 Bastid, 7.
99 Ibid., 69-70.
102 This stance was reflected in the Japanese textbooks. According to Noguchi’s geography textbook from 1896 the citizens of an absolute monarchy are fortunate beyond everything if ruled by a “wise and mild” (賢明仁恕) regent, but destined to fall to the depth of misery if ruled by a “stupid and unworthy” one (暗愚不肖). The textbook emphasizes that presidential elections are tainted by bribery and the tricks of political parties, which might prevent worthy people from being elected, although it is admitted that people in republics have the freedom of ridding “non-benevolent” (不仁) presidents from power, and are free to re-elect virtuous ones. The best form of government is therefore constitutional monarchy, in which both the evils of despotism and “the harms of elections” (撰擧の害) have been eliminated. The subjects of the Japanese empire, it is stated, are “truly under the rule of the most constitutional monarchy, and obey the most respectable and dignified constitution” (我が帝國の臣民は實に最も超絶する立憲君主國の下に統治せられ最も尊重すべき欽定憲法を奉體するものなり). Noguchi Yasuoki, Chūtō kyōiku chiri kyōkasho: Honpō no bu, 130. (There are no attempts made to explain how a constitutional monarchy is spared from the harms of corruption, or in what way the young constitutional monarchy of Japan excels the European constitutional monarchies, from which it had borrowed its essence.)
alternative to the Qing authorities. In 1906 the court signalled that it would move towards constitutional monarchism, and steps were taken in that direction, such as the convention of the first Provincial Assemblies in 1909, one year after Cixi’s death. The process came to an abrupt but natural end with the overthrow of the dynasty in 1911 and the rise of the Republic.

2.4 The adoption of a Japanese-style educational system

The Qing government’s educational reforms during the early 20th century, put in effect after the Empress Dowager had re-evaluated her earlier conservative stance, were carried out with inspiration drawn from Japan. As pointed out by Reynolds, the influence of the missionaries within the field of modern education had peaked between 1895 and 1898, but dropped dramatically after the Boxer disaster of 1899-1900. It was not until the Western powers, especially the United States, enrolled themselves in cultural diplomacy with China that Japan’s dominating position was challenged, and China began from 1908-1909 to incline towards Western advanced education and training. At first it was Japan, and not the Western world, which China approached during the beginning of the 20th century, when faced with the task of establishing a modern educational system, something which Meribeth E. Cameron also observes in her The Reform Movement in China 1898-1912: “Much as Occidental nations might flatter themselves that China in her regenerative process would copy them direct, she turned instead to Japan, a strange reversal of the process by which centuries before Japan had taken China as her teacher”. However, Japan’s influence on the Chinese

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104 Reynolds, 9-11.
education system, which reached its height during the exultation in China over Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905, gradually began to decrease with the escalating sense of distrust towards Japan’s actions to expand its influence in Manchuria. Japan’s expansionist aims gave rise to a sense of uneasiness among the Chinese political and business circles, and the unreserved admiration for Japan as a model to copy cooled off. The Chinese, increasingly aware of the true motives behind Japanese activities in the north, looked with suspicion at the mighty empire of Japan, which had developed an industry hungry for raw materials and now had set its eyes on the natural resources of China. Nevertheless, initially, before the faith in secondary school], 6th ed. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hirufumikan, 1905): Gaikoku no bu [Foreign countries]. Vol. 1, 47. Another Japanese textbook in geography for the middle school (first published in 1902) states as follows: “This country was once upon a time a well-known country for its culture, but today the educational arrangements are in a poor condition. Hence, although [China] has something which resembles a school system, it is very incomplete, and there is an extreme lack of [modern] facilities. Recently an imperial edict issued that a university is to be established in Beijing, higher schools [or colleges] in each [province], middle schools in each [city] and rural schools in each [county]. There are great plans for improvements and progress, and there is a desire to master modern scholarship and art. [China] employs people from our country, and year after year large numbers of [Chinese] students are sent to study in our country.” (本邦は昔時文化を以て世に著はれしを、近時は教育の業は振はず。従て学校組織の如きも、整然たる脈理なく、設備極めて不完全なり。近時北京に大學堂、各省城に高等學堂、各府・直隸州に中學堂、各州縣に小學堂を創設すべき上諭を發し、大に改良進歩を企畫し、日新の學藝を修めんと欲して、我邦人を聘用し、又年年多數の留學生を本邦に送るに至れり。) Kamei Chūichi 龜井忠一, Gaikoku shinchiri 外國新地理 [A new geography on foreign countries], 6th ed. (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1905). Vol. 1, 49.

106 Cameron, 80.
107 Bastid, 81.
108 Wang Feng-Gang, 132-133. Japan’s desire to exploit and lay her hand on the natural resources of Manchuria reveals itself in Japanese geography textbooks. In a geography reader published in 1911, aimed at the second and third years in the higher schools for girls (kōhō jogakkō 高等女學校), for example, the geography of Manchuria (Manshū 滿洲) precedes the chapter on the geography of Asia (in which “the state of Qing 清國 is discussed). Japan’s rights and interests in Manchuria (mining, railways and forestry) are, together with the Japanese concession of Kantōshū, described in great detail. By discussing the geography of Manchuria and that of “the state of Qing” in separate chapters, the students were given the impression that Manchuria was separate from the rest of China, and laid within Japan’s sphere of interest. It is also observed that the relations between the Han people and the Manchu minority which holds political power never has been harmonious (滿漢之關係往往相調和せず・). Yoda Yutaka 依田豊, Joshi chirikyōkasho 女子地理教科書 [A geography textbook for girls]: Gaikoku hen 外國篇 [Foreign countries], (Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1911), 1-9, 23. In a normal school textbook on foreign geography (first published in 1905) the first chapter (shō 章) in the first section (hen 編) discusses the Japanese concession of Kantōshū, while the second chapter deals with the rest of Manchuria. The first chapter in the second section gives a general introduction to Asia, and it is not until the second chapter of this section that the geography of China (here referred to as Qing 清 and Shina 支那) is discussed. The general introduction to Asia is illustrated with a map of Eurasia and Asia titled “the great powers sphere of influence in Asia” (the map shows where Europeans and Americans live and how their power is distributed in Asia), and in the chapter on China the “great powers” are blamed for their infringements on Chinese soil: “The country [China] has now become the object of attention for the great powers. The great powers occupy the strategic points along the coast, or strive to obtain railroad and mining concessions. But in recent time the people of this country have little by little started to wake up, and make efforts in getting back their rights and interests.” (此國は今や列強環視の中になり。列強は沿海の要地を占め、或は 鐵道・礦山等の利権を得るに汲汲たるものあり。然れども此民も近時覚醒して、利権の回収に努むに至れり。) Obviously, only Western encroachments in China are to be blamed, not Japan’s. Yamasaki Naokata 山崎直方, Gaikoku chirikyōkasho 外國地理教科書 [A
Japan had started to fade, Chinese officials generally turned their back on Western expertise, preferring Japanese instructors and educators, and took hundreds of Japanese into service between 1901 and 1911.\textsuperscript{109} During the first years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century westerners even complained about the “Japanization of China”.\textsuperscript{110} In 1902 the head of the Imperial University in Beijing, Zhang Baixi (1847-1907), a former disciple of Kang Youwei, dismissed all the Christian missionaries and ex-custom officials who taught at the university, replacing them with professors from Japan.\textsuperscript{111} Missionary schools were not recognized by the government as public schools, and it was not likely that their graduates would be nominated for any official posts, except as teachers, interpreters or clerks, due to the Chinese officials’ suspicion of the missionaries and their affiliates.\textsuperscript{112} Of all foreigners employed in the new schools, the majority were from Japan.\textsuperscript{113} Given that religion was banned from being taught in the new schools, the missionaries were deterred from working there, and the graduates from the missionary schools were all too few to fill the huge demand for teachers educated in modern disciplines. The ordinary, old-style teachers, although well versed in the Classics, were of little use due to their ignorance of modern education. Japanese teachers, on the other hand, had received modern schooling, did not promote any inappropriate religious ideas in the classrooms and were less expensive to employ than their Western counterparts. Chinese students who had studied in Japan, sometimes only a couple of months, were also frequently employed as teachers on their return to China, although many of them only had a very superficial knowledge of the subjects they were set to teach.\textsuperscript{114}

In 1896, shortly after China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, the Office of Foreign Affairs sent thirteen Chinese students to study in Japan. Three years later, the Yangzi viceroy Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) and Liu Kunyi (1830-1902), on their own initiative, sent large groups of students to Japan.\textsuperscript{115} After 1901, during the central government’s new policies to reform China, the State actively encouraged their youth to pursue their studies in Japan, and the number of Chinese who headed for Japan increased dramatically. The step taken in 1901 to replace the old civil service examination’s “eight-legged essay” (the traditional format of commentary on classical texts which hitherto had shaped the framework of how politics and

\textsuperscript{109} Reynolds, 10.
\textsuperscript{110} Bastid, 45.
\textsuperscript{111} Wang Feng-Gang, 60; Cameron, 69; Reynolds, 108-109.
\textsuperscript{112} Cameron, 84; Wang, 62.
\textsuperscript{113} Bastid, 44.
\textsuperscript{114} Cameron, 76; Borthwick, 118; Wang Feng-Gang, 107.
\textsuperscript{115} Reynolds, 46; Wang Feng-Gang, 120.
philosophy was to be interpreted) with essays on more up-to-date themes, including foreign government and science, stimulated interest in foreign education.\footnote{116} With Japan’s victory over Russia, which was taken as a confirmation of the fitness of the Japanese education system, the civil service examination system was finally abandoned in 1905. Interest in Japan now reached significant proportions, and thousands of students, usually self-supporting, went to Japan. Japan’s war victory spurred the enthusiasm for reform, and the modern schools in China also gained in prestige and popularity.\footnote{117}

Zhang Zhidong, one of the key officials during the late 19th and early 20th centuries who played a major role in the government’s attempt to promote modern education, had already in his famous Quanxuepian 勧學篇 [Exhortation of Study] of 1898 encouraged Chinese students to study in Japan on the grounds that it was cheaper to study there than in Europe and that the Chinese and Japanese shared the same racial and cultural background (tongwen tongzhong 同文同種).\footnote{118} Moreover, Zhang observed that it was easier to supervise Chinese students in the neighbouring Japan than in more distant Western countries, and he was also convinced that

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\textsuperscript{116} Wang Feng-Gang, 121; Cameron, 78; Harrell, 65-66; Dillon, 136. The traditional educational system of China had since long been exposed to sharp criticism in Japan, and was a common theme in Japanese geography textbooks. An early Meiji geography textbook (first published in 1870) makes the following remark: “From the imperial court down to every urban prefecture, there are altogether no less than ten thousand prestigious governmental officials, and the number of superfluous public servants is besides extremely high. They have all been appointed posts as officials after having shown talent in rigorous examinations, and are sent all over China as garrisonal or prefectural officials etc. However, the general outlines for passing the civil examinations is to write a dissertation out of touch with reality. Though the only field to be examined is whether they can compose essays or not, the graduates are given official posts as garrisonal or prefectural officials after having shown talent in rigorous examinations, and are sent all over China to study in Japan on the grounds that it was cheaper to study there than in Europe and that the Chinese and Japanese shared the same racial and cultural background (tongwen tongzhong 同文同種). Moreover, Zhang observed that it was easier to supervise Chinese students in the neighbouring Japan than in more distant Western countries, and he was also convinced that
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\textsuperscript{117} Wang Feng-Gang, 121; Cameron, 78; Harrell, 65-67; Reynolds, 49; Huang Shunli 黃順利, Zhongguo jindai sixinshu tansu 中國思想文化史探論. English title: Research on the History of the Idea and Culture in Modern China (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2005), 463; Bastid, 42-43.

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\textsuperscript{118} Huang Shunli, 462. Zhang Zhidong was influenced by the Japanese notion of dōbun dōshu 同文同種 (“common culture, same race”). See section 2.6 in this thesis.
the Japanese had already managed to bring together and translate the most important Western works, which he imagined would be easily absorbed by Chinese students, who could easily learn the Japanese script due to its similarities with written Chinese.\footnote{William Ayers, \textit{Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China} (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 136; Borthwick, 67. During the reform movement of 1898 Kang Youwei similarly also expressed the opinion that virtually all useful Western books had been translated into Japanese. Kang suggested that Japanese translations of Western books should be rendered into Chinese, which would speed up the process of attaining foreign knowledge due to the ease with which Japanese could be translated into Chinese. Kang had also suggested that China should send students to study science and technology in the West, like Japan did. However, Kang considered Germany more suitable than France because of the former’s monarchical form of government. Young self-financing students were to be encouraged to pursue their studies in Japan because of the low cost of studying there. Hsiao, 382.}

Zhang was an admirer of the conservatism of late Meiji (distant from the American liberal influences of early Meiji) and appreciated the importance the Japanese conservatives ascribed to Confucian values, apparent in the Japanese Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890. He particularly liked the way schoolchildren were taught to be patriotic and loyal subjects within the framework of elementary education.\footnote{Borthwick, 67. Zhang Zhidong feared general elections, and took the American system as a warning example. In his \textit{Quanxuepian} Zhang Zhidong remarks: “Americans who have come to China have themselves spoken of the defects of their public elections. The people below usually cherish selfish plans and those above play favourites, which has caused great trouble. Those Chinese who praise it are all talking without thorough investigation.” Quoted in Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, 168.}

Zhang, although deeply mistrusting Christianity, nevertheless seems to have acknowledged its function as a unifying force for Westerners to identify themselves with. In his \textit{Quanxuepian} he argued that Confucianism and the Chinese Classics ought to have the same place in modern Chinese schools as Christianity and Latin had in the West:

In all schools in foreign countries the Bible of Jesus Christ must be read every day to illustrate their religion. In grade schools Latin must be learned first to ensure the preservation of antiquity. The map of their own country must be familiar first, before the map of the whole globe is to be examined, to show that there is a proper order… A Chinese scholar not versed in Chinese knowledge resembles a man who does not know his own surname, or a riding horse without bridle, or a boat without a rudder; the more profound his Western knowledge the more severe will be his contempt for China. Even though there are such scholars, who have a broad knowledge of things and are equipped with many abilities, how can the country make use of them?\footnote{Quoted in Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, 169.}

“Chinese knowledge” should, however, not merely play a role similar to what Christianity supposedly did in Western schools. It should also function as a vaccine against it. Zhang’s reasoning remind us somewhat of that of Ito Hirobumi, who argued for a native alternative to the Christian “linchpin” to foster trustworthy and united citizens. To Zhang, “Chinese knowledge” apparently corresponded to the native (largely Confucian) values which formed
the ideal Chinese citizen, virtues which, if spiritually embraced, would bring forth reliable men who could make use of "Western learning" without risking their Chinese soul:

Chinese learning is inner learning. Western learning is outer learning. Chinese learning is for regulating the body and mind. Western learning is for managing the affairs of the world. It is not necessary to seek for everything in the classics. But it is not necessary to contravene the meaning of the classics. If one’s heart is the heart of the sages and one’s actions are the actions of the sages, with filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty, and sincerity accepted as virtue, and the respect for the ruler and concern for the people accepted as (principles of) government, then no harm will befall the disciples of Confucius even though they use machines and speed over railroads.\footnote{122}

As pointed out by Reynolds, Zhang’s famous \textit{ti-yong} (體用) formula, which dictated that the “essence” (\textit{ti}) of “Chinese knowledge” (also referred to as “old knowledge”) should be combined with “the utility” (yong) of “Western knowledge” (also referred to as “new knowledge”), reveals strong similarities with Meiji Japanese approaches, as captured in the maxim “Japanese spirit and Western learning”.\footnote{123} Zhang might very well have been inspired by Buddhist philosophy from the Tang dynasty and Neo-Confucianism from the Song dynasty in his formulation of his \textit{ti-yong} dichotomy, as suggested by Ayers.\footnote{124} However, the formula cannot merely be understood from the perspective of ancient Chinese philosophy, considering the extent to which Zhang was also influenced by Meiji thinking.\footnote{125}

New Western knowledge was largely to be extracted from Japan, which had already been able to successfully combine old and new, east and west, and was therefore considered a suitable model to follow. Within the field of education, it was Japan’s German-inspired educational system that was seen as the winning concept. Both Germany and Japan had proved their capability in warfare, and China, having experienced a series of heavy losses since the Opium War, sought to copy the formula for power and strength. After China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai put plentiful effort into building up their so-called New Armies, in central and northern China respectively. These units within the regular forces were fashioned and trained after the German model, which had already been adopted in Japan and proven highly efficient during the Sino-Japanese War.\footnote{126} The initial

\textsuperscript{122} Quoted in Ayers, 160.
\textsuperscript{123} Reynolds, 141-148, 244 note 44.
\textsuperscript{124} Ayers, 3.
\textsuperscript{125} See also section 2.8 in this thesis.
\textsuperscript{126} Harrison, 119. Japan had in the 1880’s converted to the Prussian military system, a process which took place alongside the drafting on the Prussian-style constitution of 1889, wherefore Japan was consequently labelled as “the Prussia of the Far East”. Hata Ikuhiko, “Armed forces”, in \textit{Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan}, 1: 86.
focus on Germany in military affairs, however, did gradually shift towards Japan, the new mediator of know-how in the area of modern warfare. New skills, tactics, drills and the like were usually conveyed through Japanese channels, and large numbers of Japanese military instructors started to arrive in China, while Chinese military personnel went to Japan to receive training. Japanese influence on military affairs was especially eye-catching after Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905. Both Zhang Zhidong’s and Yuan Shikai’s military schools were however, already by 1902, entirely fashioned after Japanese models.\textsuperscript{127}

In July 1901, Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi responded to Cixi’s hurried call for social and political reforms in three memorials. In the first memorial, which dealt with education, Zhang and Liu presented their suggestions for reforms by alluding to China’s ancient past, so as to convince the more conservative officials that there were well-grounded reasons for the changes they suggested.\textsuperscript{128} Zhang and Liu observed that during the Three Dynasties there had been equal emphasis on civil and military affairs. The students were educated in rites, writing music and the like, as well as in martial arts such as archery and charioteering, so the educational system had been a blend of “essence” (\textit{ti}) and “utility” (\textit{yong}).\textsuperscript{129} An educated person was hence both soldier and scholar in one and the same person, which was also true for Confucius, who had been a product of this kind of schooling.\textsuperscript{130} Thus the adoption of a modern educational system would be something of a revival of ancient traditions, which unfortunately had been lost in China and therefore had to be brought back from abroad, where they supposedly had survived.\textsuperscript{131}

Of all foreign educational systems, Zhang and Liu were especially attracted to the militaristic German and Japanese models.\textsuperscript{132} There was however no question about which of these related educational systems was considered to be the most suitable. The memorial was concluded with a plea in which Zhang and Liu begged “[…] our Emperor to give his utmost consideration to the perilous situation in which the country now finds itself suggesting that the regulations governing the Japanese national school system be quickly discussed in detail, and adopted, thereby strengthening the hearts of the people and steadying the foundations of the nation”.\textsuperscript{133}

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\textsuperscript{127} Reynolds, 155-160.
\textsuperscript{128} Peake, 37.
\textsuperscript{129} Ayers, 206. The Three Dynasties defines the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, i.e. China’s first dynasties, from an ancient past hidden in mythological obscurity during the Xia and Shang dynasties, unto the end of China’s classical period at the fall of Eastern Zhou in 256 B.C.
\textsuperscript{130} Peake, 38.
\textsuperscript{131} Ayers, 206.
\textsuperscript{132} Peake, 39.
\textsuperscript{133} Cited in Peake, 39-40.
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Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai wanted literate recruits with decent backgrounds for their New Armies, and the purpose of the new educational system, as proposed by Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi, was to foster a generation of new scholars who could also make good soldiers. The ideal was the refined warrior, or the warlike scholar, who although a Confucian at heart, knew how to handle a modern gun. The Chinese spirit, embodied in the Chinese Classics, was to be complemented with modern knowledge of Western origin.

Although the 1901 memorial on education only conveyed an interest in reforming the education of the sons of the gentry, it nevertheless sparked off a series of imperial decrees, one of which, issued in September 1901, ordered that the provincial academies should be turned into colleges, the prefectural schools into middle schools, and the district schools into primary schools. The new institutions for learning were to offer modern education based on a mixed curriculum. By 1902, Zhang Zhidong had reconsidered his opinion on the aims of education, and in a memorial in October that year he stressed the importance of primary schools to enlighten the masses. He emphasized the importance of normal schools, which would provide China with the teachers so badly needed in order to successfully establish education for the broader layers of the population. Considering China’s lack of funds and the many school-aged children, Zhang did not expect China to instantly reach the same level of school attendance as Japan; the initial aim was to provide some 10 to 20 percent of the eligible population with primary education.

However, despite all attempts at reform, people in general still preferred traditional education which provided the knowledge necessary for passing the civil service examinations, the usual way to official positions, wealth and power. Already in February 1903, Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai had suggested in a memorial that the civil service system should be gradually abandoned to make the new schools more popular, but it would take another two memorials, backed up by other influential officials, to persuade the court to abandon it. The last memorial, presented in August 1905, shortly after Japan’s victory over Russia, referred to the Japanese educational system as the main reason for Japan’s victory. The court, by now fully convinced of the advantage of modern education, issued a decree the following month which put an end to the ancient civil service system and paved the way for the new educational system.

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134 Harrison, 119.
135 Ayers, 207.
136 Hsü, 410-411.
137 Ayers, 224-225.
138 Peake, 46-49; Cameron, 73; Ayers, 242-244.
Zhang Zhidong, Zhang Boxi and the Mongol bannerman Rong Qing (1854-1912) had in 1903 been assigned the mission to draft the regulations for the new schools, which would cohere with the rather sweepingly formulated imperial edicts of 1901 (Rong Qing and Zhang Zhidong became the first heads of the Ministry of Education, 1905-1907 and 1907-1909 respectively). These school laws, presented in January 1904, were to form the general outlines for a nationwide educational system. The result was essentially an adapted version of the Japanese educational system.\(^{139}\) The general aims of the educational system were to foster patriotic and loyal citizens with a purely Chinese identity, who, armoured with what was originally Western knowledge, could become useful to the State:

The establishing of [the new system of] education aims, no matter what level of school, at allowing loyalty and filial piety to form the fundamental principles, and to make the study of the Classics and the Histories of the Middle Kingdom the foundation in studies, and to enable the students to earnestly set their hearts and skills straight and pure, before Western learning is to absorb their knowledge and refine their skills and abilities, [so that they], having fulfilled their period of duty, one day will become persons of solid use.\(^{140}\)

As pointed out by Yue-him Tam, the Chinese educational system of 1904 reveals strong similarities with the Japanese educational system of the 1880s, and largely appears to be a blend of elements borrowed from Motoda Eifu’s and Mori Arinori’s educational programmes.\(^{141}\) From Mori’s educational policies, as manifested in his many educational ordinances in the mid-1880s, the draftsmen borrowed the idea of education as a means to form public attitudes. Following Mori’s example of emphasising normal education, the teachers in the new schools were elevated to the position of civil servants and were, as representatives of the State, given the mission of fostering the coming generations in a spirit of patriotism, while the schoolchildren were to wear uniforms to remind them of their duty to study for the welfare of the State. The classroom teaching was to be complemented with military drills, and inspired by Motoda’s ideas on education, Confucianism was to form the major component in moral education. Christianity and other teachings which were considered to pose a threat to the State or to public morals were banned from being taught.\(^{142}\) Through educational indoctrination, Confucianism was to form the state religion/teaching which would

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139 Cameron, 71; Peake, 53; Reynolds, 139; Borthwick, 68, 73.
140 Cited in Chen Xuexun 陳學恂, Zhongguo jindai jiaoyu dashiji 《中國近代教育大事記》(A record of important matters in Chinese modern education) (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1981), 136. (立學宗旨，無論何等學堂，均以忠孝為本，以中國經史之學為基，俾學生心術壹歸于純正，而後以西學瀹其智識，練其藝能，務期他日成才，各適實用。)
141 Tam, 64-65.
142 Ibid.
bring together the citizens, just like State-Shinto was employed for the same purpose in Japan. The new educational system fell under the responsibility of the Xueba, the Ministry of Education, established in December 1905 and modelled after the Japanese Monbushō as the central agency in educational matters.

The plan was to establish lower primary schools all across China, and the enforcement of lower primary education was, according to one of the many decrees on education issued on 13th of January 1904, to “assure that there are no households in [any] county which do not engage in learning, and that there are no homes in which the children do not study”. Children about the age of six were to enter the lower primary school, which aimed at “enlightening [the children] with knowledge indispensable for life, provide them with the foundation of clear morals and patriotism, and through exercise and care allow their bodies to develop healthily”. Considerable time was dedicated to the study of the Chinese classics and the Chinese language, although the curriculum also included subjects such as ethics, history, geography, mathematics, natural science and gymnastics. The schoolchildren obviously had to be thoroughly indoctrinated with “Chinese knowledge” to be entrusted with “Western knowledge”. That is, they were to study the Chinese classics for two hours a day, six days per week, and were supposed to memorize Xiaojing (the Book of filial piety), Sishu (the Four Books i.e. the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects and the Books of Mencius) and large parts of the Liji yuepian (Abridged Version of the Books of Rites) before graduation from the lower primary school.

Most of the students attending the new schools were from rich families, so the authorities in 1906 decided to approve half-day schools, which would allow the sons of families of small means to receive some basic schooling. However, this initiative did not receive the response expected, and by 1909 there were fewer than one thousand such schools throughout China. In 1909, the government also established preparatory schools for poor

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143 Peake, 144-145.
144 Borthwick, 73; Tam, 66.
145 Cited in Sun Peiqing 孫培青 Zhongguo jiaoyu shi [The history of Chinese education], 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2000), 345. (使邑無不學之户、家無不學之童)
146 Ibid. (以啓其人生應有之智識、立其明倫理愛國家之根基、並調護兒童身體、令其發育為宗旨)
147 Peake, 51, 67.
148 Tam, 68-69.
149 Borthwick, 111-112.
children and illiterates, who after three years of schooling, one to three hours a day, were allowed to enter the fourth year of the lower primary school.\textsuperscript{150}

The five-year lower primary school was followed by the four-year higher primary school, which aimed at “fostering the innate goodness of the people, increasing the knowledge of the people, and strengthening the bodies and minds of the people”.\textsuperscript{151} The curriculum was similar to that of the lower primary school but also included drawing and the learning of patriotic songs.\textsuperscript{152} Only a few hours a week were dedicated to lessons in history and geography at the lower and higher primary schools. The courses in history at both levels only dealt with Chinese history, the course in geography at the lower primary school merely covered China and neighbouring countries, while the geography course at the higher primary school only gave a rather superficial introduction to the geography of foreign countries. Since only some five percent of those who graduated from the primary schools continued to the five-year middle school (where more importance was attached to “Western knowledge”) the absolute majority of the students only gained rather shallow knowledge of the world at large.\textsuperscript{153} Nevertheless, by introducing geography as an independent subject, China’s first modern educational system certainly offered Chinese children, to a considerably higher degree than ever before, systematized information about the world.

The middle school offered a “[…] higher general education for children between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, so as to prepare them to enter political and industrial life, or the various higher institutions of learning”.\textsuperscript{154} The study of the Classics and the Chinese language was still an important part of the curricula, but the students were now introduced to foreign languages (Japanese or English being compulsory), which were taught along with subjects such as geography, history and economics, besides subjects on natural sciences, such as chemistry, physics and biology.\textsuperscript{155} Parallel to middle schools were the lower normal schools, which educated lower and higher primary teachers, as well as other schools which offered more specialized programmes, such as industrial schools and schools of agriculture (less advanced programs in industry or agriculture were also available for those who had only graduated from the lower primary school). Above the middle school, there were various forms of schools of higher learning such as the higher schools (or provincial colleges) which offered three-year long courses specializing in arts, sciences, medicine and the like. There was also a

\textsuperscript{150} Zhang Huifen, 437.
\textsuperscript{151} Cited in Sun Peiqing, 345. (以培養國民之善性，擴充國民之智識，強壯國民之氣體為宗旨)
\textsuperscript{152} Cameron, 71.
\textsuperscript{153} Peake, 67-68.
\textsuperscript{154} Cited in Peake, 51.
\textsuperscript{155} Peake, 51, 67; Cameron, 71.
three-year preparatory school for the university, and a five-year upper normal school which educated middle school and lower normal school teachers, besides five-year schools for training students in foreign languages. At the top of the educational system was the Imperial University at Beijing with its eight faculties.\textsuperscript{156}

The new schools, which were to be administered within the framework of the new educational system, were for the most part community-funded, although there were also government-funded and, to a lesser degree, private ones.\textsuperscript{157} In 1909, there were more than 50,000 new schools (mostly lower primary schools) with altogether more than one and a half million students, which nevertheless only corresponded to some eight percent of all school-aged boys.\textsuperscript{158} The Qing authorities’ statistics on schooling in the various provinces are however unreliable, so it is difficult to exactly specify the number of schools and students in China at the time. There was, nevertheless, a clear increase in the number of schools (community-funded schools in particular) after the civil service system was abandoned in 1905, from some 10,000 schools throughout China that year to approximately five times the number four years later.\textsuperscript{159} In 1911, there were 86,318 primary schools with almost 2,800,000 students, an increase of almost 35,000 schools and 1,200,000 students two years earlier. The number of middle schools increased from 438 in 1909 to 832 in 1911, and the number of students increased from 38,881 to 97,965. The higher schools increased from 110 to 115, while the number of students doubled from 20,527 to 40,114.\textsuperscript{160}

The lower primary school was to be compulsory for boys, but girls had no place in the new educational system, in contrast to the Japanese educational system from which it otherwise drew its inspiration.\textsuperscript{161} The traditional lack of concern for educating females was, however, questioned by many reform-minded intellectuals, and nationalistic reasons were commonly used to argue for women’s education. Liang Qichao, for example, argued that females ought to receive education in order to “be able to assist their husbands above them, to be able to teach their sons below them, in the short run giving pleasure to their households, [and] in the long run even improving the race [of the nation]”.\textsuperscript{162} Women’s education was hardly seen as a measure to grant women equality with men. Rather, female schooling should provide women with an adequate education, which would allow them to spreading civic

\textsuperscript{156} Cameron, 71-72; Wang Feng-Gang, 67; Sun Peiqing, 344-346; Zhongguo da baikequanshu: Jiaoyu, 113-114.
\textsuperscript{157} Borthwick, 94.
\textsuperscript{158} Sun Peiqing, 348; Borthwick, 78, 152; Tam, 68.
\textsuperscript{159} Bortwick, 78, 94-95.
\textsuperscript{160} Tam, 68.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{162} Cited in Zhang Huifen, 426. (上可相夫、下可教子、近可宜家、遠可善種)
virtue to their children. It was moreover maintained that China was in need of strong women who could generate the strong offspring needed to produce good citizen soldiers. Since the physical weakness of women with bound feet was believed to be passed on to their sons, the custom was considered a threat to the nation.

However, by the medium of overseas journals, Chinese females studying in Tokyo expressed the idea that women ought to be active as participants in the Chinese nation, and not merely function as passive breeders, feeders and teachers of coming generations of citizens. Wang Lian, a female student had travelled to Japan in 1902, made the following reflection demonstrating this new stance:

I did not understand what a nation was or what the importance of female education was. Then when I went to Japan, I often heard people talk about the nation. After asking several questions, I finally began to understand...when people unite they form a family, when families unite they form a nation. All people belong to a nation, and all must make the nation their own. This means females are also part of the nation. One must act for the nation in order to be worthy of self-respect.

It was not until 1907 that education for girls was made an integrated part of the Chinese national school system. School regulations, however, were only issued for girls’ primary schools and lower normal schools. In 1907, there were 391 government girls’ schools in China attended by some 11,000 female students. In 1909, the number of female students

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163 Bastid, 80-81.
164 Harrison, 128.
165 Joan Judge, “Reforming the Feminine: Female Literacy and the Legacy of 1898”, in Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China, eds. Rebecca E. Karl & Peter Zarrow (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harward University Press, 2002), 173.
166 Cited in Judge, 173. Wang Lian’s observation also gives a hint of how the concept of a Chinese nation was interpreted from a Meiji Japanese setting. The idea that all Japanese are part of one large family, as members of the same state/nation, was constantly propagated throughout the Japanese educational system. Noguchi’s secondary geography textbook from 1896, for example, explains that a piece of land needs more than inhabitants to be called a state. It also requires a society with a supreme ruler (shukensha 主權者) and subjects (hichisha 被治者). The state is likened with the harmonious unity of a family (kazoku 家族) in which the head of the household (shujin 主人) holds sway over his obedient family members. The emergence of states is described as a part of the evolution. During the barbarous ages of remote antiquity there were no states, but with the lapse of time tribes controlled by chieftains gradually amalgamated into kingdoms, ruled by sovereigns enthroned because of their prowess and superiority. The subjects hence carefully obeyed the commands of the sovereign, each individual respecting the limits of his authority, so the people could start to enjoy peace and prosperity for the first time. Loyalty and obedience, the discourse implies, are preconditions for stability and wealth. The more loyal and devoted the citizens are, the better they will cooperate in unison. That is, obedience and submission to the imperial authorities are qualities of crucial importance for the survival and development of the nation. Noguchi Yasuoki, Chiūō kyōiku Chirikyōkasho: Honpō no bu, 127-129.
167 Bortwick, 116; Cameron, 72.
168 Harrison, 127.
was still very low and only 13,489 girls attended school.\text{\textsuperscript{169}} Considering that China’s population was estimated to be 400 million, only an extremely small part of the female half of the population received any modern education (or any other form of education for that matter).\text{\textsuperscript{170}}

The Chinese educational system of 1904 was in use until 1911, although additions and adaptations were made throughout the period. The general aims of the educational system were somewhat revised in the spring of 1906 by the same trio who had produced the first version of 1904. The new version more specifically addressed what the newly established Ministry of Education expected from the educational system, calling for the promotion of loyalty to the throne (zhongjun 忠君), the veneration of Confucius (zunkong 尊孔), the advancing of public good (shanggong 尚公), the exalting of martial spirit (shangwu 尚武) and an emphasis on utility (shangshi 尚實).\text{\textsuperscript{171}} The educational system was to follow the German and Japanese examples, emphasizing the importance of respect for the monarch as the head of the state. Japanese primary textbooks, it was observed, taught Japanese schoolchildren to care for their nation, so young Japanese people harboured a will to cleanse their nation from disgrace. The Japanese elite identified their own shame and glory with that of the nation — the ultimate manifestation of the unity between monarch and people as one and the same entity. Since all educational systems aim at safeguarding the indigenous national cultural heritage, as apparent in the national language, literature, history, customs and religion, the new educational system was also to preserve China’s native national identity. Confucius’s allegedly morally superior doctrines were to be upheld as the state-religion/teaching of China, and Confucianism was, in the long run, also to form the new world religion/teaching. Confucius’s birthday was to be annually honoured with ceremonies and music.\text{\textsuperscript{172}}

The advancing of the public good aimed at trying “to make everyone capable of looking upon others as they look upon themselves and [enable the citizens] to love their country as much as they love their own family”.\text{\textsuperscript{173}} The Chinese were allegedly unable to identify themselves with other Chinese as members of the same community, and even looked upon the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, not to mention people in other provinces, as strangers and outsiders. Since the foundation of a strong state depends not merely on the deeds of a few individual heroes, schoolchildren were to be taught the virtues of cooperation and

\textsuperscript{169} Borthwick, 118.
\textsuperscript{170} Harrison, 127.
\textsuperscript{171} Sun Peiqing, 349.
\textsuperscript{172} Peake, 64-65.
\textsuperscript{173} Cited in Sun Peiqing, 349. (務使人人皆能視人猶己，愛國如家)
patriotism.\textsuperscript{174} As for encouraging a martial spirit, it was stressed that Japan and the Western nations alike fostered their citizens to be potential soldiers prepared to take to arms when necessary, and ready to meet an honourable death on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{175} In order to make the Chinese schoolchildren more soldierly, physical education was to become an essential part of the education: “The youngest ones are to receive their physical training by means of play and exercise, and those slightly older are to be taught strict discipline through military-styled exercises”.\textsuperscript{176} It was also directed that “all middle school and primary school textbooks must uphold the principle of citizens in arms”.\textsuperscript{177} The emphasis on utility was to ensure that the students were provided with practical skills which would enable them to pursue careers in agriculture, manufacturing or business.\textsuperscript{178} Empty theorizing was to be replaced with factual knowledge and an evidence-based scientific approach.\textsuperscript{179}

Despite the great plans for educating the masses, China’s first modern educational system was not adequate to educate all the millions of illiterate people across China. The educational system affected first and foremost the education of the elite, and the implementation of the educational system lagged behind in rural and poor regions.\textsuperscript{180} Due to the lack of properly educated teachers, many of the new schools in the countryside were only modern on paper and continued to teach the classics with traditional methods even into the 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{181} In 1909, the Ministry of Education maintained that out of the asserted number of 89,000 teachers employed in the new schools, 53,000 were graduates from the new schools in China or had received schooling in Japan, while the rest of the teachers, in a strict sense, lacked the formal qualifications required to teach in the primary school, but had nevertheless been given permission to teach after having passed an examination.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{174} Peake, 65.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{176} Cited in Sun Peiqing, 349. (幼稚者以遊戲體操發育身體，稍長者以兵式體操嚴整其紀律)
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid. (凡中小學堂各種教科書，必寓軍國主義)
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} Peake, 66.
\textsuperscript{180} Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, \textit{Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China} (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1979), 156, 173.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 162.
\textsuperscript{182} Borthwick, 120.
2.5 The new textbooks

After the Qing authorities had signalled in 1901 that a modern school system was to be established, vast quantities of Japanese textbooks were rendered into Chinese due to the shortage of modern textbooks. Class lectures and notes by Japanese teaching in both China and Japan were also frequently published to make up for the lack of teaching materials. The Chinese legation in Tokyo even opened a special department for the purpose of translating textbooks in 1901, and numerous Chinese at translation bureaus across China were also engaged in translating everything from primary textbooks to advanced scientific works, often assisted by Japanese co-workers. Many Japanese translators had also been sent to China by the Japanese government. In 1902, the Imperial University (today Beijing University) had also accepted, from H. E. Uchida, Japanese Minister at Beijing, a complete set of all textbooks used in all schools, colleges and universities in Japan, together with a large number of textbooks, donated on the initiative of Japanese private educational institutions.

The Western missionaries’ publications for the most part only concerned religious matters, and during the early 20th century most of the yet relatively few Western works translated into Chinese were second-hand translations from Japanese. The majority of articles and books on the West were likewise also based on Japanese sources. Of a total of 573 works on varying subjects translated in 1902-1904, only 16.8 percent were translations from British or American sources, while as much as 62.2 percent were translations from Japanese sources. 21 percent of the books were on social sciences, 24 percent on history or geography, 21 percent on natural science, 10.5 percent on applied sciences, 6.5 percent on philosophy, and 4.8 percent on literature. By the turn of the 20th century, Japan had taken the lead as the foremost provider of new knowledge to China, far ahead of the Western powers, and most of the textbooks used within the new educational system were consequently fashioned after Japanese prototypes.

Inspired by Japan’s recent plans of having state-authorized textbooks replaced by state-issued textbooks, the Qing authorities decided that the State was to be in charge of editing school texts. The Imperial University, the head of the school system before the establishment

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183 Reynolds, 117.
184 Wang Feng-Gang, 110-111.
185 Ibid., 59-60.
186 Bastid, 48-49.
187 Hsü, 426.
188 Ibid.
of the Ministry of Education in 1905, had begun to plan for the compilation of school texts on
the classics, history, geography, ethics and literature as early as 1902, when the first
regulations for the new schools were issued. However, when this task was later passed on
to the Ministry of Education’s textbook section, little was still accomplished. Although the
section in 1909 presented lists of prescribed texts for each grade, many of the recommended
series only existed on these lists. When initially faced with the dilemma of what the teachers
were to teach in the new schools, Zhang Zhidong had suggested that they should make use of
the large quantities of teaching materials issued in Shanghai, and soon different publishing
houses, above all Commercial Press, met the high demand for educational literature in general
and modern textbooks in particular. Commercial Press published about sixty different Chinese
language textbooks, beside large numbers of other books to be used in the classroom or for
self-teaching.

The conversion of a traditional school into a modern primary school often meant that
the old schoolmaster continued to teach the Classics in the traditional fashion, although
complementing his teaching with lessons from a modern textbook. The new textbooks,
purchased at a low price throughout China, instructed both the teachers and the schoolchildren
about what made a modern school, and were in that respect more important than the
government regulations. By means of modern educational literature, such as the teachers’
manuals which complemented the new textbooks, the traditional schoolteachers of China
were to be moulded into modern pedagogues, ready to serve their local communities as lower
primary teachers.

In 1902, motivated by the government’s new school regulations and preliminary
guidelines for textbooks, Commercial Press joined hands with the Japanese publishing house
Kinkōdō and became a Sino-Japanese enterprise between 1903 and 1913. With new capital
and with Nagao Ameyama (a higher normal school professor from Japan) as head of the
Compilation and Translation Division, Commercial Press soon outran the two publishing
houses Wenming shuju and Guangyi shuju, which hitherto had been associated with the
publication of new school textbooks. In 1903, Commercial Press, with Japanese assistance,
began the project of compiling a set of modern textbooks, Zuixin jiaokeshu (New Text Book

189 Borthwick, 121.
190 Ibid., Sakakida Rawski, 160.
191 Harrison, 92.
192 Sakakida Rawski, 160.
193 Reynolds, 121.
Series), which was to meet the demands of the authorities. An early review of Commercial Press’s government-approved primary school textbooks, written by a Mr. John Darroch in 1906, reads:

On the thirteenth day of this month (June) the native papers in Shanghai published a set of regulations promulgated by the Board of Education [the Ministry of Education]. The Board intimates that it is prepared to receive for examination text-books intended for use in primary schools, and the Board will allow its imprimatur to be printed on the title-pages of such books as satisfy its requirements. The books thus approved will, it is presumed, be largely if not exclusively, be used in the primary schools throughout the Empire.

China has been a “literary country” for millennia but the Board of Education is a creation of the present year. Schools which profess to be conducted on modern lines are springing up all over China and the course of study in each differs according to the idiosyncracies of the various promoters and teachers. The action of the Board of Education in thus selecting and stamping with its approval certain text-books is evidently aimed at evolving order out of the present chaos.

There are twenty-two regulations in the notification issued. The first article says “This Board is put in charge of the whole Empire. Seeing that our country now is at the inception of its educational system it is important that we secure unity of administration and see that the principles on which action is based are correct. We therefore first give attention to text-books. Pending the time when the Board will issue its own books we shall select the books printed by various publishers and approve those that are suitable in order to provide for the needs of the schools.”

The last article is “The books which have been examined now are selected because of the pressing need of the time and are approved for temporary use, therefore they shall be stamped “First set of books for primary schools; temporarily approved.”

The list of books submitted to and approved by the Board of Education has not yet been published but I understand that the majority of the books thus favoured are the property of the Commercial Press.

The books mentioned in Darroch’s review include primary school textbooks and teachers’ manuals within the fields of ethics, arithmetic, abacus arithmetic, Chinese history, geography and the Chinese language, besides textbooks in discipline, pedagogy and the history of education aimed at normal schools. The only books actually reviewed by Darroch, however, are the textbooks Zuixin chudeng xiaoxue xiushen jiaokeshu with the English title Elementary Ethics (all the books, though written in Chinese, have English titles) and Zuixin chudeng xiaoxue guowen jiaokeshu (First Grade Chinese Reader for Primary School), and the teachers’

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194 Zheng Ning 張寧 and Zhang Renfeng 張人鳳, “Shangwu yinshuguan de zuixin chudeng xiaoxue bisuan jiaokeshu jianjie” 商務印書館的《最新初等小學筆算教科書》簡介 [A brief introduction to Commercial Press’s new primary school textbook in elementary arithmetic], in Shangwu yinshuguan yibaiyishi nian 商務印書館一百一十年 [Commercial Press 110 years], ed. Wang Tao 王濤 and others (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009), 310-311.

195 Darroch, 210-211.
manuals *Chudeng xiaoxue xiushen jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa (Methods for Teaching Elementary Ethics)* and *Chudeng xiaoxue guowen jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa (A Method for Teaching Chinese National Readers).* The Chinese Reader was probably one of the most common textbooks used in the Chinese primary schools during the early 20th century, and by 1906 355,000 copies had been sold, and 67,000 copies of the adhering teachers’ manual. The reviewer mentions the textbook on Ethics with approval, although he finds the archaic language unsuitable, and is of the opinion that it would have been better if it had been written in more modern language. The response to *First Grade Chinese Reader for Primary School* is also positive:

Many lessons are designed to stimulate patriotism. The history of the intercourse of foreigners with China is related in Vol. X. The sketch, though necessarily brief, begins with the Tang Dynasty and ends with the Boxer movement. It concludes “Alas! Since the opium war, sixty years ago, we have had to surrender territory eight times. We have lost three dependences and have been mulcted in indemnities to the value of 7,000,000,000 (taels).” Is it not pitiable? […] Vol. IX contains a short history of Chinese commercial intercourse with the rest of the world. Appended is a list of the dates of the various treaties. “Our country pursued a policy of seclusion and failed to understand outside affairs, so when foreigners first came to China, we opposed their landing. They compelled us by force or arms to admit them, but the treaties being the result of our defeat were invariably to our disadvantage. Our people despised the foreigner and often rudely broke the treaties; this brought the foreigner again with troops upon us and yielding to force majeure we conceded all his demands, but our country was greatly injured. Now there are forty ports at which foreigners are allowed to trade, but preachers (傳教之徒) are all over the country.”

A short history of Christianity, with a picture of its founder, is given in Vol. VIII. The Nestorian, Greek, Catholic and Protestant churches are referred to and the tone of the narrative is entirely unobjectionable. The style used in the composition of these lessons is beyond praise. The writers are evidently first class Chinese scholars.

As understood from Darroch’s review, this textbook was designed to promote a sense of love for the pupils’ own country. That is, the aim was to foster citizens who were zealous for China’s freedom and rights and had some understanding about the rest of the world, which was necessary in order to protect the nation from being taken advantage of by foreign powers. However, the nationalism promoted in the modern textbooks was, as pointed out by Harrison, not necessarily identical with the Meiji-style emperor-centred state-patriotism that the Qing
wanted to instil in the population. The reform-minded authors and publishers tended to accentuate the Chinese nation rather than the Qing throne, but they did not actively encourage revolution and stayed within the bounds of Qing law so as not to miss out on the opportunities in the lucrative textbook market. The textbooks were nevertheless compiled in an intellectual environment in which Meiji Japanese ideas totally dominated the field of education.

As revealed by Saya Makito, the Sino-Japanese War was seen in Japan as a golden opportunity to make use of the national educational system to promote national unity. In particular physical education, history and geography were regarded as important channels for fostering a sense of national unity. With the adoption of the Meiji-inspired educational system in China during the early 20th century, geography became a subject which aimed at developing nationalism in China as well. The preface to Commercial Press’s geography textbook for the higher primary school, for example, states that one of the main aims of the textbook, besides the obvious purpose of giving the schoolchildren a rough understanding of geography, is to “arouse nationalism [alt. the thought/idea/ideology of a nation]” (激發國家思想). Geography, it is made very clear, might be employed as a tool for implanting patriotism in the school children: “Reading geographical descriptions easily gives an idea of the rise and fall of nations. This book, whenever found necessary, always points out the reasons behind the failures of our ancestral country and praises the causes behind the strength and prosperity of our neighbouring country [i.e. Japan], and thereby imbues the children with a spirit of patriotism”.

The introduction to another of Commercial Press’s widely read geography textbook, compiled by the same educator but primarily aimed at the middle school, states that the textbook is “the result of [data] selected and put together from dozens of Eastern [i.e. Japanese], Western, as well as native geographical records, and draws attention to the essential point of racial struggle, so as to arouse the [patriotic/nationalistic] spirit of the

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200 Harrison, 93.
201 Saya, 101.
203 Ibid. (讀地志易生國家興衰概念，本書於宗邦失敗之由，鄰國強盛之故，靡不隨時稱述，以期喚起諸童愛國之精神)
readers, [so this work] cannot be compared with the kinds of books directly translated from Eastern [read Japanese] or Western languages”.

Even geography textbooks for the youngest schoolchildren were aimed at fostering love for the nation. The foreword to a lower primary geography textbook published by the Shanghainese publishing house Lequn tushu bianyiju, for example, explains that although the textbook hardly touches upon political geography (statistics and political affairs are pointed out as very inappropriate to teach to small children), it nevertheless aims at stimulating a strong sense of patriotism, besides fostering an understanding of the foundations of livelihood by references to local products and business. The General Remarks in the textbook’s teaching manual also accentuates that the most important aim behind the textbook is to arouse patriotism, which is defined as “promoting industry and increasing the annual growth as a means for enriching the state and defending the entire ancient realm [while] opening up new land in order to establish the principles upon which a strong nation is founded”. Obviously, the textbook compiler associated patriotism/nationalism with industry, defence and national expansion, which implied the adoption of modern technology, militarism and colonialism – the very measures taken by neighbouring Japan to gain wealth and strength.

2.6 Japanese images of Japan and of East Asia

As we have seen above, one major aim of the Chinese geography textbooks was to implant the seed of nationalism in Chinese youth. However, the Chinese textbook compilers relied to a great extent on Japanese sources on geography, which in turn were imbued with a heavy Japanese nationalistic discourse which implied that Japan, and not China, was the true master of Asia.

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204 Xie Honglai, Zuixin Zhongxue jiaokeshu yinghuan quanzhi 最新中學教科書瀛寰全志. English title: Complete Geography with Coloured Maps designed for Advanced Classes in Schools and General Readers, 8th ed. (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1906). (是編蒐採東西及本國地志數十種編輯而成時時注意種族競爭之要點以期喚起讀者之精神)

205 Guan Qi 管圻, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu 初等小學中國地理新教科書 [A new geography textbook on China for the lower primary school] (Shanghai: Lequn tushubianyiju, 1906).

206 Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa 中國地理新教科書教授法 [A Teaching manual for the new geography textbook on China] (Shanghai: Lequn tushu bianyiju, 1906). (即就振興實業。增進富國之策。保全舊邦。開拓新地。以立強國之本。)
Eager to expand its influence on the Asian continent Japan supported China’s attempts to modernize on Meiji patterns. With the blessing of the Japanese government and spurred by the paroles of a “common culture” (Jap. dōbun, Chin. tongwen) and “Asia for the Asians”, Japanese businessmen, teachers and military advisers headed for China.\(^\text{207}\) While Japanese scholars pointed out the shared intellectual heritage of Japan and China, the Japanese military and Japanese secret societies with expansionistic agendas actively engaged in researching China’s domestic conditions.\(^\text{208}\) The notion of a “common culture” derived from the view that the Japanese and the Chinese shared a common cultural and racial background, as expressed in the phrase dōbun dōshu (“common culture, same race”), which, although appealing for a united “yellow” front to withstand the “white race”, was also used as a pretext for Japan to interfere in China’s internal affairs.\(^\text{209}\) Considerable amounts of money were spent on the purpose of increasing Japan’s influence on the continent, and some of the Japanese instructors employed in China received their salaries from the Japanese government or Japanese societies, and not from the Chinese.\(^\text{210}\)

Despite the sweet talk about a “common culture” Japan hardly saw China as an equal.\(^\text{211}\) Chinese educators who sought “Western knowledge” (such as modern geography) through Japanese channels had to face a discourse which implied that the Japanese as an Asian Herrenvolk were destined to civilize, protect and rule other Asians. This discourse, as will be revealed below, is particularly evident in Meiji Japanese geography textbooks and must have had a far-reaching influence on how “Japaneseness” was defined in East Asia at that time.

When, during the early 20th century, China modelled its educational system on the Japanese fashion, more than thirty years had passed since the Meiji Restoration and the Meiji government’s early policy of modernization and the introduction of “Western civilization”. Since modern geography had been added to the school curriculum during the early years of the Meiji period, Japanese educators had had three decades to confront, or at least somehow relate to, Western stereotypical descriptions of themselves and other Asians. All Japanese textbooks used in the schools were, as already noted above, approved by the authorities from 1886 and state-compiled from 1903, so they mirrored Meiji Japanese (and not western) nationalistic and state-approved “truths”.

\(^{207}\) Harrell, 6.
\(^{210}\) Wang Feng-Gang, 100.
\(^{211}\) Sato, 131.
As revealed by Stefan Tanaka in his work *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Past into History*, Japanese intellectuals and scholars had come to challenge the Eurocentric paradigm largely by means of methods and approaches borrowed from the West. Tanaka examines the Japanese creation of *Tōyōshi* (a term which Tanaka refrains from translating, but which could roughly be interpreted as “Oriental history”), an academic discipline which largely made *shina* (a term used instead of *Chūgoku* – the “Middle Kingdom”) its field of study. According to Tanaka, “[the construction of *Tōyōshi*] established modern Japan’s equivalence – as the most advanced nation of Asia – with Europe, and also the distinction from and cultural, intellectual, and structural superiority over China. While Europe, as the West, became an other, that against which Japan compared itself, *shina* became a different other: it was an object, an idealized space and time from which Japan developed”. 212 Not only had the modern study of history taken a different course in Japan, other disciplines, such as modern geography, had also been adapted to better fit Japanese purposes. As pointed out by Keiichi Takeuchi Japanese educators also came to interpret the discipline of geography from a non-European angle:

Along with the wide diffusion of geography in school curricula by the late 1880s, a certain number of publications appeared which systematically introduced and applied the methodology of ‘modern’ western geography. Readers of these publications were generally intellectuals, but it was the geography teachers who made extensive use of them. In contrast with authors of the early Meiji period (1868-1880s) who were usually self-made scholars dependent on standard and sub-standard textbooks from the West, the authors of these new publications had generally received their higher education in Japan, and had carried out further systematic studies in geography. Moreover, they applied geographical methods pertaining to human-environment paradigms which, while available in indigenous Japanese geographical thought, were more often imported independently from nineteenth-century western sources. They developed and shaped these imported methods to fit the geographical realities of Japan. 213

The Meiji period was not the first time in Japanese history during which foreign knowledge, institutions, customs and approaches were integrated on a large scale into a native setting. During the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties Japan had adopted Chinese institutions, skills and arts en masse (the cultural impulses often came via the Korean peninsula). However, although the high-culture that developed in Japan derived largely from

212 Tanaka, 12-13.
Chinese traditions, it was different from the Chinese original. Similarly, the “Western learning” which Chinese scholars, educators and students brought back to China from Japan during the early 20th century had, like Japanese interpretations of originally Western disciplines, a Japanese touch added to it. The process in China of assimilating “Western learning” from Japan nevertheless forms an interesting analogue to Japan’s adoption and reinterpretation of “Chinese learning” in pre-modern time. Both examples typify the adoption and adaptation of foreign, more or less systematized knowledge which had the power of attracting native scholars.

Meiji educationalists were eager to draw parallels between Japan’s cultural borrowings from China in the past and China’s recent adoption of scholarship from Japan. Consider, for example, a typical statement made by the Japanese educator J. Harada to the Educational Association of China in 1905:

All will agree in saying that one of the marvels in modern history is the reversal in the positions of China and Japan among the powers in the East. Until about a score of years ago every Japanese looked up to China as his superior and teacher. Chinese classics were regarded by the literati of Japan as the source of wisdom. Anything written with kana or Japanese alphabet was, on the contrary, treated as childish. Except in the matter of science and mechanics China was considered quite equal to Europe…The Japan-China war exactly reversed the position of the two nations of the Far East. It marks the era in the liberation and enlightenment of Modern China.214

Generally, Japan’s role as “civilizer” (rather than transmitter of “Western learning”) tends to be emphasized in Meiji descriptions of Sino-Japanese relations. That is, Japan is not only to China what China once had been to Japan, but as a modern nation it represents a higher stage of development, comparable with the advancement of the nations of the “civilized” West. Although Meiji accounts frequently depict Japan as a liberator which will release the rest of East Asia from the chains of backwardness, it is also implied that Japan, as more civilized that the rest of East Asia, is also in its right to dominate its half-civilized, barbarian or savage neighbours. In the following example, found in a late Meiji Japanese textbook in geography for middle schools and normal schools, China is depicted as a brother nation in need of Japanese help and protection:

The two countries [Japan and China] have a common culture [alt. use the same script], and the contacts between [the two countries] are most time-honoured, whence the relations are also deepest. Especially within the fields of military affairs and education and other [such related] undertakings, China has learnt a lot from us, we being in

214 Quoted in Wang Feng-Gang, 19.
the position of repaying for [the fruits of] civilization we once acquired from this country. Besides, [Japan] pays attention to the safeguarding of the territorial integrity of the country, and the [two countries] are getting even closer.\textsuperscript{215}

Nevertheless, Japan appears as the natural leader of Asia with the mission of civilizing its less fortunate neighbours:

The level of enlightenment among the inhabitants [of Asia] varies. Although China, India and Persia were extremely developed countries in ancient times, their civilizations are now [even] far behind those of the more backward countries in Europe. In other parts [of Asia] the level of civilization is even lower, and not a few are in a state of barbarism. The Japanese nation alone acts as mediator [between the civilized world and Asia] and holds the position of civilized leader. However, seen from the present state of affairs in the world, still further strenuous efforts will be needed [in order to civilize the rest of Asia].\textsuperscript{216}

Under the pretext of helping and protecting its backward neighbours, Japan advanced its positions and increased its influence on the continent. By mimicking the rhetoric of European colonial powers, Japan sought equality with the West and appears to have been as patronizing towards the rest of East Asia as any of the Western powers of that day. The Meiji Japanese self-image was partially formed from a colonial discourse in which descriptions of “primitive” people within the realms of the Japanese Empire underlined the superiority, supremacy and advancement of the so-called Yamato race (i.e. the “pure” Japanese population on the Japanese islands), which is also noticeable in Japanese schoolbooks of that time.

The introduction to the chapter on Taiwan in a secondary geography textbook published in 1896 explains that the island became Japanese territory as a consequence of the peace in Shimonoseki (1895), but it acknowledges that the island, especially the eastern parts of it, has not yet been fully explored. The compiler excuses himself for not being able to give a more detailed description of Taiwan, which he refers to as “an almost dark world” (hotondo ankōsekai tari),\textsuperscript{217} which reminds of the “Dark Continent” and the European exploration, colonization and exploitation of Africa. Hence the choice of words implied that Japanese

\textsuperscript{215} Yamasaki Naokata, \textit{Gaikoku chirikyōkasho}. Vol. 1, 54. (両國は同文の國にして、交通最も古く、從て其關係亦最も深し。特に近來此國は軍事、教育其他の事業につき我に學ぶ所多く、我は嘗て此國より得たる文明を償却する位置に立ち、又此國領土の保全に意を用ひ、親密の度愈大なるに至れり。)
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 24. (住民の開化は一様なず。支那、インド、ペルシア等は、上古には甚だく開けることあれど、今は其文明遠にヨーロッパなる後進諸國の下にあり。其他の地方にては、文明の程度更に低くして、未開の狀態にあるもの少からず。我日本國民は、獨り此の間に立てて、アジアに於ける文明の先導者たる位置に立てり。されど、之を世界の現状より観れば、尚幾倍の奮勵を要するものあり。)
\textsuperscript{217} Noguchi Yasuoki, \textit{Chūtō kyōiku Chirikyōkasho: Honpō no bu}, 331.
civilized explorers and colonizers will bring light and civilization to a savage and backward Taiwan.

As highlighted by Ka F. Wong, Japan’s colonization of Taiwan not only gave Japan international prestige in that she had now joined the same “exclusive club” as the Western powers as a colonial power, but it also gave Japanese anthropologists a chance of revealing their skills in researching “primitive societies” in areas “unexplored” by Western scholars, who otherwise dominated the research in this field of study. Anthropological research on the natives of Taiwan became a means for convincing the West that Japan was “civilized” and “enlightened”. As pointed out by Richard Siddle, the indigenous Ainu on Hokkaido, seen as “primitive” people, also became objects of scientific studies for Japanese anthropologists, archaeologists and linguists during the Meiji period:

Since the scientific paradigms of most human and infant social sciences in those days were overwhelmingly influenced by ideas of evolution, obsessed with hierarchical classification and the explanation of ‘natural’ difference between primitive and civilized societies, the Ainu were tailor-made material for research by both Western visitors and their Japanese students. As Japan became more confident and began seeking acceptance as a civilized country, and later, as a Great Power, the Ainu, in the guise of a primitive Other, served also as a yardstick against which the civilization and progress of Japan could be measured.

The image of the Ainu people as the direct opposite to the “Yamato race” was a common theme in Meiji geography textbooks. It is often noted that the Ainu people had also once upon a time inhabited Honshu (the main island of Japan), but, pushed aside by the stronger “Yamato race”, they had made their escape to the remote Hokkaido, where they reside in decreasing numbers. In a middle school geography textbook from 1895, the Ainu “race” is claimed to be completely different from the Japanese in terms of language and customs. The Ainu people are allegedly ignorant and illiterate, dressing in clothes made of bark-fibres and living in thatched log houses. It is understood that the arrival of Japanese people from the main islands brings civilization. That is, it is observed that the Ainu nowadays are supervised by the people from the Japanese main islands, and that some of the Ainu have started to change their customs after having been educated. The text is illustrated with two pictures. One depicts a group of heavily bearded Ainu dressed in traditional clothes sitting under a tree, the

other a train running across a large bridge on the Otaru railroad in Hokkaido. These pictures, it could be argued, illustrates the contrast between civilization (Japanese) and barbarity (Ainu). (Japanese) progress proceeds with the strength and speed of a locomotive, and civilization wins terrain by the acquisition of new territory, while the Ainu people as ignorant barbarians, passively and submissively await their future destiny.

Japan not only followed European patterns of colonial or imperialistic rhetoric but also tried to justify its imperial agenda with knowledge produced by native scholarship without any connection at all to European traditions of learning. For example, the legendary Empress Jingu’s alleged subjugation of the Korean state Silla in remote antiquity and Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s war-expeditions in Korea at the end of the 16th century were frequently employed to legitimatize Japanese involvement on the peninsula. An early Meiji geography textbook gives the following account of the relation between Japan and Korea, after stating that that the Koreans are slow and dull:

The country has since ancient times paid tribute to the [Japanese] Empire, forwarding skills in all sorts of crafts. Japan has to no small extent frequently subjugated Korea. The Empress Jingu, leading an army personally in the conquest sixteen hundred years ago, and the more recent punitive expedition of Taiko Toyotomi are well known to everyone.

Throughout the Meiji period similar statements can be found describing the Koreans as inferiors and emphasizing Japanese pre-eminence over Korea. In a textbook for middle schools published in 1905, the Koreans are described as lazy idlers, and the relations between Korea and Japan are expressed in a fashion akin to the example above:

This country has historically been most intimately connected with our country, and the southern part [of Korea] was after the conquests of Empress Jingu our territory for a long period of time. Besides, Lord Toyotomi managed to conquer almost the whole country during his war expedition in Korea. In February Meiji 37 [1904] our two countries concluded a treaty of alliance in which our country promises to guarantee Korea’s independence and secure her territorial integrity.

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221 Uchida Masao, Yochi shiryaku. Vol. 2, 21-22. (此國古代ヨリ皇國ニ朝贡シ百工ノ技術等ヲ傳ヘシテ少ナカラズ又毎日本ヨリノ征討セシテ有リ千六百七十年前神功皇后ノ親征及ビ近ク豊太閤ノ討伐ノ如キハ皆人ノ能ク知ル所ナリ。)
222 Chūtō shinchiri kyōkasho: Gaikkoku no bu. Vol. 1, 20. (當國は我が國と歴史上の關係最も密にて、南部は神功皇后ノ征韓後久しく我が領土たり。又豊公征韓役には、殆ど全領を占領セリ。明治三十七年二月、兩國間に同盟條約を結び、我が國は韓國の獨立及び、領土保全を永久に保障したり。)
The alleged conquest of Korean land by Empress Jingu alludes to passages in the Japanese chronicle *Nihon shoki* (720 A.D.) which describe how the Empress, with divine support, forces the King of Silla to submission under Japanese suzerainty. As pointed out by Edwin O. Reischauer, the early chronicles *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* (712 A.D.) and their mythology were “[...] utilized to whip up among the Japanese people a sense of uniqueness and ultranationalist fervour, as during the wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”. Combined with descriptions of backward and lethargic Koreans, references to legendary tales in *Nihon shoki* were obviously also used to justify Japan’s efforts to convert Korea into a protectorate.

2.7 The introduction of Japanese human geography into China

Modern human geography was introduced into China by Liang Qichao, who, during his exile in Japan published four essays in 1902 in *Xinmin congbao*. Liang’s essays relied heavily on borrowings from works on geography compiled by the geographer and journalist Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927) and the historian and textbook compiler Ukita Kazutami (1859-1946), both lecturers at Tokyo senmon gakkō (the forerunner to Waseda University). Liang did not, however, acknowledge Shiga or Ukita for his borrowings. Liang’s first essay “Dili yu wenming zhi guanxi” (The relationship between geography and civilization) is an adaptation of the chapter “Rekishi to chiri” (History and geography) in Ukita’s *Shigakutsūron* (Overview of historical studies), published ca. 1898. Liang’s three other essays “Yazhou dili dashi lun” (General Outlines of Asian geography), “Zhongguo dili dashi lun” (General Outlines of Chinese geography) and “Ouzhou dili dashi lun” (General outlines of European geography) are adapted versions of Shiga’s essays “Ajia chiri kōkyū no hōshin” (Approaches to research on Asian geography), “Shina chiri kōkyū no hōshin” (Approaches to research on Chinese

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226 Ibid., 160.
geography) and “Yōroppa chiri kōkyū no hōshin” (Approaches to research on European geography), which were records of Shigetaka’s lectures held at Tokyo senmon gakkō, collected in his book Chirigaku (Geography), published in 1897.227

Chinese intellectuals, such as Liang, willingly embraced the geographical deterministic theories of Japanese scholars like Shiga and Ukita because of the universalistic use their ideas seemed to imply.228 Shiga, whose understanding of modern human geography seems to have had a particularly strong impact on how the world was described in Chinese geography textbooks during late Qing,229 did not, however, believe that geographical factors alone determined the destiny of a people, but also emphasised the quality of honouring moral values in order to form a nation.230

In Japan, Shiga’s most influential work was Nihon fūkeiron (Theory of Japanese Landscape, 1894), which romanticised about the unique beauty of the Japanese scenery, making comparisons with the landscapes of Europe and China. Shiga’s intention was to evoke patriotism and boost Japanese self-esteem by reminding the Japanese people of the splendour of their natural landscape. Widely read, Nihon fūkeiron fostered a nationalistic sense of pride in the allegedly distinctive features of the natural beauty of Japan.231 However, the work was largely based on English sources on alpinism and natural scenery, in particular on a handbook for foreign tourists in Japan published in the early 1890s.232

When Chinese educators sought new knowledge within the field of modern geography from Japanese sources, no matter whether they consulted geography textbooks or more academic works, they had to face a Japanese nationalistic discourse, which stressed the uniqueness, beauty and strength of Japan, a nation which had utterly defeated China in 1895 and had also dispatched soldiers to join the Western powers to quell the Boxer-rebellions in the Chinese capital in 1900.

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227 Ibid. Transcripts of Shiga’s lectures on geography held at Tokyo senmon gakkō were first published in 1889 under the title Chirigaku kōgi (Lectures on Geography). Takeuchi, “Nationalism and Geography in Modern Japan, 1880s to 1920s”, 108.
228 Ishikawa, “Liang Qichao, the Field of Geography in Meiji Japan, and Geographical Determinism”, 169.
229 See chapter 3, 4 and section 6.1 in this thesis.
230 Takeuchi, “Nationalism and Geography in Modern Japan, 1880s to 1920s”, 108.
232 Takeuchi, “Nationalism and Geography in Modern Japan, 1880s to 1920s”, 108.
2.8 The preservation of the national essence

Shiga Shigetaka, like Nitobe Inazō, was a graduate of Sapporo Agricultural College (now Hokkaido University) and a fervent nationalist. But unlike Nitobe, influenced by the faith of the Protestant American principal of the college, William Smith Clark (1826-1927), Shiga had always felt an aversion to Christianity and did not give in to the expectations to convert. Shiga, together with men like Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945), Inoue Enyō (1859-1919) and Sugiura Jūgō (1855-1924), was one of the founders of Seikyōsha (Society for Political Education), established in 1888 in protest against the Japanese government’s support of what the society considered to be indiscriminate Westernization and the government’s acceptance of the Unequal Treaties forced upon Japan by the Western powers. In the journal Nihonjin, started in 1888, the society developed its nationalistic principle of kokusui hozon 國粹保存 (preservation of the national essence) as a measure to balance Western influences. Arguing that the wholesale acceptance of Western culture had deprived the Japanese of their self-confidence, Seikyōsha maintained that Japan had to restore and make use of its traditional culture to enhance its citizens’ spiritual qualities.\(^\text{234}\)

As pointed out by Michael Weiner, Shiga Shigetaka popularized the term minzoku 民族 during the late 1880s. Minzoku, along with kokusui and kokuminshugi 國民主義 (civic nationalism), was “a critical element in the development of a popular nationalism which arose in response to what was regarded as the over-Westernisation of the previous decades”.\(^\text{235}\) The term minzoku implies both nation and nationality, and roughly matches the German nationalistic concept of Volk, which carries the idea of a people bound together by both cultural ties and common blood.\(^\text{236}\)

To Shiga and other nationalists affiliated with the journal Nihonjin and the newspaper Nihon, the latter started in 1889 by the former bureaucrat Kuga Katsunan (1857-1907), who shared Seikyōsha’s aversion to Westernization, the Yamato (Japanese) minzoku manifested the supposedly unique historical, geographical and cultural characteristics of the own nation

\(^{233}\) Ibid., 107.
\(^{236}\) Ibid., 446, 448; Morris-Suzuki, 84-88.
as a family state.\textsuperscript{237} Shiga Shigeta and his associates were against the opening of Japan to foreign residence beyond the treaty ports, but although they sneered at what they saw as Westernization policies, they nevertheless understood that a total rejection of everything Western was out of the question. This stance was also illustrated in the founding proclamation of the newspaper Nihon, which expressed a strong fear that the Japanese were about to lose what was left of their original Japanese identity and called for the “restoration of the national spirit”, but nevertheless acknowledged that Western civilization also had its values and strong points.\textsuperscript{238}

The term \textit{minzu} (Jap. \textit{minzoku}) was introduced in China into 1899 by Liang Qichao, and soon became popular amongst both reformers and revolutionaries in China, along with the related term \textit{minzuzhuyi} (Jap. \textit{minzokushugi}, lit. \textit{minzu/minzoku}-ism, i.e. nationalism).\textsuperscript{239} Seikyōsha’s conviction that “preserving the national essence” was bound to strengthen the nation also gained much attention in China. Liang Qichao voiced ideas akin to those of the Japanese “national essence” nationalists, sharing their fear of excessive Westernization. Arguing that native scholarship constituted “the essence of the national spirit”, he called for the promotion of \textit{guoxue} 國學, or “national learning”, as a means to counter the obsession with things Western.\textsuperscript{240} Paradoxically, \textit{guoxue} (Jap. \textit{kokugaku}) was a term which in Japan had originally distinguished native Japanese learning from Chinese learning.\textsuperscript{241} In Liang’s usage, however, it meant Chinese native learning, which he believed embodied China’s true “essence”. In his essay “Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi” (On the general trend of changes in Chinese academic thought), published in Xinmin congbao in 1902, Liang states:

\begin{quote}
In the forthcoming two decades, I am not worried about the introduction of new learning; rather, I do worry that our own scholarly ideas will not be enhanced… Failing to do so will mean that we simply have gotten out of a slavery that worships the ancients and into another slavery that worships the foreign, and therefore has contempt for our own race (\textit{zu}). I worry that the advantage is not worth the gain.\textsuperscript{242}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{237} Weiner, “Discourse of race, nation and empire in pre-1945 Japan”, 447; Shively, “The Japanization of the Middle Meiji”, 106.
\textsuperscript{239} Xu Xun 徐迅, \textit{Minzuzhuyi} 民族主 [ Nationalism] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 246.
\textsuperscript{241} Sang Bing, 182.
\textsuperscript{242} Cited in Sang Bing, 180.
\end{footnotes}
As suggested by Lu Xun (1881-1936), China’s perhaps most celebrated writer in modern times, the phrase baozun guocui (Chinese for kokasui hozon) carried different implications, depending on the political agenda of the advocator. In 1918 Lu Xun made the following observation:

From the last years of the Qing dynasty and right into present time one has frequently heard people use the phrase “preservation of the national essence”. At the end of the Qing dynasty there were largely two kinds of people who used the phrase: high-minded patriots and high-ranking government officials who had been on [study] tours overseas. Behind the theme [of preserving the national essence] each [group] had different agendas. The high-minded patriots argued that “preservation of the national essence” was for the sake of restoring time-honoured customs, while high-ranking officials maintained that “preservation of the national essence” should teach the [Chinese] students abroad not to cut their queues.243

One of the high-ranking officials who argued for the necessity of protecting “the national essence” during the end of the Qing dynasty was Zhang Zhidong, the main architect behind the Meiji-style educational system. In 1907 Zhang submitted a memorial to the court in which he made requests to found the School for Preservation of Antiquity (Cungu xuetang 存古學堂) as a means to preserve the Chinese “national essence”:

Today the schools of all countries in the world place special emphasis on departments of national literature. National literature includes the written and spoken language of a given country and the books handed down through history. Among the books there are some not fully suitable for use in times that have changed; but they also must be preserved and transmitted. Their destruction absolutely cannot be permitted. The finest of a country’s teachings, skills, rites, doctrines, and customs, which are especially treasured and protected are called the “national essence” (guocui). (Other countries) attach special importance to preservation (of the national essence). They do so in order to nourish feelings of patriotism and the awareness of one’s own kind. Actually the source (of strength) of the powerful nations in the East and the West may be found herein. This cannot be disregarded.244

243 Lu Xun 魯迅. “Yi jiu yi ba nian” 一九一八年 [1918], in Refeng 熱風 [Hot wind], ed. Luxun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 魯迅先生紀念委員會 [The Committee for the Commemoration of Mr Lu Xun] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1952), 12. (從清朝末年，直到現在，常常聽人說保存國粹這一句話。前清末年說這話的人，大約有兩種：一是愛國志士，一是出洋遊歷的大官。他們在這題目背後，各各藏着別的意思。志士說保存國粹，是光復舊物的意思，大官說保存國粹，是教留學生不要去剪辫子的意思。)

244 Cited in Ayers, 249. It seems like Zhang refers to the new institutions in Japan which engaged in the production of works of literary history. As pointed out by Atsuko Ueda, Japanese literature historians who had studied at Koten Kōshūka (Program for Study in the Classics) and Kokubungakka (Department of National Letters) at Tokyo University, founded in 1882 and 1889 respectively, sought Japanese “national character” in Japan’s ancient literature. Atsuko Ueda, Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of “Literature” in Meiji Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 14, 33, 146-147. Other contemporary establishments were Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō (Tokyo School of Fine Arts), set up to revitalize traditional arts, and
Undoubtedly, Zhang’s emphasis on the preservation of China’s “national essence” was inspired by ideas current in Japan at that time, and his conservatism clearly drew inspiration from Meiji nationalism. Zhang Zhidong wanted change along Japanese patterns, and saw, like many of his contemporaries, Japan as a nation which had managed to integrate foreign knowledge without abandoning its indigenous cultural heritage. Generally, the Chinese elite looked upon Japan as a “cultural offshoot” of China, and Japan’s modernization was thus probably seen as the proof of the fruitful combination of Eastern “essence” and Western “utility” — or Oriental culture and Occidental technology.

The nationalistic ideas of Seikyōsha also appealed to intellectuals who wanted to overthrow the Manchu rule. During the early 20th century, the culturally conservative but politically radical Guocuipai (National Essence Circle) argued the importance of preserving the “national essence”, supposedly embodied in China’s intellectual heritage, as a means to preserve the minzu. In 1902, the activists Huang Jie (1873-1935) and Deng Shi, inspired by Shiga Shigetaka and Miyake Setsurei’s call for the “preserving of the national essence”, set up the bulletin Zhengyi tongbao (The bulletin for political art) to safeguard China’s national survival by the preservation of indigenous learning.

In 1905 Deng Shi and Liu Shipei (1884-1920) formed the nationalistic society Guoxue baocunhui (Society for the preservation of the national learning), which aimed at researching China’s native literature in order to promote guocui zhuyi (Jap. kokusuishugi, lit. national essence-ism, i.e. nationalism). The society issued the monthly journal Guocui xuebao (National essence journal) in Shanghai to reach out to the public. The following year Zhang Binglin (1869-1936), besides Liu Shipei the circle’s perhaps most prominent person, went to Tokyo where he was a leading force behind the establishing of the nationalistic student societies Guoxue jiangxihui (National learning study society) and Guoxue zhenqishe (Society the school Kokugakuin (university since 1906 under the name Kokugakuin Daigaku), which aimed at promoting Japanese arts and letters, but also trained the priests employed at the shrines of State Shinto. Conrad Totman, A History of Japan (Oxford & Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000), 353. Perhaps Zhang had read the report written by the educator Wu Rulun (1840-1903), who had been on a study tour to Japan in 1902. According to Wu’s records from his journey, he had been recommended by Kojō Teikichi (1866-1949), the publisher of the earliest work on the history of Chinese literature, not to “abolish the learning of the Chinese classics, histories, and ancient Chinese philosophers. The educational system of European countries also made use of their own national learnings as backbones.” Sang Bing, 182.

245 Fairbank, China: A New History, 240.
247 Ibid.
for the promotion of national learning). Zhang Binglin opposed those he regarded as advocates of Europeanization and maintained that their worship of everything Western, along with their inability to see the strong points in Chinese culture, only caused unpatriotic sentiments and indifference to the destiny of their own race. To preserve the “national essence”, people should treasure the history of the Han “race” and boost the self-respect and self-confidence of the minzu as a means to counter the negative consequences of the ongoing Europeanization.

As we have seen above, both Zhang Zhidong, who was politically conservative and absolutely loyal to the throne, and Liang Qichao, a friend of reforms who advocated constitutional monarchism, as well as outright revolutionaries such as Liu Shipei and Zhang Binglin, all drank from the same well of Meiji cultural conservatism and nationalism. When approaching the ideas current in China during the early 20th century, it is perhaps all too easy to interpret them as either “purely” conservative Chinese ideas, harboured by traditional Confucian thinkers more or less hostile to foreign influences, or as first-hand Western thought, directly “imported” from Europe and echoed by progressive intellectuals and revolutionaries. To get a more accurate picture of the world of ideas current in China during the end of the Qing dynasty (and during the Republican era for that matter) it is impossible overlook the impact Japan had on China.

2.9 Orientalism and Occidentalism

In a thesis aimed at analyzing images of “Orientals” it is perhaps unavoidable to touch upon so-called “Orientalism” as defined by Edward Said, who since the late 1970s has inspired countless scholars and students in their writings on topics related to the images of non-Western “others”.

I do not refute Said’s assumption that “power” defines the production of “knowledge” or that there are structural patterns behind the ways in which foreign peoples are described (in

249 Zheng Dahua, 102.
250 Huang Shunli, 175.
251 Said has even received quite some attention in China: “Indeed, Said has been a popular figure among Chinese intellectuals, and ‘orientalism’ has become a way that Chinese intellectuals construct their discourse of nationalism against the West.” Zheng Yongnian, Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9.
geography textbooks, for example). Certain disciplines, such as geography, have certainly had a history of claiming authority over its objects of study, and some scholarship may indeed be employed to dominate through objectification and classification. Western scholars have in a patronizing manner passed “scientific” judgments on foreign peoples, classifying them and defining them, and the “knowledge” produced during this process, no matter whether it was originally deliberately created for colonial purposes or not, has undeniably been used as excuses for colonization and other exploitation. I also acknowledge that non-Westerners, through the acceptance of Western scholarship and science, have to a certain extent been forced to categorize themselves according to Western “scientific” standards.

However, I do find that Said is all too preoccupied with Western sources on the Orient (or perhaps rather the Near East and the Middle East), and shows no interest in how the objects of so-called Orientalists responded to the stereotypical descriptions they allegedly were subjected to. I even find that Said could be criticised for being rather Eurocentric (or perhaps more precisely Anglo- and Francocentric). Wang Ning, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Peking University and Director of the Research Institute for Postmodern Studies, criticizes Said for overlooking Oriental, non-Arabic countries, such as China (in particular), Japan and India, and for only analyzing primarily texts from the English-speaking world:

Moreover, due to the limitations of other geographical and ideological factors, Said’s Orientalism, in the sense of Oriental Studies, naturally leads to his limitation in comparative literature studies: the texts he discusses are mostly from the English or English-speaking world rather than from the non-English-speaking or other Third-World countries, while comparative literature is not only cross-national and interdisciplinary but also cross-cultural and cross-linguistic. In this way, the limitations of his research as well as that of all the postcolonial academic studies are obviously discernible. It is true that to conduct comparative literature studies from the postcolonial perspective could break through the boundary line of geography and disciplines, but cannot break through the boundary line of languages, which is the very problem that we Oriental scholars of comparative literature and cultural studies must solve in our research.252

In my view, Said, by overlooking the reactions of the “Orientals” to the images ascribed to them, thereby victimises the Asiatic peoples as passively accepting everything said or written about them. Suppressed or discriminated individuals, sexes, ethnicities, societies, cultures, nations or continents do not necessarily accept all the images that hegemonic oppressors have created about them in order to wield power over them (or out of pride, arrogance, fear, pure

ignorance, or whatever might be the reason). Instead, they might not only refuse to accept the stereotypical images ascribed to them but in turn also create images of those who control or suppress them (actually or imagined). “New” (foreign) ideas can (unintentionally or deliberately) be misunderstood or re-interpreted in order to fit native interests. Western rhetoric was, as we already have seen above, partly adopted in Japan for nationalistic and expansionistic purposes.

Furthermore, Said largely overlooks Europe’s “internal others” in his work and thereby conveys a somewhat distorted picture of European attitudes towards “otherness” during the 19th century. “Others” were found not only in the colonies but also at home. Here I find Daniel Pick’s critique of Said to be absolutely accurate:

[Said] does little to develop the implications of that putative world of internal degeneration (‘delinquents, the insane, women, the poor’, who were inalienably part of the imperial society) for orientalism. The point is made and then generally abandoned. Evolutionary anthropology functioned not only to differentiate the colonised overseas from the imperial race, but also to scrutinise portions of the population at home: the ‘other’ was outside and inside. Imperialism, no doubt, was the discourse which sought to bind the myriad realities of the colonial ‘power’ into a discursive unity. Social Darwinism and other social evolutionary theories in the late nineteenth century underpinned the supremacist rhetoric, but the spectre of internal degeneration continually haunted it. 253

Taking such aspects as gender, class and ethnicity into consideration, “others”, in the eyes of the educated class in imperial China, were basically the same categories of people who were seen as “others” in Europe during the age of imperialism, that is, women, the uneducated masses and “barbarians” — all those who were not considered civilized, reliable or capable enough to represent themselves. Moreover, similar to the idea of “the west and the rest” (Europe as the only manifestation of true civilization in contrast to the rest of the world) is the Chinese dichotomy of a Chinese civilized centre and a barbarian periphery, utilized for the purpose of justifying hegemonic Chinese supremacy over its surrounding. 254 But which “ism” should be called “knowledge” of peripheral non-Chinese “others” that may be found in Chinese textbooks from the early 20th century, if this “knowledge” is a blend of European and East Asian scholarship, employed to dominate these groups?

254 In Japan the Sinocentric world order was altered for rather Japanocentric alternatives. During the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) some scholars even claimed that Japan was the true Central Kingdom (Chūgoku 中國), Japan hence corresponding to the civilized centre. Karine Marandjian, “Some aspects of the Tokugawa outer world view”, in War, Revolution & Japan, ed. Ian Neary (Folkestone: Japan Library, 1993), 10-19; Wakabayashi, 17-57.
Many West Europeans of the 19th and early 20th centuries might very well have seen “Orientals” as less civilized “others”. On the other hand, they did not necessarily regard East and South Europeans as their equals either, something which Said also fails to examine in his Orientalism. West European stereotypical negative images of South and East Europeans also found their way to East Asia. Consider the following description of South Europeans by Shiga Shigetaka:

These nationals [in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal] have all been exposed to Roman progress, and have entered the realms of civilization. However, the so-called Romans conquered other countries and united them into one big power, and while the aristocracy and military were high-handed, common people had no rights whatsoever. The upper strata of society were utterly extravagant, arrogant and extremely wasteful, and the customs consequently turned vain and frivolous. Moreover, all countries in South Europe have a pleasantly warm climate, lovely scenery, and the flowers and the birds are gaily beautiful. The people have long been influenced by all this splendour and brilliance and have as a result been successful in the creation of novels and dramas. The degree to which the peoples of southern Europe have advanced is essentially not secondary to that of the Romans, and since [the south Europeans] came under the influence of Roman culture, their speed of development has been out of the ordinary. The nature of the people, the customs, the religion, political matters and everything produced ran solely in Roman fashion. Take a look at how boastfully vain and frivolous the French are and how prodigal of luxury articles and lazy the Spaniards are. Since all the [Latin] nationals put their faith in the old teaching of Christianity (i.e. Catholicism), a religion which does not value reason but stresses

255 The image of the Orient in the West was however far from coherent. An example of this is the extent to which positive images of Japanese people tended to be contrasted with negative stereotypes of the Chinese. As revealed by Toshio Yokoyama in his research on the images of the Japanese in British magazines and review articles during the Victorian era, the Japanese were favourably described in terms of cleanliness, honesty, intellectual capacity, attitude towards foreigners and in outer appearance. During the end of the 1850’s the Japanese were even seen as the descendants from the lost people of Babylon, which gave rise to the conviction of a British and Japanese remote common ancestry, and the supposition that Christianity easily could be reintroduced into Japan. Toshio Yokoyama, Japan in the Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation, 1850-80 (London: Macmillan, 1987), 3, 24, 44, 51, 52, 75. Captain Sherard Osborn, one of the first British visitors to Japan during the mid-nineteenth century, not only saw the Japanese as superior to the Chinese, but even as more advanced than certain South Europeans: “Japan shows signs of a higher order of civilisation, energy, industry and wealth, which modern Greece decidedly does not exhibit, whatever it did in olden days.” Cited in Yokoyama, 25. If the Brits (at least initially) felt some sort of familiarity with the Japanese, the same could be said about the Americans. In her research on American schoolbooks of the 19th century Ruth Miller Elson points out that while the Chinese are depicted as conservative and unwilling to learn from foreign countries, the Japanese are praised as the most progressive people of the Mongol race. Japan is predicted a bright future since they have imitated the west and are willing to make use of new technology. One of the merits ascribed to the Japanese is identical with that which allegedly distinguishes Americans, that is to say, the rational ability of combining ingenuity with utility. Elson, 165. In Swedish geography textbooks from the late 19th and the early 20th centuries the Japanese are also described in a much more favourable light than the Chinese. From the late 1880s and onwards there is a tendency towards accentuating Japanese superiority over the Chinese in cleanliness, bravery and willingness of learning from other countries. The Japanese are pointed out as the most enlightened country in Asia in terms of education, and the textbooks from the latter half of the nineteenth century tend to emphasize Japan’s adoption of European culture and Western modern innovations (earlier textbooks more emphasize Japan’s Chinese cultural heritage). Bert Edström, “Japan i Svenska Geografiböcker”, in Öst i Väst, ed. Bert Edström (Stockholm: Centrum för Stillahavsstudier, 1997), 58-61. Perhaps the positive Western images of Japan are to be seen in the light of Japan’s receptiveness to Western influences, combined with disappointment directed towards China’s more “hostile” attitude.
rituals and superfluous adornments, things are just [as bad] with their political affairs; now and then it is monarchism, sometimes democracy, aristocracy or theocracy. The countries are often thrown into great disorder and revolutionary upheavals repeatedly occur one after the other. Manufactured goods are mostly beautiful luxury products of no necessity for daily life, such as wineglasses, engravings and sculptural arts which are the results of utmost perfected skills, just like their gildings are of the most exquisite quality. [These products] were all first developed in Latin nations. Moreover, the Latin peoples value chivalry to the backbone and react heatedly with anger at social injustice. They aim high but care nothing about the fundamentals in their conquests of distant land. They may have searched for new land, defied dangers on their exploring expeditions and colonized land, but most of their [former] territories have today been lost for ever. This is easily understood if one takes a look at how things have come to pass for Spain and Portugal. If one reads the books recording the words and deeds of Latins of outstanding talent such as Caesar and Napoleon, the true characters of the Latin Volk become obvious.

The description is indeed something of a concentrate of the prejudice towards the Catholic world common in West Europe during the 19th century. The populations of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal are simply lumped together and described as one and the same people with similar qualities and customs. If it were not that the text quoted above is a Chinese translation of a Japanese scholar’s portrayal of Europeans, obviously influenced by Western images of Europe, it would certainly qualify as a good example of Orientalism. That is to say, the Latins are depicted as politically immature, stagnated, lazy and irrational, and the inheritors of a culture rooted in ancient and despotic empire, which in modern time has been unable to

256 Shiga Shigetaka, Dixue jiangyi 地學講義 [Lectures on geography], transl. Sa Duan 薩端 (Shanghai: Jinsuzhai 1901), 26. (此等國民受羅馬之開化，以進於文明之域矣。然所謂羅馬人者，征服他邦，而併為大國。其貴族軍人甚跋扈，平民全無權力，上流會社極驕奢。極暴殄。遂成浮華輕薄之風俗。且歐南諸國。氣候和煦。風光宜人。人民因外物瑋璨感化。閱時既久。遂工於小說戲曲。蓋歐南之民。其開化程度。本不讓於羅馬。而復灌漑以羅馬之文化。發逹之速。自倍異於尋常。其人情風俗宗教政治製造諸品。無非羅馬之風。試觀法蘭西人。何其浮誇輕薄。西班牙人。何其奢侈孄惰。其宗教又不尚義理。而重儀式纍飾。故其國民。皆信奉基督舊教。即天主教。政治亦然。或君政。或民政。或貴族政治。或僧侶政治。國中常脊脊大亂。革命之事。疊見層出。其製造之物。大概奢麗。非日用所必需。如玻璃樽斝。雕文刻鏤。窮工極致。其他堊鋈。幷皆精妙。皆自辣丁民族之邦國開其端焉。又其國民尚武俠。慷慨激烈之化。淪入骨髓。好騖荒遠。征伐四方。或尋新地。或探險阻。或殖民種。然絕大之版圖。至今已蕩然無存。觀於西班牙葡萄牙之往事。可以知矣。辣丁民族之豪傑。如該撒拿破侖者。讀其言行録。此民族之真面目。灼然可覩也。) I have followed Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s example of translating the compound 民族 (Jap. minzoku, Chin. minzu) as Volk (and not as “nation”, “race” or “people”). Morris-Suzuki, 84-88.

257 Early Swedish geography textbooks, for example, commonly blame the Catholic Church for the alleged stagnation in countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal. Olsson, 128-129. In American school books published before 1870 Catholicism was frequently criticised for being a superstitious teaching and the Catholic clergy for being greedy. It is often implied that the Catholic Church brought misery in the form of ignorance and idleness upon the people of Catholic countries. Although the negative remarks on Catholicism were toned down towards the latter half of the century, Catholic countries were still described in terms of deterioration. Alleged faults were however now blamed on supposed racial or national characteristics rather than on religion. Elson, 47, 51, 54, 138-154.
surpass its former glory. Moreover, Catholic Latins appear as the antithesis to Protestant Teutons:

The Teutonic Volk, also called the Teutons, live north of Central Europe, and is [the people] from which the Brits, Germans, the Dutch, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians stem. The climate of their nations in comparison with Latin climates is cold and the flora and the fauna somewhat less productive and the [natural] products also fewer. People are therefore patient, do their best despite difficulties and practice austerity and frugality. They are not superficial or extravagant but assiduously make their living, and therefore have a sharp intellect with a precise sense for mathematical logic, very much the opposite to the Latins with their studies in novels and dramas. Religious and political affairs and the products [of the Teutons] should also be seen in this light. The Teutons are all Protestants, and as for their religion, it sets great store by reason but not ceremonies and superfluous adornments. There are extremely few changes within the fields of politics, and there are no such things as violent revolutions. People work single-mindedly in each and every occupation. The products made are things necessary for daily life and there is no lavish spending on decorations for outward appearance. Woollen cloth and hardware are examples of such products largely produced by the nations of this race. This Volk is admirable and respectable and their foreign trade becomes more and more prosperous with each passing day. Washington and the Duke of Wellington are the heroes of the Teutons. If one reads the books recording their words and deeds one gets the picture of the true character of this Volk.258

The superior Protestant Teutons are indeed pictured as the complete opposite to inferior Catholic Latins. While the Latins are fickle, the Teutons are stable, while the Latins are emotional, the Teutons are logical, while the Latins are extravagant, the Teutons are frugal, while the ancient dictator Caesar and the emperor Napoleon are held as typical examples of the Latin Volk, the first president of the United States and the defeater of Napoleon are given as examples of the Teutonic Volk. Allegedly, the difference between the two Völker is easily understood by looking at the colonies and the former colonies of the Latins (Mexico, Central and South America and the Philippines) and the Teutons (the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand) respectively.259

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258 Shiga, 27. (鳩督尼苦民族。一名久頓民族。居歐洲中部以北。英吉利德意志荷蘭丹馬瑞典挪威人之所自出也。其邦國氣候。較辣丁為寒冷。生物生育。稍稍遲緩。物產種類亦寡。故其忍耐勉強。質實節儉。不事浮奢。勤於生理。故心思密。數理精。與辣丁民族之學小說戲曲者。大相反矣。其宗教政治與製造之品。亦稱此焉。論其宗教。則尚理窟。不尚儀式綴飾。其國民皆基督教。即耶穌教。其政治。變化極少。激烈之革命。亦不概見。人民各安其業。製造之物。概為人生所必需。非奢靡以飾外觀。若紗羅鐵器等。多自此族民之邦國製出。此民族。可以崇信尊敬。貿易通商。日增月盛。華盛頓惠靈吞侯。為此民族中之英雄。讀其言行錄。可見此民族之真面目矣。）

259 Ibid. Shiga’s assumption that the national characters of Europeans were reflected in the way they handled their colonies is of Western origin. In American textbooks from the 19th century the Englishmen who once settled in America tend to be described as industrious farmers, nurturing a love for humanity and liberty, while the allegedly cruel Spaniards had colonized Latin America motivated by quick gains in the form of gold and silver. French-styled colonialism is also described as inferior to British colonialism. Elson, 131-132, 154.
But how then was the third Volk of Europe, the Slavs, looked upon during the early twentieth century, before the outbreak of the war between Japan and Russia (1904-1905)? Although classified as belonging to the white race, the Russians are compared with the Chinese Qin dynasty, which in 221 BC had swallowed up the surrounding countries and united the Chinese in one single empire. It is hence implied that Russia is an aggressive nation and a military threat to its surrounding countries. The fear of this enigmatic “other” can be sensed in the description of the Slavs:

The Slavonic Volk, also called the Slavs, live in the north-eastern part of Europe. Russia is the true leader [of the Slavonic nations]. This race lives on the vast plains and its character is therefore profound and resolute, deep and unfathomable. They are unpredictable, and devote themselves to agriculture and have faith in the Greek [Orthodox] Church.

The Latins are compared with the vanguard, the Teutons with the main body of troops, and the Slavs with the rearguard of an army. Using military terms when discussing Europeans, Shiga obviously regards the Europeans as a threat. However, it is the approaching peril of the Slavonic race that is to be most feared:

The Latin Volk has already reached its limits of development and the Teutonic Volk is right now at its peak of prosperity, almost on the point of decline. The Slavonic Volk is now on its way of great expansion and is not to be underestimated.

In the mind of Shiga the Latins have apparently already become over-refined and degenerate. The Teutons, who are now at their height of their cultural development, will soon start to

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260 Shiga, 28. Already in the early 19th century the Japanese scholar Aizawa Seishisai compared Russia with the ancient state of Qin, besides referring to Peter the Great as “The Russian khan, Peter”, Wakabayashi, 198, 234.

261 That Russia might pose as a threat in the future was also expressed in Fukuzawa’s Sekai kunizukushi almost thirty years earlier. Fukuzawa notes that Russia is different from other European nations in that it is an absolute autocracy and primarily an agricultural country which is developing its school system and military forces, while steadily gaining in national strength and expanding its territories. It is emphasized that Russia is still undefeated in war, although it on several occasions has been exposed to foreign aggressions, and that the Russian even burned down Moscow in order to halt Napoleon’s invasion. Fukuzawa closes his account on Russia by expressing his concern over the Russian expansion in the East. Russia has partially annexed Chinese soil in Manchuria, and flags with the insignia of the double headed eagle are allegedly seen flapping in the wind near the Korean border. Fukuzawa Yukichi, Sekai kunizukushi, reprinted in Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshū. Vol. 2, 145-147.

262 Shiga, 27-28. （蘇拉扶尼民族。名蘇拉扶民族。居歐洲之東北。俄羅斯實為其首著者。此族人民所居之處。為廣漠平原。故其性情沈毅深遠。不可測度。務農業。信奉希臘教。）

263 Ibid.

264 Ibid. （辣丁民族發達已盡。鸠督尼苦。目現盛之狀。殆將衰歇。蘇拉扶民族。此後當大發達。不可輕量。）
The Slavs, resolute and mysterious, are to be feared because of their unpredictability, persistence and violent temper. The Latins are harmless and flamboyant and only care for entertainment, while the Teutons are to be respected because of their strong engagement in trading and their sharp mathematical skills. In the long run, however, the Slavs will emerge as the biggest threat. The Slavs are not flashy like the Latins and care little for trading but have great ambitions and are persistent and brutal. Neither is their sharp intellect to be looked lightly upon. Shiga reminds the reader how the Russians managed to turn defeat into victory in their resistance to Napoleon’s campaign in Russia after the French troops had entered Moscow, but he also expresses his admiration (or perhaps rather fear) for the Russians’ determination to build the Siberian railway.

Shiga Shigetaka’s observations of the supposed national characters of the peoples of Europe are echoed in Liang Qichao’s “Ouzhou dili dashi lun”, in which very similar passages are found, partially more or less identical to those quoted above. As observed by Dikötter, Renwen dili ABC (ABC of Human Geography), a popular Chinese geography textbook from 1929, states that “Latins are the advance forces, Teutons are the central army, Slavs are the rearguard”. This statement is beyond doubt a direct or indirect borrowing from Shiga, revealing that the Japanese understanding of human geography continued to influence the way the world was perceived in China during the Chinese Republic.

During the early twentieth century the famous Japanese historian Shiratori Kurakichi (1865-1942) argued that the Russian autocratic form of government was originally an adaptation of the Mongolian system of governing Russia. That is to say, the form of Asian government which the Russians had once been exposed to during the Mongol rule was later

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265 Shiga, 28 (辣丁民族之事業，如花如戲曲。豈足畏。鳩督尼苦民族。習商業。精算術。是不可不畏。至若蘇拉扶尼民族。其事業既非如花如戲曲。又非商業。其性情雄大沈鷙。又有遠略。)

266 Ibid.

267 In his “Ouzhou dili dashi lun” Liang does not however hesitate to stretch Shiga’s ideas a bit further in an attempt to explain in what way north Europeans and south Europeans differ in their handling of colonial affairs. According to Liang, the colonial projects of the Latins are organized by the aristocracy, while the colonial enterprises amongst the Teutons are in the hands of commoners. The Latin tend to beautify their colonies, while the Teutons make theirs prosper, and while the governments of Latin countries control their colonies, the Teutonic colonies are autonomous. The Latins are further on claimed to impose heavy levies on international trade, which the Teutons do not. The Teutonic colonies are besides established by companies being run by common people, in contrast to the Latin ones, which allegedly have been founded by armies dispatched by the governments of their mother countries. While the Latins prioritise the construction of churches, wine cellars and parks for the autocracy and the gentry, the Teutons set up assemblies and prioritise communications and land for poor immigrants to cultivate. Liang Qichao, “Ouzhou dili dashi lun” 歐洲地理大勢論 [General outlines of European geography], in Yinbingshi quanji 飲水室全集 [The Yingbingshi selected works] (Hongkong: Xianggang wenyi shuju, 1974), 679.

268 Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China, 160.
applied by the Russians themselves to rule Asians. Although Shiratori acknowledged that the Russians were of Caucasian origin, he argued that the Russians were the true “Yellow Peril”.269 Undoubtedly, many Chinese were also deeply troubled over the Russian expansion in East Asia. In April 1903, Chinese students in Tokyo even decided to set up a militia to fight back the Russian troops occupying the northeastern part of China, comparing Chinese volunteers with the Spartans who had once resisted the Persian invasion.270 It is noteworthy that the Chinese students chose to liken themselves with the old Greeks, while the Russians were given the role of invading Asians.271 One of the dogmas of Said’s Orientalism is that the Orient is something to fear or control.272 As examples of the former, Said mentions the Mongol hordes and the “Yellow Peril”. But how then are we, from a Saidian perspective, to understand the East Asian fear of Russia?

Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit’s Occidentalism, which analyses the negative images of the West in “Oriental” countries, strongly emphasizes the heavy influence of German thought as opposed to French Enlightenment in the creation of national identity and

269 Tanaka, 101. “The Yellow Peril” as a term signifying the fear in the west of yellow peoples overwhelming or dominating the world, was originally the name of a drawing (Gelbe Gefahr) given as a present to Tsar Nicholas II from his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm, and it was with the reproductions of this drawing the expression spread across the globe. In the drawing the white nations, represented in the female personifications of the Western world (such as Germanica and Britannica), clad in armours and weapons in hand, stand on a cliff, looking in the direction (eastwards, one might suppose) pointed out by an armed angel. There, over a European landscape, an image of Buddha is seen towering aloft in the sky. Gelbe Gefahr, and later versions of it, illustrates the Japanese threat towards Russian interests after the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), when Russia, France and Germany intervened to thwart Japan’s intentions of controlling the Liaodong Peninsula. Ian Littlewood, The Idea of Japan: Western images, Western Myths (London: Secker &Warburg, 1996), 27-28, Gina Owens, “The Making of the Yellow Peril”, in Cultural Difference, Media Memories: Anglo-American Images of Japan, ed. Phil Hammond (London & Washington: Cassell, 1997), 32.

270 Chen Xuejun, 28.

271 The Russian “Asiaticness” nevertheless seems to have been somewhat redefined during the Chinese republic. In a lecture held in 1924 Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) argues that Russia had left the community of European suppressive white nations and wants to join the Asian nations in the just cause of fighting Western imperialism. Sun first notes that the European and American Caucasians, only a small part of the world’s total population, have managed to wipe out different coloured peoples, and that the “Yellow race of Asia”, who allegedly suffers under the suppression of the white man, perhaps might face racial extinction in a near future. He then makes the following rather telling remark: “But after having succeeded in the Russian Revolution, [the Russians, a nation of] one hundred fifty million people, broke off with the white race, disapproving with the white men’s acts of aggression, and are right now considering to join the Asian nations in the just cause of fighting against the brutal Völker of Asia to resist the brutal Völker [of the Western world].” (但是俄國革命成功,他們一萬萬五千萬人, 順應了革命, 不贊成白人的侵略行為, 現在正想加入亞洲的弱小民族, 去反抗強暴的民族。) Sun Zhongshan 孫中山, “Sanminzhuyi (yi jiu er si nian yiyue — sanyue)” 三民主義（一九二四年）民族主義（一九二四年一月—三月）[The three people’s principles (1924): nationalism (1924 January — March)], reprinted in Sun Zhongshan xuanji 孫中山選集 [Sun Zhongshan’s selected works] (Beijing: Rennin chubanshe, 1956). Vol. 2, 631. Sun’s statement should likely be interpreted as a response to Soviet’s invitation for cooperation between Russian communists and Chinese nationalists. Abraham A. Joffe, Soviet’s star diplomat in China, had earlier described the Russians as Asians who wanted to liberate their Chinese brothers from the suppression of the imperialistic Western powers. Roger Pelissier, The Awakening of China 1793-1949, ed. and transl. Martin Kieffer (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967), 301.

stereotypical images of Westerners. Buruma and Margalit (who frequently refer to pre-war Japanese perceptions of the West as an example of “Occidentalism”) certainly identify something which Said’s *Orientalism* largely neglects — the importance of German influences in the formation of images of the “other” during the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, European traditions of thought (whether French, German or British) cannot alone explain the self-images and images of “others” in East Asian textbooks from the turn of the last century. To get a thorough picture, it is necessary, of course, also to take the traditions of East Asia into consideration. However, for the most part the textbooks examined in this study do not give any references to the sources used in the compilation of the texts, and the ideas forwarded in the textbooks are often so general, and their specific identifications so vague, that it is difficult to trace their exact origins. Western ideas tended to merge with native, traditional understanding of the world, to an extent that it is often very difficult to label them as specifically “Western” or “Eastern”.

2.10 Summary

The loss of the Sino-Japanese War triggered the reform-minded Chinese intelligentsia to call for change, which, after the disastrous Boxer Rebellion, finally met the approval of the Qing court. The accomplishments of neighbouring Japan, which had recently defeated China in war, seemed to prove that swift change towards strength and wealth was possible, and measures were taken to reform China along Japanese lines. In the attempts to modernize the Empire and turn it into a strong and rich nation, the establishing of modern education with militaristic elements was seen to be of fundamental importance. China’s first modern educational system (including its aims) was based on the Japanese system, which in turn largely drew inspiration from the German model. The teaching materials used in the new schools were for the most part translated Japanese textbooks, or textbooks which drew inspiration from Japanese textbooks. Remarkably, the most widely read textbooks, which were also favoured by the Qing school authorities, were published by a company with strong Japanese interests.

“Modern” geography was one of many fields of study which reached China through Japan during the late Qing period. However, geography, as it had developed in Japan during the Meiji period and although it was based on methods developed in Europe, was adapted to suit Japan’s growing ambitions and had largely been stripped of Eurocentric overtones. Instead, the Japanese geography textbooks of the late 19th and early 20th centuries mirrored ideas of Japanese supremacy over the Asian continent, combined with an escalating desire for imperial expansion. Despite Japan’s imperialistic and colonial agenda, many Chinese intellectuals and educators, from stout supporters of the ruling dynasty to elements who wanted to overthrow it, were drawn to Japanese nationalistic cultural conservatism which, although not hostile to modernization, argued for the importance of preserving the supposedly distinct character of the intrinsic nature of the Japanese Volk. The Japanese success story seemed to prove that modernization was possible without wholesale Westernization and the risk of falling under the boot of Western interests, as long as the native “essence” was preserved.

Considering the fact that Chinese educators largely drew inspiration from Japan, and not from Europe and/or the United States, their world-view was rather cast in a Sino-Japanese mould than in a Sino-European one, although many of the ideas which reached China through Japan indisputably had a European origin. My analysis of the descriptions of East Asians in Chinese geography textbooks is hence based on the assumption that they mirror a multi-faced amalgamation, which in turn reflects a mixture of European, Japanese and Chinese elements.
3 Progress, civilization and the struggle for survival

The late 19th and the early 20th century was the age of European imperialism, colonial expansion, Christian missionization and mass emigration to the New World. It was also the age of mass education, urbanization, industrialization and improvements and innovation in the field of technology. The maxim of the age was progress — the idea that human society moves from a rudimentary state of simplicity and barbarity to maturity and civilization. As an impellent force, constantly advancing, progress was imagined as pushing aside everything weak and stagnant, thereby making room for further achievements.

As will be revealed in this chapter, faith in the supposed law of progress also had an enormous impact on how the world at large was described in the Chinese geography textbooks. However, although the textbooks follow the originally Western model of dividing social and/or cultural development into different stages, from primitiveness towards advancement, they do not reveal any signs of what Blaut refers to as “Eurocentric diffusionism”. Nevertheless, Social Darwinism greatly influenced the “modern” and “scientific” way of thinking of East Asian educators.

The ideas of the English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer (famous during the latter half of the 19th century for his evolutionist philosophy) were the focus of tremendous attention in Japan, especially during the early Meiji period. The ideas of Darwin and Spencer also found their way to China through the translations of men like Yan Fu (1854-1921), who at the end of the Qing dynasty introduced Western philosophy and social science in China.274 However, although Yan Fu indeed popularized Darwin’s theory of evolution through his translation of Thomas Huxley’s On Evolution in 1898, Darwinian ideas also reached China through Japan. In the primary geography textbook Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu, based on Japanese teaching materials, we meet evolutionist theories of the origin of mankind as having originated from apes, or having the same forefathers as apes, besides a discussion on various proofs of the evolution, such as fossils.275 This textbook, however, soon starts to apply evolutionist theories on social development:

275 Hou Hongjian 侯鸿剑, Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu 中等地理教科书 [An Intermediate geography textbook] (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, late Qing), 51-52.
The native barbarians in India, Africa and on the islands of the South Sea are stupid by nature and have no knowledge and little capacity. The stronger individuals live from fishing and hunting, while the weaker are doomed to die out by natural selection. How many of them have not perished without leaving any traces behind?  

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The textbooks, full of references to progress and evolution, generally reveal a strong contempt for anything considered weak and unfit, but they also voice a more or less pronounced fear of having fallen too far behind in the development. The common picture is that Asia, especially China, was once upon a time far more advanced than Europe, but that the Western world nowadays has surpassed the rest of the world in development. Asians, Chinese people in particular, must hence regain their former position by ridding themselves of backwardness, taking control over their natural resources and developing their industries, and thereby once again becoming their own masters.  

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The idea that different societies can be sorted on a scale ranging from the lowest level of savagery to civilization is found, in more or less pronounced forms, in all the textbooks examined. The stages of progress, as defined in Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu, are civilization, (wenming 文明), half-civilization, semi-civilization (ban kaiming 半開明), barbarism (wei kaiming 未開明, literally not yet civilized, i.e. nomadic culture) and savagery (yeman 野蠻), definitions which are also employed in the teaching materials used at the Imperial University

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276 Ibid., 67. (印度非洲及南洋各國之土蠻性情愚蠢既無智識。又少能力。其稍強者。以漁獵為生業。其弱者則隨天演而淘汰之。幾何消滅其踪迹耶。）

277 The modern educators seem indeed to have been deeply sickened by the domination of the white man, which on the other hand did not prevent them from being terribly racist towards other, non-white peoples. A geology textbook from 1903, for example, has the following to say about the Chinese people, after first having concluded that “black slaves” are the meanest of races: “The people of our country belong to the yellow race. Two thousand years of Han Chinese civilization has been lightening up the good earth, which nowadays is more or less in the hands of the white man. For the sake of our people, how will we be able to cleanse ourselves from this shame while not turning our backs on the development of [the natural resources of] the physical geography of the Asian continent?” (我國民。黃色人種也。二千年來漢族文明。焜耀大地。今幾為白人所掩并焉。為我國民者。果何以洗雪斯恥。亦無負亞洲大陸地文之發達呼。), The textbook especially emphasizes the national interest of controlling the natural resources of China in order to modernize the nation. Above all the exploitation of mineral findings is considered to be crucial for the development of the nation: “The myriad things on earth can roughly be divided into three categories: minerals, plants and animals. With regard to the improvement of the people and the progress of the nation, among these three categories the category of minerals is the most essential in physical geography. If the mineral findings are many and the mining industry busy, the country will turn rich and strong. If there are few findings and the mining industry is indolent, the country will turn poor and weak. In China the metal and coal deposits hidden in the earth and not yet exploited are too many to be recorded” ( 地球萬物。約分三類。曰礦物類。曰植物類。曰動物類。三類之中。關於人民之開化。邦國之進步者。則礦物一類。最為地文學上之要點。礦產多。礦業勤者。其國富以強。礦產少。礦業懶者。其國貧以弱。中國五金煤礦。埋藏未發者。不可紀勝。), Qian Chengju 錢承駒, Mengxue diwen jiaokeshu 蒙學地文教科書 [A schoolbook on elementary geology] (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1903), 24, 30.
and the Yixueguan in Beijing. Other geographers use somewhat different terms. The primary textbook *Chudeng Zhongguo dili jiaokeshu*, for example, uses the synonyms *ban kaihua* (半開化) and *wei kaihua* (未開化) instead of *ban kaiming* and *wei kaiming* respectively, while *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, used in higher primary school, discusses the alleged stages of social evolution in terms of civilization (*wenming* 文明), half-civilization (*banhua* 半化), nomadism (*youmu* 游牧) and savagery (*yeman* 野蛮).*279* The middle school textbook *Complete Geography*, although compiled by the same scholar as *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, distinguishes between civilized (*wenming* 文明), educated (*you jiaohua* 有教化), half-educated (*ban kaihua*), nomadic (*youmu*) and savage (*yeman*) peoples/nations (*guomin* 國民).*280*

The term *wenming* or “civilization” is sometimes used to signify Chinese traditional culture, but usually it is employed to denote modern Western attainments within the fields of statecraft, economy, technology, science and the like.*281* Although the textbooks do not necessarily directly label the Chinese as “half-civilized”, the context always makes it very clear that China nowadays is lagging behind the Western world and neighbouring Japan for that matter. By generally discussing the shortcomings of “half-civilizations” in comparison with more advanced “civilizations”, it is implied that China must reach a higher stage of development to be able to safeguard her independence. It is, however, frequently hinted that the Chinese have potential for developing their land of plenty, as long as they stick together and are ready to think in new terms. The bottomline is that the Chinese must swallow their pride and develop their country along new, foreign and ultimately more advanced patterns.

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*278 Hou Hongjian, *Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu*, 58; Zou Daijun 鄒代鈞, *Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi* 京師大學堂中國地理經濟學講義 [The Imperial University’s lectures on Chinese geography] (*sine loco, sine anno*, likely published in Beijing between 1898 and 1911), 22; Han Pucun 韓檏存, *Jingshi yixueguan yudixue jiangyi* 京師譯學官舆地學講義 [Capital College of Translation’s lectures on world geography] (Beijing: Jingshi yixueguan, 1905), lesson 13, 1.


*281* The terms *wenming* 文明, *kaihua* 開化 and *kaiming* 開明, as used in the examples above, are Japanese loanwords, derived from Fukuzawa’s famous slogan *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 (usually translated as “civilization and enlightenment”) formulated during the opening year of the Meiji Restoration. During the 1870s and 1880s both *bunmei* (文明) and *kaika* (開化), besides the abbreviated forms *kaimei* (開明) and *bunka* (文化), were all separately used to translate the French/English term “civilization”. In the 1890s however, *bunka* came to fill the additional function of conveying the German concept of *Kultur*. *Bunmei* and *kaika*, though synonyms, had slightly different connotations. *Bunmei* implied the meaning of “the ongoing and total progress of humankind”, while *kaika* largely conveyed the meaning of “the public cultivation of civilization through government policy”. Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 33, 34, 38, 43.
Most explicit in the analysis of the assumed stages of progress is the teaching material used at the Imperial University, which underlines that there are “scientific” ways of predicting the destiny of the peoples of the world. In the passage on political geography (zhengzhi dili 政治地理), the level to which a given society can develop is claimed to be due to natural factors such as geographical location, topographic features, climate, productivity, and human factors, that is, the extent to which the population is good-natured or bad-natured. The best natural premises for development are a mild climate, close access to the open sea, river systems which can be used for irrigation and transport, and an abundance of natural products, minerals in particular. The best human premises for development are physical strength, endurance, organizing skills and unity:

If a population has a strong physique, can stand hard work, has the ability of making firm decisions and is equipped with a chivalrous [alt. righteous] spirit [which allows people to] undertake their tasks in agreement, [they are blessed with outstanding] human [resources].

Geography is depicted as an exact and accurate discipline with universal application which allows the initiated to objectively classify his surrounding. A given people, culture, society or state is easily classified by the scientifically educated man as belonging to any of the different stages of social evolution:

Farming can be diligent or idle, manufacturing and trading can be ingenious or clumsy. When those in the know arrive in a country, they can tell which level the people have reached by looking at their farmland and houses and by analyzing their instruments and [estimating] their amount of wealth.

It is even claimed that the geographer, by examining the physical geography and the fitness of the population, can tell whether a country or a people “will rise or perish, survive or die out”. The idea that the discipline of geography can identify the premises for future development is frequently encountered in the textbooks examined. In Complete Geography, for example, we find the following observation, which also emphasizes the importance of a benevolent environment and the right human premises for progress:

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282 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang Zhongguo dili jiangyi, 22.
283 Ibid. (居民之體質強壯能耐勞苦有斷制事物之能力有同心任事之義氣此得人者)
284 Ibid., 21. (農有勤惰，工商有巧拙。識者人其國，觀其田疇居室，辨其器用財貨，可以知其國民之程度焉。)
285 Ibid., 22. (治地理學者，當就二原因，以究人國之廢興存亡，其大要也。)
[The reasons why] the nations of the world are at different stages of evolution depend on the rate to which their societies have developed, and [the degree to which] their societies have developed is actually due to natural and human factors. The natural factors are such matters as the productivity of the land etc., and the human factors are human character and physique etc. The speed of development will naturally be fast if the climate is mild, if there are many natural harbours and fertile soil, and if the population is strong and healthy, can endure hard work and is dedicated to the same cause and spares no efforts [in their undertakings]. But the speed of development will necessarily be slow if the situation is the reverse. Scholars researching geography must investigate all these factors when seeking the cause of the prosperity of a country.\footnote{Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 32. (世界國家進化之不齊、由於社會發達之有遲速、而社會發達之遲速、實因天然人事而殊、天然者地土物產等是也、人事者、性情軀體等是也、如地處溫和之境、既多海口、物產饒富、而居民強健耐勞、同心奮力、則其發達自速、反乎此者、發達必遲、有斷然者、研究地理之士、不可不於上文所舉諸端、而求國民興盛之故也)}

As understood from the passages cited above, progress is to some extent a question of physical fitness, but perhaps even more of commitment and willpower (i.e. the determination to head forward as one man). The physical exercises practised in the modern schools and the attempts to install patriotism in schoolchildren were both important aspects of the new educational system, functioning as measures for improving the human factors for progress and development. The educational system was to produce a physically strong and patriotic youth with a developed spirit of “togetherness” (an ideal which could best be expressed with the German word \textit{Gemeinschaft}), that is, a new generation of vitalized citizens who were better fit to safeguard the interests (or the survival) of China. The emphasis on the importance of cooperation and unity runs all through the textbooks examined as a continuous thread, and is, as will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 5, something which the Chinese educators, inspired by their Japanese counterparts, argued that the Chinese population at large were in urgent need of.

\textit{Wenming}, as the highest stage of social development, tends to be described as something of an earthly paradise in which people have come together as an organic entity and enjoy all the fruits of progress:

In civilized nations, high and low are of one heart and able to cooperate in a spirit of unity, ready to rise up together [in the face of a challenge]. A constitution has been perfected, the legal system is enlightened and in order, advanced learning is excellent and common education widespread. [People] honour moral values, possess vast knowledge, attach importance to hygiene, and are hardworking and skilled [within the fields of] agriculture, manufacturing and trading. Life and property enjoy protection, and the state is rich and the military strong. The
process of civilization makes new advances with each passing day, and in the world of today, the most fortunate peoples are those [of civilized nations].

Human society is usually described as progressing from a rudimentary state to maturity, following a given course of development in which “primitive” man initially lives from what nature has to offer, then moves on to pastoral nomadism, next passes through the agricultural stage and “half-civilization” and finally reaches the ultimate goal of industrialization and “civilization”, provided that the natural and human conditions are right. Progress equals constant striving towards higher stages of development, and since those nations which have managed to struggle their way to the top dominate less advanced ones, “half-civilizations” must quickly proceed towards the next step in social development:

Though half-civilized people do not have any constitutions, they have legal systems, literature and skills. [They] attach importance to agriculture, but manufacturing and trading are also very developed. They have reached the level of having city walls and palaces, and have sufficient clothes and utensils. However, education is not yet widespread and the social system is incomplete. In this world of competition, [they] have not yet been able to attain independence and become their own masters.

While it is understood that “half-civilized” peoples are able to get back on the right track towards further forms of social development if they just pull themselves together, the situation looks rather different for peoples at supposedly lower stages of social development. Allegedly, nomadic peoples, such as Mongols and Arabs “are content with their ignorance and have no thoughts of progressing”. “Savages”, on the other hand, are said to be “stuck in the same chaos as in primeval time and lack the capacity of attempting to evolve”.

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287 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang Zhongguo dili jiangyi, 22. (上下一心。有協同振作之氣。憲法完備。法律修明。學術茂美。教育普及。尊道德。博知識。重衛生。農工商業。既勤且巧。生命財產。皆得保護國富兵強。文化日進。方今世界。最得幸福之民也。) The passage reminds of the idea of national assemble, as expressed in one of the clauses in the Meiji Emperor’s Charter Oath of 1868: “All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state.” Cited in Tsunoda, Sources of Japanese Tradition, 644. The remark on the importance of national prosperity and military strength (保護國富兵強) also echoes the ideals of Meiji Japan. The slogan Fukoku kyōhei (富國強兵) embodies the goals of the Meiji government, for the attainment of which the new administrative and constitutional structure had been established. Imperial Japan, 202.

288 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang Zhongguo dili jiangyi, 22. (半開明國民雖無憲法。尚有法律制度文學技術。其民重農。即工商之業亦頗發達。城郭宮室具備。衣服器具用充足。然教育未溥及。社會組織不完。處此競爭世界。未能獨立自主者也。)

289 Ibid. (安於固陋。不思進化。)

290 Ibid., 21. (野蠻之民。所以閉塞於草昧之天地。而不能圖進化。)
The reason why certain races perish is their alleged “incomplete social structures”. It is hence understood that as important as catching up with the modern world in terms of technical innovations is improving the mechanisms of the state. Social (or political) change is thus of the same crucial importance as industrialization and the adoption of modern communications. The bottom line is that the more mature a society gets, the less people have to rely on individual strength for their survival. In advanced nations, it is understood, all individuals are knitted together by mutual bonds of “togetherness” which hold the society together and provide a better environment for survival and further progress. It is therefore of absolute importance to take the right measures to create an order that will unite the masses. Progress, it is nevertheless understood, is ultimately the way to happiness, dominance and national survival, while stagnation equals unhappiness, weakness and the risk of final extermination in a dog-eat-dog world. “Civilized people” are even claimed to control the allegedly stupid, primitive and disorganized “savages” just like “wolves command sheep”.

There are no attempts made to explain how the alleged morality of “civilized people” was compatible with their submission of weaker peoples, and the narrative of “civilized peoples” versus “savages” seems to be largely based on the observation that it is simply better to be the hammer than the nail, so to speak, and that it is better get the upper hand if given the opportunity.

The textbooks examined generally tend to draw parallels between development and race. That is, the “White race” is often depicted as positioned ahead of the “Yellow race” in the course towards higher forms of social and technical advancement, while the rest of mankind is portrayed as utterly left behind. In Commercial Press’s elementary textbook *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*, published in 1902, the following racialized interpretation of the ideas of the Japanese geographer Shiga Shigetaka is presented:

Mankind, high and low, can be divided into three categories. The first category is called civilization. [People belonging to this category] are virtuous, intelligent and resourceful in technology. [Their societies] are developed and they make progress day by day. The second category is called half-civilization. [People belonging to this category have] written languages and are reasonable, which slightly distinguishes them from savages. However, the natural sciences are not known to them and they are misled by superstition [lit. devils and gods], and observe past practices with great care. They do not understand to change their [old] ways in order to pursue what is new. The third category is savagery. People have no common goals, are selfish and do not organize any societies. They make their living through hunting and fishing. They have no knowledge of farming and have never heard

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291 Ibid. (以至種族澌滅者由其社會組織不完也)
292 Ibid., 22. (文明國民。以威力馭之。如狼將羊耳。)
of letters or morality [alt. social obligations]. The white race constantly approaches civilization, while the yellow race still is half-civilized. The black, brown and red races are uncivilized savages.

It is understood that the “Yellow race” must quicken the pace to shorten the distance between themselves and the “White race” and not be content with a second place in a competition where the winner takes it all and the loser perishes. In other words, the “Yellow race” must exert themselves in order to keep up with (or in the long run perhaps even surpass) the “White race”. Progress in that perspective is perceived as something of a racial struggle. “Civilization” is the next level of development which China must attain to in order to survive on the international arena. It is the higher stage of development already attained by the powerful nations, which are now taking advantage of China’s weaker position and threatening her independence.

Commercial Press’s somewhat later textbook Lessons in Elementary Geography includes a passage in the chapter on culture (wenhua 文化) which bears a close resemblance to what we have seen in the passage cited above, the levels of human development clearly being associated with the assumed racial categories of white, yellow, black, brown and red peoples. “Savages”, it is implied, are nothing but relics of prehistoric times, while change (and hence history) only characterises “higher” forms of development. Nomadism has now been added as one of the phases of social evolution, and it can be observed that while “half-civilization”, as depicted in the passage cited above, comes through as rather close to “savagery”, “half-civilization” now appears as a comparatively advanced stage of development in this modified interpretation of the assumed evolutionary course of human history:

293 Chen Qiansheng 陈乾生, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian 小學萬國地理教科書新編 [A newly compiled primary school textbook on the geography of all nations] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1902). Vol. 1, 4. (人類高下。分為三等。第一曰文明。德慧術智。日發達而有進步者。第二曰半文明。文字義理。稍別於野蠻人。然物理不明。惑於鬼神。篤於守舊。不知變法求新焉。第三曰野蠻。人各一心。不公不羣。漁獵為生。岡知耕種。文字義理無聞焉。白種人日近文明。黃種人猶半文明。若黑色。棕色。紅色。三種人。則皆未開化之野蠻也。) In Shiga’s teaching material on geography one finds the following observation: “The degree of progress amongst all human races can, according to regional differences, be classified in three kinds; savagery, half-civilization and civilization. Every savage only devote himself to his own business. The savages are selfish and do not cooperate or form societies. They have no literature or principles. They hunt among the mountains and in the forests, and fish in the lakes and in the sea, or eat wild plants. They use what the nature offers as clothes and food. By nature they are fond of fighting, and lack moral and wisdom and have no clever skills. Half-civilized people can form societies, but do not understand science. They carefully adhere to past practices, and do not understand to grasp the opportunities to change and thereby complete their societies. They [run] businesses and [are in the possession of] literature, [but otherwise] differ only slightly from savages. Civilized people have ethical standards, are of superior intelligence and are extremely developed and advanced.” Shiga, 12. (人類開化之程度。因其不同區為三種。一野蠻。二半文明。三文明。野蠻之人。人各一心。不公不合。不成社會。無文學。無義理。獵山林。漁湖海。或食野生之植物。以資衣食。性好爭鬪。無德慧智術。半開化之人。雖能成社會。然理學末明。篤於守舊。不知乘變履世。事業文學。稍稍別於野蠻而已。文明之人。倫理睿智。甚發達有進步者。)
In the beginning, man lived in caves in the wilderness. People ate [raw meat with the rind] unsinged and drank blood. Those who live in the cold areas use hides as clothes while those who live in hot places are naked and barefoot all year round. They are unenlightened and ignorant, cold-hearted and fond of slaughtering, and each individual pays undivided attention to himself/herself without any sense of a common good, unable to form societies. This is what is called savage people. As a long time passed by, some people took up the practice of pastoral nomadism. They built houses which merely sheltered them from wind and rain, or set up tents in which they resided while following the access of water and grass. They do not know letters or morality [alt. social obligations]. This is what is called nomadic people. Later, some were able to settle in places with fertile soil and began to practice agriculture. These people are skilled in manufacturing and commerce and apply themselves to studies in literature. They have learnt to observe the common civilities of life but do not yet understand natural science. They are misled by superstition [lit. devils and gods/spirits] and stick to past views with great care. They do not understand [the importance/necessity of] making [appropriate] adaptations [to new circumstances], and many of their customs are low and corrupt. This is what is called half-civilized people. At the most superior stage of human development, manufacturing, commerce, technology and arts are most ingenious. People’s intellect is developed and the scholarship profound. They honour morality and set a high value on politeness. The citizens are at peace and the nation [alt. state] strong and secure. On these grounds, they are what is referred to as civilized people. At present, only the white race constantly approaches civilization, while the yellow race is still stagnant at the level of half-civilization. As for the black, brown and red races, they are for the most part nothing but savages.294

The influence of Shiga Shigetaka is still evident, although the account of social evolution now been placed in a more traditional setting. That is, the textbook makes passing references to the descriptions of early primitive man that are met in the Chinese Classics. The notion of the prehistoric cavemen refers to a passage in Yijing (Book of Changes), which states that people in remote antiquity originally lived in caves in the wilderness but were later taught by sages to build houses, which protected them from exposure to wind and rain.295 The mentioning of the alleged eating habits of prehistoric man, on the other hand, refers to a passage in the chapter “Liyun” (Evolution of Rites) in Liji (the Book of Rites, one of the Thirteen Classics), which describes how primitive early man, dressed in feathers and hides, lived in dug-out caves

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294 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 3, 8. (生人之初，穴居野處。茹毛飲血。居寒地者。以獸皮為衣，居熱地者。終歲裸跣，蒙昧無知。殘忍好殺。人各一心。不公不羣。是曰野蠻之民。厯時既久，漸有從事畜牧者。所築宮室僅蔽風雨。或張幕為廬。逐水草而居。文字義理。尚無所知。是曰遊牧之民。其後有獲居腴壤者。從事農業。嫻於工商。勉於文學。習於禮義。而物理未明。惑於鬼神。篤於舊說。不知變通。俗多鄙陋。是曰半化之民。至人類最超卓者。工商技藝。窮極精巧。智慧發達。學術深邃。尊德義而貴禮讓。人民又安。國家鞏固。則所謂文明之民也。今惟白種人日近文明。而黃種人則猶有滞居半化之列者。若夫黑櫛紅三種。則大都野蠻而已。)

295 Yijing 易經 [Book of Changes]: Xici 繫辭 [Connecting words]. Shisan jing zhushu 十三經注疏 [The thirteen classics with commentaries and subcommentaries] (Shanghai: Guoxue zhenglishe, 1935). Vol. 1, 87. (上古穴居而野處。後世聖人易之以宮室，上棟下宇，以待風雨。)
during the winter and in nests at the top of trees during the summer, and drank blood and ate raw, uncooked flesh, still ignorant of the use of fire. People were, however, later taught by sages the use of fire, so they came to master not only various forms of preparing food but also metal casting. Moreover, people learned the skills of pottery and architecture, and how to weave silk and hemp textiles and make wine and vinegar. By alluding to the Chinese classics, the passage suggests that the first steps in the process of man’s cultivation took place in ancient China and nowhere else. That is, although the “White race” nowadays has surpassed the “Yellow race” in advancement, man first rose from savagery in China, so the Chinese also have been culturally more sophisticated for a long period of time in comparison with the Europeans.

The middle school textbook Complete Geography also refers to the chapter “Liyun” in *Liji*, although here with the apparent purpose of underlining that progress does not simply equal Westernization, the ultimate “goal” of social development being far more profound and advanced than merely reaching the highest stage of civilization in its present form. In the passage on “society”, social evolution is described as an ever-ongoing process of refinement in which the most developed countries are not necessarily considered to be the last, ideal stage of development: “Mankind proceeds from savagery towards civilization, that is to say, society develops from its incipient stage to reach perfection. Today, [even] the most civilized countries in the world still have shortcomings, and the social structures have not yet attained their maximum height”. This textbook distinguishes between “half-educated” (a term which obviously corresponds to what is usually referred to as “half-civilized” in other textbooks) and “educated” peoples/nations (an alleged phase between “half-educated” and “civilized” people), and gives the following description of these assumed stages of social development, including an observation which seems to suggest that the Confucian utopia of Great Unity (*Datong*) is the natural stage of development following *Wenming*:

Half-educated people have permanent settlements. They primarily engage in farming, are familiar with systems for cooperation and found states and make laws. Technology and arts are also developed, although imperfect and incomplete. Folk customs are vulgar. The perspective of educated people is slightly more advanced. If literature, technology and arts and good morals are added, progress is bound to proceed even further, into a so-called

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296 *Liji* 禮記 [Book of rites]: Liyun 禮運 [Evolution of rites], *Liji Chen Hao zhu* 禮記 陳澔注 [Book of rites annotated by Chen Hao] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 122. (昔者先王未有宮室。冬則居營窟。夏則檜巢。未有火化。食實鳥獸之肉。飲其血茹其毛。)

297 Ibid.

298 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 32. (人類由野蠻而進文明，即社會之發達自草創以抵純全耳，今世界文明之邦，猶有以缺憾，以其社會之組織，猶未達其極也)
civilized nation. The social structures are almost complete, and the administration pays close attention to public opinion. People do not have to worry about their welfare or their private property, and education is made universal. People become brighter and more virtuous day by day. They live and work in contentment, enjoy perpetual peace and have the desire to proceed to the world of Datong.  

Datong, as originally described in “Liyun”, is something of a lost ancient paradise in which harmony, equality and justice prevailed. In Kang Youwei’s reinterpretation, however, Datong was projected on the future. The increased contacts between the west and the east and the political and social reforms which had been carried out in Europe and America were seen by Kang as indicating that man had entered the second phase of historical development (that of approaching peace), which in turn anticipates the final stage of progress — Datong. Confucius, who according to Kang lived during the first stage of progress when decay and disorder dominated, had allegedly already foreseen this development, and from Kang Youwei’s point of view, the adoption of the attainments of modern Western civilization was hence not the same as Westernization but rather a step towards the realization of true Confucianism. Regardless of whether the textbook compiler was inspired by Kang’s projection of Western progressionism on the Chinese Classics or not, he nevertheless managed to give the very idea of social evolution a Confucian flavour. The middle school students, who had been exposed to an educational system which still put heavy emphasis on the Classics, must have got the impression that Confucian utopianism awaited at the end of man’s imagined course from utter egoism, severe competition and brutal violence, to solidarity, cooperation and peace. From this perspective, the “lowest forms” of social development consequently represent the very antithesis of the Confucian ideal society – the embodiment of chaos, immorality, self-interest and bestiality:

Savage people only seek personal gains, and if they cooperate, it is only to a very small degree. Except for fishing and hunting, they only engage in the slaying of enemies. They do not conduct business and have no production. They are the lowest of mankind, not distant from the wild animals. Nomads are usually organized in tribes under a chieftain. They raise cattle and sheep, and follow the access of grass and water. They have no

299 Ibid., 33. (半教化之民、居有定所、業多農務、知協力之制、建國立法、技藝亦興、然缺而不全、民俗卑陋、其有文化者、視前稍進、若再加以文學、技藝、德義、則進步更增、即所謂文明之國也、其社會之組織、已幾純全、政治尊視公論、民生財產、安固無慮、教育之法普及無遺、民智日高、民德日進、安居樂業、永亨太平、且更冀進於大同之世界)

sense of propriety and righteousness and renounce literature. They are tough and violent by nature, and are good at plundering. 301

The idea that “savages” were beastlike and somehow less human than more “developed” peoples, as encountered in the passage above, does not necessarily reflect originally European notions of the alleged “primitive” (and hence beastlike) nature of non-Europeans but rather seems to mirror the long-established Chinese image of the peripheral “savage” as something of both man and beast. As pointed out by Frank Dikötter in his pioneering work on racial prejudice in China, the tendency to ascribe beastlike attributes to non-Chinese ethnicities in ancient China was “[…] part of a mentality that integrated the concept of civilization with the idea of humanity, picturing the alien groups living outside the pale of Chinese society as distant savages hovering on the edge of bestiality”. 302 Traditionally, the Chinese considered themselves to be more civilized than neighbouring peoples and often used contemptuous terms, implying beastlike qualities when referring to them. 303 Dehumanizing “others” has unfortunately been a common practice throughout the ages in both the East and the West, so it can sometimes be rather difficult to tell whether the textbooks’ derogatory descriptions of “savages” are primarily based on traditional ideas or new, “scientific” ideas of foreign origin. The “savages” are, sometimes at one and the same time, both the ancient caven men described in the Chinese Classics, wild and beastlike creatures at the periphery of Chinese civilization, and allegedly racially and culturally inferior peoples incapable of making progress and doomed to the yoke of foreign colonialism, if not racial extinction.

It might perhaps be imagined that the Sinocentrism of the Chinese Classics and the Eurocentrism of the modern human sciences of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as

301 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 32-33. (野蠻之民，各自為謀，即有協力之事，亦僅小小部分。無經 經籌無造作，漁獵之外，惟事仇殺、在人類為最卑下、去禽獸幾布、遊牧之民、往往立一部落，奉一酋長、畜牛羊、逐水草而居、寡禮義、絕文學、性質剛猛、以劫掠為能)

302 Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China, 4. As an example of this mentality, consider for example the following observation, found in a teacher’s manual to a lower primary geography textbook published in 1906: “Beyond the Nushan Mountains in the province of Yunnan there are extremely many wild savages. They have a fierce appearance and are close to being animals. They have not made any advancement since ancient times.” Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa. Vol. 2, 25. (雲南省怒山之外。野蠻極多。狀貌獰惡，近於禽獸。自古以來。尚未開化。)

303 Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China, 4. The traditional worldview of the Chinese, which placed China at the centre of civilization surrounded by more or less barbarian, if not animal-like peoples, irritated many Meiji Japanese intellectuals, who now wanted to place Japan at the centre of cultural development in Asia. In the geographer Uchida Masao’s geography textbook from the early Meiji period one finds the following observation, after the usual remarks on the alleged deceitfulness, stubbornness etc. of the Chinese: “Further on, they value ancient times and despise modern times, and self-importantly they refer to [their country] as Chūka Chūgoku [Chin. Zhonghua Zhongguo (China – the Middle Kingdom)], and look down upon foreign countries, as if inhabited by barbarians or beasts.” Uchida Masao, Yochi shiryaku. Vol. 2, 7. (又古ヲ貴ミ今ヲ賤ミ自尊大ニシテ中華中國ト稱シ外國ヲ視ルニ夷狄禽獸ノ如ク)
geography, anthropology and history, are like oil and water: they do not mix. Yet the new "scientific" ideas which pointed out the coloured "savage" peoples of the world as inferior seem to have been generally accepted by the Chinese textbook compilers without a second thought, probably because they reminded them of traditional constructions of non-Han peoples as inferior. The "scientific" claims that Westerners have reached a higher degree of development than the Chinese themselves nevertheless placed the Chinese in an awkward position. However, by discussing (although not defining) the Confucian utopia of Datong in terms of social development, Complete Geography implies a Confucian (and hence Chinese) scheme behind man’s development towards perfection. Providing that the utopia is imagined as an ideal society of remote antiquity and not as a future phase of development, the mentioning of Datong as the highest stage of social development can also be interpreted as implying that the Westerners of today have not yet excelled the Chinese of ancient times in terms of constructing an advanced society. The attempt to seek equality with the West by mentioning Datong is paralleled by suggestions implying that modern technology and other fields of knowledge recently introduced into China originally had an eastern origin, and by the idea that the Chinese had a glorious ancient past as colonizers, themes to be more thoroughly discussed later on in chapter 6 below.

None of the textbooks examined depict the “White race” as racially superior to the “Yellow race”, although, as seen from the examples above, it is admitted that the latter has stuck at a phase of social stagnation and must hence start to move forwards. However, Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu does note that “the brainpower of the yellow man is not inferior to that of the white man, but [while the yellow man’s] capacity of thinking in terms of utopian ideas is high, the power of thinking in terms of industry is rather weak”. It is, on the other hand, argued that “yellow people” can stand hardships better than any other people in the world, and that the lower classes are especially good at enduring hard labour, which is given as the reason why Chinese people are employed to carry out the toughest jobs. It is understood that China’s prospect for future progress, the “white” and “yellow” races being equally intelligent, is more of a question of changing attitudes than inherited (racial) qualities, although the alleged ability of enduring extreme hardship was probably considered an asset in the constant struggle for survival. The Chinese upper class, it is however implied, should

304 Hou Hongjian, Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu, 67. (黄人腦力。不亞於白人。然於理想上之思力為高。實業上之思力較為薄弱。)
305 Ibid., 67, 69.
306 Ibid. The alleged capacity of the Chinese to endure hard physical labour, which in Chinese textbooks is described as a superior quality, is however not necessarily described as something absolutely positive in Meiji
engage less in lofty philosophical speculations on the ideal society and instead embrace a more down-to-earth mentality and focus more on practical knowledge.

All the textbooks examined express a deep concern for China’s lack of advancement in comparison with the West and convey a more or less pronounced sense of fear for the possible outcome if China remains inflexible and proves incapable of changing quickly enough. We can imagine the torment the textbook compilers must have felt when faced with the difficult task of pointing out all the supposedly non-lovable aspects of China to the new generation of Chinese citizens, while at the same time trying to promote a strong sense of love for it. The educators had to balance between hinting at the worst-case scenario for China (i.e. racial extinction) in order to make the students fully aware of the importance of embracing a more progressive approach, while boosting the student’s faith in themselves and the nation (or perhaps rather the nation-to-be), although not to an extent that might give them the false idea that change was of minor importance. The students were to meet the future with confidence and be proud of their ancient past, but, on the other hand, they had to remember that their present level of social development was not advanced enough to face the challenges of tomorrow. In order to reach a higher level of social progress, whether the goal was set on the peaceful utopia of Datong or on the realization of Wenming, China had, first of all, to strengthen her ability to compete in the struggle for existence.

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Japanese textbooks: “Even if the China men’s customs are mean and crude, they are good at enduring hard labour, and are therefore engaged as slaves by Westerners. There are plenty of them in many countries in the Orient.” (支那人ハ風俗賤陋ナリト雖モ其善ク勞苦ニ堪フルヲ以テ洋人ヲ雇テ奴隷トシ東方諸邦一般ニ於テ役役スル者多シ) Uchida Masao, Yochi shiryaku. Vol. 2, 7.
4 The lay of the land and its influence on man

4.1 The promises of a mild climate

Steps towards modernization (or development/progress/evolution at large) tend to be described in the textbooks as voluntary and collective acts of determination, possible for white and yellow people to accomplish, but impossible for other parts of the world’s population to achieve due to climatic and/or geographical factors. The natural conditions were believed to have influenced or formed the characteristics of the inhabitants negatively in supposedly non-benevolent environments. Geographical-deterministic ideas are found in all the textbooks examined, and they run parallel to racist and Social Darwinian ideas. The intermediate textbook Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu, for example, argues that people in the Tropics are stupid and lazy and lack energy. The hot and humid climate has weakened their minds and souls, and the rich access of natural resources has spoilt them:

Areas within the Torrid Zone are [heavily] exposed to sunlight and have a hot and humid climate. Therefore people are weak and tired and of fragile constitution. The bright shining sun and the humidity stimulate the reproduction of the fauna, and people can therefore easily get food and clothes. The climate is hot and people do not need any thick clothes and can thus save on it. As a result [of the climate] people in the Tropics are lazy, lack energy and are very stupid.\textsuperscript{307}

People in the Frigid Zone, on the other hand, are claimed to be so preoccupied with merely surviving in their harsh climate that they have no time for anything else than trying to get food and clothes due to lack of natural resources, which is why their “intelligence does not easily develop”.\textsuperscript{308} Although it is admitted that there might be some clever people within this zone, it would be “difficult to improve [alt. change] them”.\textsuperscript{309} Only the Temperate Zone with its moderate climate is said to suit the human race well, and people within this zone are said to be

\textsuperscript{307} Hou Hongjian, Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu, 71. (熱帶地方。受太陽之映射。氣候炎暑。復以多受蒸發氣。故其民。精神疲委。體質軟弱。又太陽熱力與熱發氣。大助其動物生育。使人不勞而得衣食。氣候既熱。又不需重厚衣服。衣服之費。節省甚多。故熱帶地方居民。惰懶無氣力。而多癡瘖。)

\textsuperscript{308} Ibid. (智慧不易發達)

\textsuperscript{309} Ibid. (不易改變)
“lively, courageous, intelligent and broadminded”. These ideas are, directly or indirectly, certainly borrowed from Shiga Shigetaka, whose wordings on the issue are almost identical. Similar accounts of the necessity of a beneficial climate to spur progress, apparently also influenced by Shiga’s lectures, are also found in *Lessons in Elementary Geography*.

In *Notes on New Geographical Readers*, compiled to provide the reader with more detailed explanations of the “facts” given in *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, things are stretched a little further. It is observed that the climate determines the skin colour of mankind, which is why the skin colour of people in the Temperate Zone is “slightly yellowish”, in the Frigid Zone “lightly white”, and in the tropics “deep black”. Yellow skin colour is clearly identified with what was commonly seen as an advantageous and promising climate, and black and white colour with extreme, distantly located and peripheral zones, far from the Yellow Earth where the process of civilization once upon a time begun. By referring to the same alleged connection between climate and the development of civilization discussed above, it is argued that people in the Tropics are “physically slack”, while people in the Frigid Zone are “spiritually worn out” due to easy access to the necessities of life in a hot climate and the difficulties of getting hold of them in a cold and barren environment respectively. Only people in the Temperate Zone have “the spirit of concentrating their efforts”, besides being “most strongly competitive”, which is why people living in an environment with a mild climate “make progress most easily”.

In the teaching material used at the Imperial University, the same arguments are used to maintain that people in the Torrid Zone and the Frigid Zone are inferior. It is observed that the black peoples of the Torrid Zone are “muddleheaded and lazy”, and that the white peoples

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310 Ibid. (活潑。勇敢明達。)
311 Shiga, 26.
314 Ibid. (膚色淡白)
315 Ibid. (膚色深黑)
316 Ibid. Vol. 1, 12. (筋骨懈弛)
317 Ibid. (精神憔悴)
318 Ibid. (精氣凝聚)
319 Ibid. (競爭之事最烈)
320 Ibid. (故進化最易)
321 Zou Daijun, *Jingshi daxuetaang zhongguo dili jiangyi*, 19. (昏惰)
of the Frigid Zone are “stupid and dull”.

The “savages” in the Frigid Zone allegedly “lack in organization [even amongst people of] the same kind, have no great sovereigns or leaders, no written languages, no laws, get their food and clothes from hunting and fishing and are stuck in blind darkness, stupid as deer and pigs”, while those in the Torrid Zone “worship birds and beasts as gods, adorn themselves by deforming their skin and body, eat insects and the fruits from herbs and trees, and are ignorant of farming”. In the Temperate Zone, on the other hand, where the flora and fauna are thought to provide proportionate amounts of the necessities of life, people are white or yellow, and it is also here that the majority of all “civilized countries” are allegedly located. The primal factor for progress is a mild climate, and given that China is located within the Temperate Zone, the premises for future development are good. From the context, it is moreover understood that the preconditions for progress are restricted to yellow and white peoples of the temperate Zone, but since white peoples of the Frigid Zone are savage, white skin is by no means a precondition for progress. Yellow skin, on the other hand, which is not identified with harsh and extreme climates, appears as most typical of the Temperate Zone, from where all forms of higher human development supposedly sprout.

The primary geography textbook Chudeng Zhongguo dili jiaokeshu similarly notes that people in the Temperate Zone have yellow skin, while people in the Frigid Zone have white skin and people in the Torrid Zone have black skin. In an illustration complementing the text, an East Asian man is depicted in the centre, surrounded by people belonging to the other imagined four races of the world (people of black, brown, red and white colour). As pointed out by Ruth Miller Elson, many American geography textbooks of the nineteenth century include pictures of pleasant-looking representatives of the “white race” surrounded by less handsome coloured Others. In the Chinese version, however, the East Asian man illustrated in the picture is, at least in my eyes, quite ordinary-looking, while the others have rather grotesque features. As suggested by Frank Dikötter, the notion of a “Yellow race”, although originating in Europe, became widely accepted at the Chinese during the end of the 19th century due to the positive connotations yellow traditionally carries in China. It was

322 Ibid., 19. (愚鲁)
323 Ibid. (同類渙散。無大君長。無文字。無法律。以畋漁為衣食。晦盲否塞蠢蠢如鹿豕。)
324 Ibid., 22. (崇拜禽獸以為神。毀傷肌體以飾。食昆虫與草木之實。而不知耕作。)
325 Ibid., 19. (文明開化之國) Almost identical statements are encountered in Jingshi yixueguan yudixue jiangyi, although no attention is paid to the skin colour of the inhabitants of the three climate zones. Han Pucun, Jingshi yixueguan yudixue jiangyi. Lesson 12, 1.
327 Elson, 67-68.
associated with the Emperor of the Middle Kingdom and represented centrality and advancement. It was the colour of the Yellow River and the Yellow Emperor, honoured as the common ancestor of the Chinese people.\textsuperscript{328} Due to the symbolic nature of the colour, it was associated with the Temperate Zone, allegedly the only breeding ground for higher forms of human advancement, positioned between severe cold and extreme heat. Hence, in the Chinese textbooks, the “Yellow race” is described as occupying a central position, between two extreme climate zones and two forms of savagery.

\section*{4.2 The importance of the topography}

Not only the climate but also the physical landscape of a given area was commonly believed to influence the characteristics of the people living there. Thus different populations were believed to be more or less inclined to progress. In \textit{Zhongdeng dili} it is argued that differences in temperament, customs and habits between different cultures can be analyzed from two perspectives: geographical location and livelihood.\textsuperscript{329} People who live in mountainous countries are “stubborn, simple, thrifty and perseverant”, \textsuperscript{330} lowland people are “lively by nature and good at taking initiatives”, \textsuperscript{331} and people in maritime countries engaged in foreign trade are “quick and nimble, and outstandingly intelligent”, but on the other hand also “wasteful of luxury”.\textsuperscript{332} People in agrarian countries are “slow and dull and hard working”, \textsuperscript{333} people in industrialized countries “careful and precise”\textsuperscript{334} and people in trading nations “nimble, brisk and vigorous”.\textsuperscript{335} From these premises, it is concluded that “people in the North-western part [the textbook does not specify the North-western part of what] value simplicity and honesty, esteem military preparedness and engage in craft production”, \textsuperscript{336} and that “people in the South-eastern part [the textbook does not specify the South-eastern part of

\textsuperscript{328} Dikötter, \textit{The Discourse of Race in Modern China}, 55-57, 71.
\textsuperscript{329} Hou Hongjian, \textit{Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu}, 70.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., 70. (頑固。質朴節儉耐忍。)
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid. (天機活潑。善於進取。)
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid., 70-71. (敏捷英慧。用度奢侈)
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 71. (訥鈍勞苦)
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid. (心思致密)
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid. (便結輕健)
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid. (西北部之民風。尚朴實崇武備任工藝。)
what] esteem extravagance and fine arts, and are good traders”. It is difficult to tell if “the North-western part” and “the South-eastern part” signify the North-western part and the South-eastern part of Europe, or if it is Asia that is discussed, or perhaps even China as a geographical entity. It is in any case clear that the textbook again draws inspiration from Shiga Shigetaka’s lectures on geography, which contain almost identical statements (Shiga does not, however, discuss the “peoples in the North-west” or “the South-east” respectively). In Shiga’s textbook it is evident that the assertions on the alleged characteristics of non-specified “mountain countries” and “lowland people” are based on the observations of the alleged characteristics of the peoples of Europe (Teutons, Latins and Slavs) which are discussed in the same section. From the context, it nevertheless seems as if the alleged character-moulding attributes of the physical landscape described in Shiga’s accounts are to be understood as universal formulas, also true for other continents than Europe. This was, as already suggested above, in any case the way in which Shiga’s vaguely specified ideas appear to have been interpreted in Zhongdeng dili, which loosely refers to “the North-western part” and “the South-eastern part” respectively, as if they could signify any part of the Chinese empire, Asia, Europe or the world at large. Lessons in Elementary Geography also seems to reflect Shiga’s ideas on the influence of the physical landscape on man, although

337 Ibid. (東南部之民風尚華美崇文學善貿易)
338 Shiga, 26.
339 Shiga’s interpretations of originally West-European ideas of the alleged different qualities of the peoples of Europe have already been examined in section 2.9 above.
340 In the teaching material on history used at the Public Middle School in Lujiang one finds the following assertion, which indeed reveals the extent to which Chinese intellectuals were convinced that there were general laws for human development, valid for all parts of the world: “Geography is the basic element for [the development of] history. Flatland is suitable for farming, high plains suitable for ranching, and river and sea coasts suitable for economic development. The Frigid Zone gives rise to skills in arts of war and the Temperate Zone produces civilization. This is a universal principle [true] for the entire globe” (地理者歷史上之根據也平原適農高原適牧河濱海涘適經濟寒帶熟戰術溫帶產文明此全球之公例也). Liang Xideng 梁系登, Lujiang xuetang lishi jiangyi 瀬江學堂歷史講義 [Lujiang Middle School’s lectures on history] (Sine loco, sine anno, probably published during the opening years of the 20th century), 2. The textbook compiler apparently understood the term “Frigid Zone” as signifying the northern part of Europe and Asia. The alleged ability within the field of warfare in the cold parts of the world signifies the attainments of the militarily strong nations of northern Europe, but also the military strength of warlike peoples in the northern part of East Asia, while South Europe and China with their mild climates were identified with civilization and refinement at large. Here originally Western ideas, which likely reached China through Japan, appear to have merged with a classical interpretation of the world, in which the north was associated with military strength (wǔ 武) and the south with civilized ways (wén 文). The textbook compiler may have drawn inspiration from Liang Qichao’s essay “Zhongguo shi xulun” (An introduction to Chinese history) published in the first issue of Xinmin congbao in 1902: “There is a close relationship between geography and history, and understanding this relationship is critical to understand history. High plains are appropriate for ranching, low plains are appropriate for farming, and the shores of oceans are appropriate for markets and enterprise. People in cold regions are warlike while people in temperate zones have cultivated civilization. This is because of the universal principles of geography and history.” Cited in Ishikawa, “Liang Qichao, the Field of Geography in Meiji Japan, and Geographical Determinism”, 159.
perhaps in a somewhat re-articulated form. The supposed relationships between man and the physical landscape are nevertheless definitely presented as universal truths:

Mountain people are simple, honest and good at enduring hard work, but difficult to enlighten. Lowland people are lively and mobile and eager to make progress. Coastal people near [large] rivers and the sea are experienced and insightful and also easily make advancements, although some might have a tendency toward deceitfulness.\(^{341}\)

The belief that climate and topography might affect the human mind is found in all the textbooks examined, and largely reflect, if not specifically Shiga’s understanding of human geography, at least similar ideas of the supposed relationship between man and earth, common in Meiji Japan.\(^{342}\)

In his essay “Dili yu wenming zhi guanxi” (The relationship between geography and civilization) published in 1902, Liang Qichao, influenced by Ukita Kazutami’s understanding of Hegelian theories on human geography, distinguishes between three different kinds of distinct landscapes which determine how human society develops.\(^{343}\) Liang explains that

\(^{341}\) Xie Honglai, *Lessons in Elementary Geography*. Vol. 3, 10. (山居之民。朴實耐勞。難於開化。平原之民。活潑流動。樂於進取。濱臨江海之民。識見明通。開化亦易。然或流於狡黠。) An almost identical passage is found in the somewhat earlier textbook *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*. People living in mountainous areas are however in this version claimed to be “strong and simple” (強朴), Chen Qiansheng, *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*. Vol. 1, 5.

\(^{342}\) Geographical deterministic ideas are often encountered in Meiji Japanese textbooks, and notions on the difference in climate and topography are sometimes given as explanations to alleged locals variants of the otherwise allegedly so uniform Japanese *Volkgeist*. Noguchi’s secondary geography textbook from 1896, for example, notes that people’s mentalities may differ according to geographical factors. Noguchi suggests that people living in tablelands/highlands (高原) are used to looking down upon things and therefore have a tendency towards being “arrogant and self-important” (尊大自重), while people living along the shores of the boundless ocean often are equipped with an “adventurous” (冒険) mind. People in big cities where it is lively and noisy are claimed to be “shrewd and clever” (機敏伶俐), while people in the silent and isolated countryside are “simple-minded and good-natured” (質朴淳良). The textbook is however quick to note that the members within each and every social unit, from households to nations, have certain specific characteristics in common, which is why the Japanese Yamato *Volk* (大和民族) allegedly also share a common mentality inherited from past generations. Noguchi, *Chūtō kyoiku chiri kyōkasho: Honpō bu*, 122-123. A supplementary geography textbook to be used as a refreshing course for the fourth year of the elementary school (first published in 1893), states that all Japanese have certain beautiful qualities in common, such as bravery, a sense of loyalty, uprightness and honour along a predisposition to regard self-sacrifice for a just case honourable (virtues which allegedly are rare in other countries). However, it is also admitted that the characteristics of the Japanese people vary somewhat according to the climate and the geographical landscape. People in Kanto (the region where Tokyo is located) are allegedly especially noted for being “chivalrous” (義倉ニ勇ミ), while the people in Kinai (the vicinity of the old capital Kyoto, south of the Kanto region) are “elegant and refined” (優雅), the people of Shikoku “honest and sincere” (敦厚), the people of Kyushu “unpretentious and tough” (素剄), and the people of Chukoku “good-natured” (溫順). *Kōtōka fukushūyō Nihon chiri* [A review course in Japan’s geography for the higher primary school], 2nd rev. ed. (Tokyo: Gakkai shishinsha, 1894), 50.

\(^{343}\) As pointed out by Ishikawa Yoshihiro, Liang Qichao introduced an excerpted version of the Hegelian theory of human geography (the idea that three types of topography, i.e. high plains, flat plains and coastal regions give rise to different kinds of human society), which he had borrowed from the textbook *Shigaku tsūron*, published
highlands give rise to nomadic, clan-dominated societies, which might take the form of something very similar to countries, which in turn might give rise to “barbarian heroes” such as Genghis Khan and Timur. However, since unity within their societies is based solely on bloodbonds, they are not able to found any solid states, which is why those peoples are also rather uncivilized. Fertile lowland near rivers, on the other hand, allows agriculture, which give rises to strong feudal states. It is in such places that some of the earliest great civilizations developed, like China, India, Babylonia and Egypt. Coastal areas, unlike continental inland areas, are allegedly blessed with the best conditions for development, due to the ease of communication which open water allows. People who live along the seacoast, as opposed to inlanders, have developed a certain progressive, active, daring, free and enterprising spirit, which allows them to challenge all kinds of difficulties in search of economic benefits. Another characteristic feature of coastal people, according to Liang, is that certain peoples, although originally members of a larger race (種族), suddenly become independent nations. Liang mentions Dutch independence from Germany and Portuguese independence from Spain as European examples of this alleged tendency. The differences in customs between the Japanese and the Chinese, who both belong to the same Yellow race, are, in Liang’s opinion, due to the element of the sea. Liang even quotes Hegel as having said that “the nature of water makes people communicate and the nature of mountains is to block them up, the force of water is to make people meet and the force of mountains to keep them apart”.

The idea that high topography is a hindrance for development while an environment which allows communication on water (with the exception of all too distant and isolated islands) is a good premise for progress is frequently encountered in the textbooks examined. In both Imperial University’s and Jingshi yixueguan’s teaching materials almost identical notions on the alleged influence of topography on man are presented. Lowland people are “broadminded and not tied down by petty conventions, but on the other hand they lack a sense

around 1898 and written by Ukita Kazutami, who in turn had borrowed passages on this theory from the introduction to the second part of Hegel’s Philosophy of History and the introduction to Henry Buckle’s History of England. Ishikawa, “Liang Qichao, the Field of Geography in Meiji Japan, and Geographical Determinism”, 160-161.

344 Liang Qichao, “Dili yu wenming zhi guanxi 地理與文明之關係 [The relationship between geography and civilization], in Yinbingshi quanji, 638. (野蠻英雄)

345 Ibid.

346 Ibid., 638-639.

347 Ibid., 638. (水性使通，山性使人塞；水勢使人合，山勢使人離) Although Liang Qichao mentioned names like Aristotle, Hegel and John Locke in his essays on human geography, he never relied directly on the works written by these western thinkers. Ishikawa, “Liang Qichao, the Field of Geography in Meiji Japan, and Geographical Determinism”, 160.
of exactness, which is why they also have the defect of being somewhat unsophisticated". Mountain people and islanders are “narrow-minded and ill informed, but on the other hand they have simple, honest and courageous customs”. People living in coastal regions have “a vivid intellect and want to travel far and wide, but they have a tendency to degenerate towards capriciousness and cunningness”. In Notes on New Geographical Readers similar ideas are presented, although slightly modified. Here it is instead the “broadminded” lowlanders who “have a desire to travel far and wide”, and not people in the coastal regions. It is however noted that lowland people, despite their “enterprising spirit”, easily become “vulgar and careless”. People in the coastal regions, where communications are good, are “well informed and of a sophisticated, smooth and alert character", but they also tend to have the shortcomings of being “sly and cunning”. People who live in mountain areas, where communications are inconvenient, on the other hand, are “hard to enlighten”. Although mountain people are “steadfast and persevering”, they are so ill-informed that they are “inevitably sneered at by others for their stubbornness”. The new (originally European) ideas on geography were not necessarily understood as something of foreign origin. The teaching manual Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa makes the following statement, indicating that the new way of interpreting the role of the landscape was understood as originally having sprung from Chinese wisdom:

People living near the foot of mountains are by nature simple and honest. People in coastal areas are by nature very lively. These folks’ natures are rooted in the geography. This is what Confucius meant by ‘the wise man delights in water, the good man delights in mountains’.

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348 Zou Daizun, Jingshi daxuetang Zhongguo dili jiangyi, 20; Han Pucun, Jingshi yixueguan yudixue jiangyi. Lesson 13, 1. (器識宏遠不拘小節然缺精密而失之粗大)
349 Ibid. (褊隘知識固陋而質直朴實有勇敢之風)
350 Ibid. (心思活潑有長駕遠馭之志而失之輕佻機詐)
352 Ibid. (練達人情，嫻習世故，性機警，故不免失之狡黠)
353 Ibid. (難於開化)
354 Ibid. (志氣堅忍，見聞甚隘，不免有頑固之譏)
355 Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu jiaoshoufa. Vol. 1, 29. (山麓之民。性多質直。海濱之民。性多活潑。此民性之根於地理者。孔子所謂知者樂水仁者樂山是也。) The teaching manual refers to Book VI in the Analects which states: “The master said, The wise man delights in water, the Good man delights in mountains. For the wise move; but the Good stay still. The wise are happy; but the Good, secure.” The Analects of Confucius, translated and annotated by Arthur Waley, 4th edn (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1956), 120.
The notion of the simple and honest character of people in mountain regions again resembles Shiga Shigetaka’s image of peoples in mountainous countries, although the background to the alleged nature of mountain people is explained by citing the Confucian Analects. Shiga never specified the works referred to in his Lectures on Geography, even if he was apparently familiar with the modern ideas on geography of the late 19th century. However, taking Shiga’s knowledge of modern Western geography into consideration, his remarks on “mountain countries” probably reflect originally Western notions of European nations with high topography. His description of inhabitants in “mountain countries” bears a strong resemblance to the stereotypical picture of the Calvinists of the Scottish highlands and Switzerland. Ruth Miller Elson notes in her research on the stereotypical descriptions of the peoples of the world in American textbooks during the 19th century that the Swiss and the Scots, as representatives of stout Calvinism, are described as industrious, temperate and frugal. In American textbooks, the image given of these nationals is to be understood as parallel to the society of New England (i.e. the British Puritan colonizers, the first of whom had arrived in 1620 on the Mayflower), also idealized in American schools. Possibly, the “stubborn, simple, thrifty and perseverant” character ascribed to the inhabitants in “mountainous countries” by Shiga may indeed be nothing but the idealized image of European Puritans. Considering the influence Shiga’s ideas obviously also had on Chinese geography writing, the descriptions of the allegedly simple and honest character of people in mountainous regions, in the Chinese passages referred to above, probably echo the ideals of the European continental Reformed Churches and Scottish Presbyterianism. Whatever the truth in this respect, notions about the “puritan” qualities ascribed to mountain-dwellers are, as already seen from the examples above, usually combined with remarks on alleged backwardness. Without a doubt, backwardness is nevertheless the most dominant image presented of people in mountainous regions, as will be revealed in Chapter 7. Indeed, inhabitants of isolated mountain regions (especially non-Han ethnicities) are usually described in negative, if not strongly derogatory, terms.

356 Takeuchi, “Nationalism and Geography in Modern Japan, 1880s to 1920s”, 108.
357 Elson, 104-105.
358 Shiga, 26. (然山國之民。大率頑固質朴。節儉耐忍。)
5 The alleged roots of backwardness

5.1 The lack of a soldierly spirit, of unity and of a progressive mindset

As understood from the preceding chapters, the textbooks largely depict the world as a competitive arena where ill-fated peoples perish through natural selection. In order to safeguard the survival of China, the supposed shortcomings of the Chinese had to be identified and the right countermeasures had to be taken in order to ensure survival. The much smaller and peripheral Japan had shown that change for the better was possible and had even proven that the “Yellow race” could indeed keep up with modern times and ward off the White peril. Although the Chinese government came to look upon Japan’s growing ambitions for expansion in East Asia with increasing concern and mistrust during the closing years of the Qing dynasty, the Japanese example nevertheless continued to illustrate that what was regarded as an essentially Confucian/Chinese society could efficiently integrate Western elements for the purpose of self-strengthening. Consider for example the following passage in the chapter on Japan in a geography textbook for the higher elementary school, published in 1910 by the Chinese Ministry of Education:

[Within the field of] education, emphasis was in olden times laid on Chinese learning, but since the Restoration European and American methods have been adopted and schools have been established one after the other. Children between the age of six and fourteen are of school-age. The army is modelled on German standards, and when boys have reached the right age, they are liable for military service. Since the Russo-Japanese War, the navy has also earned great reputation.  

The message presented is clear indeed. Japan, a country with a similar cultural background to China, has managed to achieve success thanks to its modern schools and strong army. The passage also reflects the tendency to discuss Japan’s military achievements in connection with accounts of the accomplishments of its educational system. Japan’s victories were largely attributed to the adoption of modern education, as the backbone of the modernized forces.

359  Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu 高等小學地理教科書 [A geography textbook for the higher primary school] (Beijing: Xuebu bianyi tushuju, 1910). Vol. 3, 17. (教育古重漢學。維新後採歐美新法。學校林立。兒童自六歲至十四歲為學齡陸軍仿德國制度。男子及歲。律當從軍。海軍自甲辰戰後。亦頗有聲。)
consisted of well-educated recruits graduated from the new schools. Modern education and militarism, it might be argued, were more or less seen as two sides of the same coin. In *Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu*, for example, we find a strong emphasis on the importance of military preparedness and the great advantages of a system based on a conscript army of student recruits. The textbook argues that China needs drilled, educated and courageous soldiers, not illiterate and uneducated men, who hitherto have formed the great bulk of the army. The new soldiers should therefore be recruited directly from the schools. It is thus understood that modern weapons are not enough to safeguard the survival of China. What China demands is the true formula for military success: popular education which forms the masses into disciplined and well-informed citizens, who in turn make good soldiers.

The conviction that China’s newly established educational system, cast in the same mould as that of Japan, would ultimately make it possible for China to settle the scores with the Great Powers brought hope for the future. Consider the following composition written by a ten-year-old Chinese schoolboy in 1906, in which it is observed that (modern) knowledge is (military) power:

Small Japan defeated big China. Afterwards small Japan defeated big Russia. How was it able to accomplish this? You think by its ships and soldiers. But that is not so. It defeated Russia by its knowledge, by its education. It defeated the stupid Chinese and Russian soldiers because education is so good in Japan; because the Japanese people are instructed in the sciences and are no longer ignorant. There is hardly a Japanese soldier who cannot read and write. China is much bigger than Japan and much bigger than Russia or any empire of Europe and it has more than four hundred millions of inhabitants. When these people are instructed and know, China will be much more powerful than little Japan or the strongest peoples of Europe. Therefore, the first thing China wants is instruction. It must start with that. Then China will become the first empire of the world.

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360 It can be observed that Japanese admiration for the combination of education and German-styled militarism was expressed already during the opening years of the Meiji Era by Fukuzawa Yukichi in his *Sekai Kunizukushi* (World Geography): “Amongst the persons of low birth in the country [Prussia] there is none, not even amongst the water drinking peasants, who cannot read or know how to march.” (國中の下人、飲水百姓に至るまでも、字を知らずる者なく、訓練の歩法を知らずる者なし。) *Fukuzawa Yukichi, Sekai kunizukushi*, reprinted in *Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshū*, Vol. 2, 142. Xue Fucheng, a subordinate of Li Hongzhang, also expressed similar ideas. In a diary entry of Feb. 11, 1891, he writes “During the last several decades the schools in Germany particularly have flourished and all other nations are trying to equal her. Most German soldiers have had some schooling and thus in fighting they are always victorious...The system of popular education as evident today is probably the origin of the rise of the various European countries.” Quoted in Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, 146. In 1898 Kang Youwei, following a similar line of thought, commented on the effective Prussian educational system, attributing Prussia’s victory over France to it. Hsiao, 379.


362 Quoted in Wang Feng-Gang, 20.
Among the reformers, national education was seen as the universal formula for putting China on the right tracks again. If education was duly developed, China would avoid the destiny of a weak country, and perhaps even reach the position as the strongest nation in Asia, in a couple of decades.\textsuperscript{363} The passage cited above certainly mirrors what the boy had learnt in school. That is, Japan’s educated conscript soldiers had defeated both China and Russia, and as soon as the Chinese masses attained the corresponding level of schooling, China would ascend to the heights of universal supremacy with the power to dominate the rest of the world.

In the teaching material in geography used at Lujiang Public Middle School, the following telling passage on the alleged nature of Asians identifies what were considered to be the faults of Asians at large, and the Chinese people in particular. Above all, it illustrates the extent to which Japanese militarism was idealized as a measure to gain national strength:

> The nature of the peoples of the [Asian] continent is generally to esteem gentleness. Originally they were the first to become civilized. [However] the ethical education has influenced them unobtrusively and imperceptibly, and has also given rise to the stubbornness and idle customs which have come to mark their minds. [If one] distinguishes between [different Asians], [one finds that] only the Japanese Yamato people honour a martial spirit. [They] have truly managed to occupy a dominant position in this world of competition, while all the other [Asians] have given themselves up to polite pursuits [to the neglect of the military arts] and have become weak both physically and spiritually. The people of China are thrifty, diligent and perseverant and have made advancements since remote ages. It is only that they are too individualistic in their thinking and have made little progress internationally. [Chinese people living in] the north are extremely soft and weak. They are lacking in national spirit and are not like the [Chinese] southerners who are more passionate. South Asians are stupid and lazy. They will be slaves forever, but do not care. Central Asians and West Asians are of a courageous and agile temper. Even though they managed in past ages to make great achievements, [their achievements] have never been able to last for long. People in the northern part [of Asia] are ignorant and weak and they all obey and serve the Russians. Moreover, the Russians are cunning and cruel and forcefully carry out their oppression. Anthropologists claim that the Yellow race will follow the black, red and brown races towards extinction, but even though [this claim] belongs to [the category of] extreme opinions [alt. theories], our nation [alt. people] must realize [the importance of] enhancing [our national spirit].\textsuperscript{364}

\textsuperscript{363} Bastid, 52.

\textsuperscript{364} Hu Shidan 胡師澹, \textit{Lujiang gongli zhongxuetang dili jiangyi} 澧江公立中學堂地理講義 [Lujiang Public Middle school’s lectures on geography] (\textit{Sine loco, sine anno}, probably published during the opening years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century), 12. (洲人性情大約均尚溫和。固由開化最早。禮教之所潛移默化。亦因積習偷陋之習。印入腦筋之所至。就中分之。惟日本大和族。負尚武之精神。克稱雄於競爭世界。餘皆流於文弱。氣體與精神俱衰。中國之人。勤儉堅忍。自古即已發達。然第有個人思想。國際殊少進步。北方柔弱尤甚。鮮國民精神。不若南人稍有熱心。南亞之人愚而怠。將永為奴隸而不惜。中亞與西亞之人勇而輕。前代有偉業。而不能持久。北國之人勇而弱。皆聳於俄。俄人又狡而狠。且力行其壓迫。談人類學者。謂黃種將繼黑紅棕三種而滅。雖屬過激之論。我國民亦當知振作。)
Reading between the lines, one understands that it is traditional education that lies behind Asia’s impossible situation, the biggest deficit being that it does not emphasize military affairs enough, which is why people have become weak and wimpy. China’s salvation, it is implied, is the new educational system, which will enlighten and empower the Chinese youth, thereby preventing the country from being taken advantage of in the future. Although the textbook dismisses the idea that the “Yellow race” is predestined to perish, the fear of falling under foreign domination is evident. The South Asians here function as a warning example of what awaits those peoples who are too ignorant to bother about their independence: they are destined to face eternal thraldom under the colonial yoke. It is also understood that the Chinese are not group-oriented enough and lack the aggressiveness needed to survive in a harsh international climate. The underlying message is that the Chinese must develop emotional sentiments towards their native soil to avoid becoming the “servants” of Russia (the textbook was probably compiled shortly before the war between Russia and Japan in 1904-1905, when Russia still occupied large parts of Manchuria) or the “slaves” of any other colonial power. The bottom-line is that China is in need of national unity and should follow Japan’s example of militarism to get on equal terms with the Great Powers. The Chinese should be proud of their ancient past and cultural achievements, but on the other hand they should rid themselves of their bookish feebleness and instead embrace a progressive, cooperative and militaristic mindset, which was seen as the magic formula for Japan’s dominant position. The Chinese simply ought to become a little like the Japanese, who had managed to hold their own against the Western powers and expand their territory (albeit at the expense of China), so they had also gained prestige internationally. If the Chinese fail to embrace a national consciousness, the passage seems to imply, the very existence of China as a political entity might be threatened, if not worse.

In the early geography textbook *Shijie dili*, which idealizes Japan and the Japanese people to a great extent, the Japanese are described as standing united in that they share the same language, habits and thinking, besides being loyal subjects and embracing a martial spirit.\(^{365}\) The Chinese, on the other hand, are described as “having no sense of a nation”,\(^ {366}\) which is blamed on the racial and linguistic diversity of China, and it is even argued that people from the northern and central parts of China look at southerners as if they were of “another kind”.\(^ {367}\) The Chinese, although not wanting in “individual courage”,\(^ {368}\) above all

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\(^{365}\) *Shijie dili* 世界地理 [World geography] (Shanghai: Zuoxinshe, 1902), 142.

\(^{366}\) Ibid., 67. (無國民之思想)

\(^{367}\) Ibid., 68. (異類)
lack an “all-embracing sentiment of patriotism”.\textsuperscript{369} This, it is argued, is also the reason why four hundred million Han people have been dominated by a minority (i.e. the Manchu regime) since the fall of the Ming dynasty.\textsuperscript{370}

While the Japanese are supposedly in the possession of the Confucian virtue of loyalty, the Chinese are claimed to have mistaken loyalty and filial piety for obedience towards invading foreign peoples, which is described as the lowliest of all Chinese practices. This shortcoming, the textbook explains, is the result of an attitude fettering the Chinese since the Han dynasty when Emperor Wu (in reign 140-87 B.C.) rejected all other schools of thinking but Confucianism; since then this has served as an excuse for giving family heads and monarchs unlimited power.\textsuperscript{371} Based on Japanese sources and mirroring Japanese self-righteousness and a patronizing attitude towards China, the textbook implies that it is the Japanese people, naturally loyal to their sovereign, that has understood the true essence of Confucianism, while the Chinese have got everything wrong, and thus have been hampered by despotism since ancient times. On the other hand, the Chinese are pointed out as being persevering and good at doing business, thrifty and economical, albeit extremely stingy. The Chinese are conservative, but if something profitable lies ahead of them, they are ready to make swift changes. Further on, the Chinese are claimed to be unhygienic, which is explained as a result of their supposedly tight-fisted disposition. Men and women are said to dress in similar cloths, and queues or bound feet (the latter said to be one of China’s barbarian practices, besides opium-smoking) are described in such detail that it is evident that these passages were originally aimed at Japanese readers who had never seen queues or bound feet.\textsuperscript{372} The extreme inequality between the sexes is pointed out as harmful, but the textbook’s approach is hardly what we nowadays would call feminist: “Moreover, the women are good at manual labour, which has been their practice for such a long time that it has become a part of their natural disposition, so they do not find [hard labour] painful”.\textsuperscript{373}

Although none of the other textbooks examined gives such an extremely negative and disparaging picture of the Chinese as that presented in Shijie dili, it can nevertheless be discerned that some of its themes reoccur in other, somewhat later textbooks, although the critique is now redressed in less offensive wording. There are, however, no descriptions of

\textsuperscript{368} Ibid. (個人之勇氣)
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid. (全體之愛國心)
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{372} Ibid., 69-71
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid., 71. (且中國婦人之善於勞動。久而習慣。成為自然之性。故亦不覺其苦。)
Chinese as passively accepting foreign domination, no discussions of Han clothes or hairstyle, and no statements which directly suggest that the Manchus are non-Chinese invaders. Otherwise, they offer rather similar presentations of the general picture of the Han people, who are supposedly hardworking, economical and perseverant but on the other hand far too stubbornly conservative, and poor at co-operating. The alleged disunity and lack of homogeneity of the Han people, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, even appears as something of a common trait for all Chinese. It is often implied that the Chinese fail to identify themselves as members of the same Chinese entity and are unable to be emotionally attached to their nation, and hence lack the necessary attitude for working together as one body towards a common goal. Statements such as “[the Chinese] are by nature good at enduring hard work and are good at making money, but it is just that they are lacking in the quality of uniting in patriotism” are thus to be interpreted as an urgent appeal for the Chinese to stand together in solidarity by showing love for their land, thereby uniting against all the dangers China might face in a world where only the strongest and most solid nations survive.\textsuperscript{374} 

In Lessons in Elementary Geography, the population of the Empire emerges as ethnically extremely diverse, and the peoples/races (zu 族) of China are described as of “different mentalities and different customs”.\textsuperscript{375} It is, however, observed that the Han are the most widespread people,\textsuperscript{376} and that Han Chinese script is used throughout the whole country, while other written languages are restricted to certain areas only.\textsuperscript{377} The lack of unity, “[they] cannot become of one [mind] and the will of the people is lacking in concentration”, is largely blamed on the geography of China with its many mountains and rivers, which has given rise to a diversity of languages.\textsuperscript{378} However, the Han population are claimed to be equipped with some common qualities which distinguish them from other peoples. Their alleged strong points are their “mild temper, frugality, ability to endure hard labour, diligence in making money and sense of filial piety and love for the past”.\textsuperscript{379} Their shortcomings, on the other hand, are their “impractical habit of adhering to old ways, their suspicion of new trends, their lack of a progressive spirit and their bragging and deceitful manners”.\textsuperscript{380}

\textsuperscript{374} Chen Qiansheng. Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian. Vol. 1, 7. (人情耐勞苦。務貨財。惟少合群愛國之性。) 
\textsuperscript{375} Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 26. (氣質不同。習俗以異。) 
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid. (然漢族最盛。) 
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid. (文字以漢文為盛。通行全國。滿洲蒙古文唐古忒文。祗各行於一方而已。) 
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid. (全國語言。為山川所限。不能齊一。人心渙散。此亦一因。) 
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid. (大率性情溫和。節儉而耐勞。勤於貨殖。孝親好古。是所長。) 
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid. (迂執古法。不審時勢。乏進取之氣。多誇詐之風。)
The simplified geography textbook *Jianyi dili* also discusses the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the empire, but on the other hand it tries to tone down the issue by asserting that “it is a common quality [of the peoples of China] to obey the commands [of the authorities]”.

From the context, it is understood that although the whole empire does not have the preferably homogenous population of a nation state, it is nevertheless held together by its supposedly law-abiding peoples. The most urgent problem is instead that they “simply are conservative and outdated and are slow at taking the initiative”. That is to say, the Chinese should be more forward and aggressive and rid themselves of old evils which hamper them, while embracing new practical knowledge which could help them in the race towards higher stages of development.

To make the harsh critique of the Chinese more easily digested, it is sometimes combined with some remarks on the alleged superior qualities of the Han people. In *Zhongguo dili*, used in the junior normal schools, for example, there is the following opinion about the Han people:

The purity of character, the natural gift of intelligence and nimbleness is really something other races can not come up to. It is only that [the Han people] have a habit of giving too much emphasis to civil affairs, and are constrained by corrupt practices and fettered by vulgar views, which has resulted in that they have stagnated and do not develop.

*Geography of the Chinese Empire*, used in middle and normal schools, on the other hand, suggests that it can be difficult to objectively understand the true nature of the people who belong to the same society as oneself: it reminds the reader that it may be just a little too easy to remember only the good aspects of one’s fellow countrymen, while turning a blind eye to less flattering aspects. The textbook recommends students to pay some attention to how foreigners look upon them, although it is admitted that the way foreigners perceive the Chinese is perhaps not very precise. Foreigners, the textbook argues, see the Chinese as thrifty and diligent, perseverant, conservative and skilled in running businesses, but they also consider China to be so racially and linguistically complex that it is impossible to identify any

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381 Tong Zhenzao 童振藻, *Jianyi dili kebenshu* 簡易地理課本書 [A simple and easy geography textbook] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1906), 15. (而服從教令。為普通之性質。)

382 Ibid. (惟守古背時。拙於進取。)

383 Xu Nianci 徐念慈, *Zhongguo dili* 中國地理 [China's geography] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1906), 29. (性質之純。靈敏之質。殊非他種所能及。惟右文之習太深。囿於陋習。錮於俗見。致以鬱而不發耳。)

other qualities which could be said to be true of all of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{385} The image of the Chinese as conservative is however somewhat modified. Foreigners allegedly see the Chinese as sticking to old ways, but they also acknowledge that the Chinese quickly change their old ways for new ones if it is profitable.\textsuperscript{386} The description of the characteristics of the Chinese, as seen through foreign eyes, is indeed so similar to the way the Chinese are described in \textit{Shijie dili} that it seems plausible that the textbook compiler had consulted this textbook in his attempt to portray how foreigners look upon the Chinese people. \textit{Geography of the Chinese Empire} does not, however, mention the alleged stinginess of the Chinese, the supposed lack of “the idea of a nation” or any of the many other faults ascribed to the Chinese in \textit{Shijie dili}.

Although the image of the Chinese as non-progressive indisputably sprung from European traditions, it was embraced by intellectuals in Japan, where China came to represent stagnation and backwardness — the very antithesis to a progressive and civilized Japan. The construction not only filled a function in the process of defining a positive Japanese identity, it also became a handy legitimation for Japanese expansion during the Sino-Japanese War. As an example of this, consider the following passage from the article “Justification of the Corean War”, published in 1894 and written in English by the Christian scholar Uchimura Kanzō:

But leaving all legalities aside (and we by no means disregard them), is not a decisive conflict between Japan and China an unavoidability, – we might almost say, a historical necessity? A smaller nation representing a newer civilization lying near a larger nation representing an older civilization, – was there ever such a situation in History without the two coming to life-and-death struggle with each other at last? … The Corean War is to decide whether Progress shall be the law in the East, as it has long been in the West, or whether Retrogression, fostered once by the Persian Empire; then by Carthage, and again by Spain, and now (last in world’s history, we hope) by the Mantchurian Empire of China, shall possess the Orient forever. Japan’s victory shall mean free government, free religion, free education, and free commerce for 600,000,000 souls that live on this side of the globe.\textsuperscript{387}

At the end of the Qing dynasty, when inspiration was drawn from Japan during the process of reforming the Chinese empire, the Chinese had to relate not only to the Japanese image of Japan as a progressive and united nation, but also to predominantly negative images of China

\textsuperscript{385} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{386} Ibid.
common in Japan at that time. In view of the high degree to which Meiji Japanese ideas influenced Chinese advocates of reform, the self-images in Chinese geography textbooks during the late Qing period must, first and foremost, be understood from the perspective of how Japanese educators (or the Japanese Ministry of Education) defined “Chineseness”. There is no question that the self-images in Chinese textbooks are to a great extent reminiscent of the images the Japanese had made of the Chinese, and that the Chinese educators behind the new textbooks had borrowed extensively from how the Chinese were described in Japanese textbooks.\textsuperscript{388}

The promotion of loyalty to the throne was, as already discussed above, one of the chief means in the government’s attempt to attain national unity during the late Qing period, and it was carried out with inspiration drawn from Japan. The Japanese educational system seemed to produce disciplined and reliable citizens, a result which was of great interest for the Chinese authorities. Liu Tingshen, the director of education for Shaanxi province, stated in his report to the throne in January 1907 on his return from a study tour in Japan: “Whatever concerns the cultivation of morality and good behaviour, or the way of loyalty to one’s sovereign and love of country are all written in their textbooks. When people learn these as children, they will know their own value and have self respect, so that the country will have few rebels”.\textsuperscript{389}

In Japan, the Japanese nation was from the 1890s commonly described in terms of a “nation-state family” (kazoku kokka 家族國家). That is, the Emperor and the Japanese people

\textsuperscript{388} In a Japanese geography textbook from 1879, the Chinese are described as hardworking, frugal and good at agriculture, manufacturing and business, but on the other as cunning and deceitful, which allegedly is especially true for those of the Chinese who are engaged in foreign trade. Yamada Yukimoto, Shinsen chiri shōshi. Vol. 3, 4-5. In a Japanese secondary school geography textbook published in 1893 (first published in 1891), the Chinese are claimed to have the bad habit of clinging to old customs, but are on the other hand said to be industrious, perseverant and economic with a strong ability of accumulating wealth “probably unmatched in the whole world”. Nakamura Goroku 中村五六, Chūtō chiri bankokushi 中等地理萬國誌 [Secondary school geography: a description of all nations], 3rd rev. ed. (Tokyo: Bungakusha, 1893). Vol. 4, 30. In a Japanese elementary geography textbook from 1895, the Chinese are described as industrious, submissive, moderate and thrifty, but also as all too conservative, nourishing distaste for things new and novel, besides lacking patriotic sentiments to an extreme degree. Matsushima K. 松嶋剛, Kinsei shōchirigaku 近世小地理學. English title: The Elementary Geography (Tokyo: Shunyōō, 1895): Gaikoku no bu 外國之部 [The volume on foreign countries], 33. In an intermediate geography textbook from 1899, the Chinese are described as mild-tempered, withstanding and thrifty with a strong drive to make money, but to lack a spirit of cooperativeness due to the diversity of languages and customs within the empire. Yazu, Masanaga 矢津昌永, Chūchirigaku 中地理學 [Intermediate geography] (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1899), 61-62. In a secondary geography textbook from 1901, the Chinese are described as intelligent and good at business, and their perseverance, diligence and frugality allegedly have no match in the whole world. On the other hand, however, they are far too conservative, valuing moneymaking too much, and lack patriotic sentiments. Ono Masayoshi, Chūtō shinchiri: Gaikoku no bu 外國之部, 27. The accounts on the alleged nature of the Chinese, as described in these examples are usually followed with more or less standardized descriptions of the “evil practices” of China (i.e. foot-binding and opium-smoking).

\textsuperscript{389} Cited in Reynolds, 146.
supposedly formed a unit in which the sentiments between ruler and subjects corresponded to the affection between father and child. The loyalty the Japanese citizen was expected to show towards the Emperor was in essence considered to be identical with the virtue of filial piety. However, behind the Confucian terminology, it might be argue, also lurked an ideology relying on the construction of the Japanese nation as a homogenous Volk in which the Mikado was both Kaiser and a semi-divine Landesvater. In Meiji textbooks, the ideal nations are always those with a homogenous, united and patriotic population, and the Japanese are, implied or expressly asserted to be the most united and patriotic people in the world, loyal to their Emperor in everything. The Chinese, on the other hand, are always described as hopelessly disunited and unpatriotic.

By drawing inspiration from a nationalistic Japan, the Chinese educators had to face a discourse which always placed China in an unfavourable position as the direct opposite to a

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390. Fujitani, 190-191.
391. The Meiji oligarchs sought national unity by the construction of the Japanese as a Volk of remote antiquity, with the Japanese Emperor as an “Almighty God” and “Father to all Japanese”. Ohnuki-Tierny, 77. The men behind the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the “restoration” of the Emperor to power as the central leader of Japan employed the symbolic value of the Imperial Court as a traditional institution in order to make the revolutionary characteristics of the overthrow to appear as a return to a more genuine, ancient and traditional society, rather than the starting point of a new era in which Western know-how and institutions were to be adopted. The constructed tradition of an imperial past resulted in the image of the Meiji Emperor as a mixture of a Shinto pope, generallissimo and German Kaiser. Ian Buruma, Taming the Gods: Religion and Democracy on Three Continents (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 72; Buruma and Margalit, Occidentalism, 63. Symptomatically for the admiration of the new and militarily strong German Empire, the rooms used for public purposes within the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, completed in 1889, run in a predominantly German fashion. Fujitani, 77-79. Already in 1873 the Meiji Emperor had cut his topknot, wore a Western-style military uniform, and had grown a Kaiser moustache. Ohnuki-Tierny, 63. For further reading on Japanese self-images and Japanese nationalism, see also Kosaku Yoshino, Cultural nationalism in contemporary Japan: A sociological enquiry (London & New York: Routledge, 1992); Peter N. Dale, The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness (London & New York: Routledge, 1986).
392. The Japanese elementary geography textbook Shinchishi (first published in 1892), for example, emphasizes that “a perfect country” (国の完全なるもの) has a common language and common traditions and customs, and that the people “all are united in love for their country” (皆一致して、其國を愛するなり). Japan, the textbook observes, is the most developed country in Asia, while China is the biggest one. Yamada, Yukimoto, Shinchishi 新地誌 [A new geographical description], 2nd rev. ed. (Tokyo: Uehara Seiichi, 1893). Vol. 3, 8-9. Noguchi’s secondary geography textbook published in 1896, maintains that Japan is likely to face a bright future due to the high reproduction and homogeneity of the population. If the inhabitants of a given country lack the conditions of racial, cultural, lingual and temperamental homogeneity, the textbook argues, it will end up undisciplined and disorganized, and thereby loose in strength. Noguchi Yasuoki, Chūtō kyōiku Chirikyōkasho: Honpō no bu, 112-113.
393. In Noguchi’s textbook, referred to in the note above, the Japanese are described as especially good at cooperating in agreement, and the virtues of loyalty and filial piety are claimed to be peculiar to Japan. Noguchi, Chūtō kyōiku Chirikyōkasho: Honpō no bu, 118. Remarks on Japanese patriotism are often combined with assertions on other alleged superior qualities of the Japanese. In a supplementary course in geography for the elementary school (first published in 1893), for example, the Japanese allegedly “value military prowess, are outstandingly intelligent, good at enduring hardship, have a disposition of advancing ahead without retrogressing, and are so rich in the spirit of loyalty to the throne and love for the country that nothing compares to it in the whole world” (勇武ヲ貴ミ才智勝グレ・能ク艱難ニ耐エ進ミテ退カザルノ気象アリ・而シテ忠君愛国ノ精神ニ富メルコト・宇内ニ其ノ比類ヲズ). Shōgakkō yō Nihon chiri hoshū 小学校用日本地理補習 [Supplementary lessons for the primary school on the geography of Japan], 2nd rev. edn. (Tokyo: Kinkōdō, 1894), 38.
superior Japan. Besides, the Guangxu Emperor, who was favourably inclined towards reform, had been kept in detention by his aunt Cixi after he had sympathized with Kang Youwei and other progressives in the attempts to introduce political reforms in China in 1898. Kept in isolation until his death in 1908, he could hardly function as a symbol of national unity, as Emperor Meiji did in Japan. Moreover, since the imperial court in Beijing and the Chinese masses were of different ethnic background it became difficult to make use of the concept of an organic nation in which ruler and subjects are bound together by imagined kinship. Neither could the Qing authorities rely on rhetorically referring to an alleged unbroken line of emperors from time immemorial as a unifying force for the empire, which was commonplace in Japan. The supposed correlation between the Japanese imperial line and the allegedly unique Confucian qualities of loyalty and filial piety of the Japanese people, was, for example, articulated by the Japanese Sinologist Uno Tetsuto (1875-1974) in his *Shina bunmei ki* (A Chronicle of Chinese Civilization) of 1912, in the following way:

In Japan the imperial family embodies the principle of a large family uniting the entire nation into a single group. Thus, the thorough consistency of loyalty and filial piety exists as an absolute truth in Japan. But China is different. There, because of centuries of changing dynastic control, this concept of the family writ large has not taken root, and the unity of loyalty and filiality has not fully developed among the populace. This, I believe is the greatest cause for China’s weakness as a state. 394

As pointed out by Basid, the militaristic education during late Qing turned the Chinese youth more aggressive. In difference from Japan, however, there was no increase in sentiments of loyalty to the throne, which had been a premise for national stability in Japan. The result was militant nationalism, with the political agenda of social revolution, or just revolution, which was most common. 395

In 1912, the educational goal of promoting loyalty to the throne was, as a natural consequence of the revolution, erased from the new programme for education in China. The new watchwords became *Liberté, Égalité* and *Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality and Fraternity) which were identified by the republic’s first minister of education Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940) as corresponding to the Confucian virtues of righteousness (*yi* 義), reciprocity (*shu* 恕), and humanity (*ren* 仁). These Confucian values were supposed to be the foundation of all morality, and were hence to be given due attention to in the moral education of the citizens (*gongmin*

395 Bastid, 79.
It may be observed, however, that the virtues of loyalty and filial piety were later renewed by the Guofu (Landesvater) Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) himself, who in a lecture in March 1924 blamed certain elements of Chinese society for not understanding the value of good old Chinese morality and abandoning it for new foreign culture. Sun maintains that loyalty and filial piety are the first of the Chinese moral standards (which he considers superior to foreign virtues) and explicitly accuses the tendency amongst certain people to believe that there is no room for the virtue of loyalty in a republic. People should be loyal towards the nation and the people (just as people in ancient times were true to their monarchs) and be ready to sacrifice their own lives — the ultimate meaning of the ancient concept of loyalty. Loyalty directed towards four hundred millions (i.e. the people of China), Sun points out, is indeed far superior to loyalty directed towards one single individual. If only the Chinese population will cherish the virtues of loyalty and filial piety, he promises, the Chinese nation will face a bright future. Sun obviously did not regard loyalty and filial piety as virtues typical of Japan but instead as unique Chinese qualities, which nevertheless deserved a more prominent place.

In 1925 the Japanologist Zhou Zuoren (1885-1966) pointed out that the concepts of loyalty and filial piety in Japan were nothing but borrowings from China, so loyalty and filial piety could not be counted as unique traits of the Japanese national character. Zhou, referring to the research of the Japanese sinologist Naitō Torajirō (also known as Naitō Konan, 1866-1934), emphasized that the Japanese (non-Sino-Japanese) readings of the Chinese characters for loyalty (“tada” or “mameyaka”) and filial piety (“yoshi” or “taka”) hardly convey the meaning of loyalty and piety in the strict sense. It was thus unlikely that these virtues had existed in Japan before Chinese culture had begun to influence early Japanese society. Zhou admitted that the Japanese had been taught to honour their emperor through their national educational system, which had also proven to be advantageous during Japan’s wars abroad, but he claimed that the Japanese loyalty to their throne (zhongjun 忠君) was nothing but “[…] Chinese goods with a recent layer of German lacquer, and after all not a sign of an eternally unchangeable national character of their own”. Zhou, who was a great admirer of Japan (to such an extent that he ended up in prison after World War II after having served as Minister

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396 Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, 236.
399 Ibid. ([…] 中國貨色，近來加上一層德國油漆，到底不是他們自己的永久不會變的國民性。)
of Education in the collaborationist government of Wang Jingwei) does, however, send a message to the Chinese Guocui (“national essence”) clique, asking them not to be all too haughty when they hear that loyalty is originally a Chinese (and not a typically Japanese) quality. However, although loyalty cannot be counted as a genuinely Japanese virtue, Zhou emphasises, Japan is nevertheless superior to China in some other aspects.

5.2 Harmful customs and practices

The textbooks examined usually follow the pattern of first discussing the roots of China’s backwardness in rather general terms, and then more explicitly pointing out the evil customs, above all opium-smoking and foot-binding, which, it is understood, have crippled and held the Chinese people back far too long. There are, however, also other examples of backwardness given in the textbooks, such as gambling, filthy streets and extreme inequality between the sexes. There is always a sense of urgency behind the appeals for change and the abandoning of dangerous and outdated practices, and it is often implied that change is of crucial importance for the survival of China.

Zhongguo dili, which gives a rather lengthy account of the customs of China, fires off a round of severe critique of the situation in the empire, complaining that the roads in the country are in such bad condition and the city streets so filthy and in such disorder that Westerners have got the idea that the Chinese people are as a rule unhygienic. In the eyes of Westerners, the textbook argues, the Chinese are nothing but gamblers and drunkards with pierced ears and bound feet.

The biggest concern, however, is not what foreigners might think of China, but what might happen to China if people did not rid themselves of their backward practices. Although attention is drawn to the positive qualities of the Han people (i.e. thrift, high ideals and talent in business), the textbook warns that it will nevertheless be difficult for China to remain independent, as long as the customs remain unreformed and people uninformed about “new morals” (xin daode) and “new knowledge” (xin zhishi). From the argumentation, it is

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400 Ibid.
401 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 31.
402 Ibid.
understood that the ideal citizen is patriotic, progressive and forward-looking, eager to learn new ways and quick to put them into practice, while ready to give up all stale practices which have locked China in a state of stagnation. When the textbook states that “the lazy people are with each passing day becoming more numerous along with the annual increase of opium consumption”, it essentially warns that the Chinese population, owing to the escalating use of opium, is becoming less progressive and is hence about to lose the very premise for being able to compete effectively with other nations. It is realised that opium-smoking deprives people of initiative, turning them into apathetic and worthless citizens to such an extent that it constitutes a threat to the nation as a whole.

The traditional low status of women and their non-participation in public life is seen as causing disharmony within the collective of the family, producing worthless female citizens who know nothing about the world: “[The custom of] attaching importance to men and belittling women is carried far too far and has resulted in [the custom of male] polygamy, a cause of conflicts within households, while women are engaged in nothing but sewing and cooking, incapable of doing anything else”. Although the passage on Chinese customs gives a rather depressing portrait of a China on the verge of ruin, it nevertheless concludes with a remark intended to leave students with some hope for the future announcing that leading educators have started to pay close attention to the many problems caused by these harmful attitudes and practices.

Other geography textbooks, at all levels within the educational system, similarly offer some words of comfort, hinting that things after all are moving in the right direction, at least for the plans to eliminate opium-smoking and foot-binding. Complete Geography, for example, remarks that “a lot of women from families of scholarly background have bound feet and cannot easily leave the household, and there are so many men who smoke opium and are fond of gambling that the opium pipe and things used in gambling are seen as necessary utensils for daily use”. It nevertheless calls attention to the recent opening of societies which work against foot-binding and opium-smoking, and points out that people have started to abandon these practices.

The simplified geography textbook Jianyi dili stresses the harms of opium-smoking and foot-binding, but quickly adds that “people who care about public manners and morals

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403 Ibid. 404 Ibid. 405 Ibid. 406 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 69. 407 Ibid.
constantly strive to change [these customs].”  

In *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, the tone is rather high-pitched, and the condemnation of opium-smoking, foot-binding and gambling is followed by an outright cry for change: “People who care about public manners and morals must urgently try to save [China from these practices].”  

In the 1910 version of the textbook, however, this sentence has been replaced with a statement in a less alarming tone: “In recent years wise Imperial edicts have repeatedly been issued to prohibit [opium-smoking and foot-binding]. Scholars and officials are also advocating their abolishment, so these ugly customs will gradually come to an end”.  

*Notes on New Geographical Readers* also stresses the action the authorities have taken in order to rid the empire of these practices, and provides some detailed information on the issue:

Foot-binding was forbidden in the twenty-seventh year of the Guangxu Emperor [1901], and in recent times the majority of the families of ranking government officials have come to understand the harms of the practice. Girls who have not yet had their feet bound are left with their feet unbound, and measures are also taken to release those who have already had their feet bound. Opium was banned in the thirty-second year of the Guangxu Emperor [1906], and according to the imperial edict it will be strictly forbidden during the prescribed time of ten years. At present the ban on poppy cultivation is already under gradual enforcement in every province, and particularly many government officials have, one after the other, been dismissed from their offices for smoking opium.

The message is rather obvious. The modern educated elite and the authorities have taken the initiative to rid China of evil past practices and pave the way for progress, leaving behind those who refuse to follow the new order. The reform-minded elite has set a good example, and the masses are now to set their minds right and follow suit, whereby China will get on track, stagnation will turn into progress, and defeat will become triumph. The allegedly far too conservative character of the Chinese is not seen as something absolute, and the general outlook is that an enlightened people, in a spirit of voluntarism, is able to embrace a progressive mindset, ridding themselves from opium-smoking and foot-binding, and come together as a collective entity.

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408 Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dili kebenshu*, 15. (有心世道者。恒汲汲以謀變異。)
411 Tan Lian, *Notes on New Geographical Readers*. Vol. 2, 18. (禁止纏足在光緒二十七年。近来紳紳之家。多知其弊害。未纏者不纏。已纏者亦設法解放矣。禁止鴉片光緒三十二年奉 [thel name of the emperor is omitted] 上諭。限十年禁絕鴉片。現在各省。已逐漸禁種。官吏以吸煙獲職者。尤踵相接也)
Apart from the practices of foot-binding and opium-smoking, backwardness tends to be depicted as an Asian problem and not something which denotes solely China. The teaching material used at Lujiang Public Middle School makes the following observation:

The folkways [of Asia] are old and not up to date. Although there are extremely many learned scholars, they just follow deep-rooted and old practices and do not strive for improvement. People esteem politeness in their interactions and like to observe the proper forms [of doing things], although it is common that people deceive and cheat each other. Great importance is attached to agriculture, and women are belittled to an extreme extent. Education seldom reaches females, which is an extreme hindrance for the progress of civilisation. The diet is diverse, the hygienic standard very low, the houses damp and small, and even wealthy households fail to air their rooms, which jeopardizes the health. Technology and commerce were perfect in ancient days in countries like China, India and Persia, but learned men despised [technology and commercial affairs] as unimportant things and did not study or research those matters. Most of the industry and commerce is carried out in an easy, slovenly way, and corruption is extreme. Recently, however, people have come to understand [the importance of] reforms and that social life is in urgent need of change.  

Although the picture of the situation in Asia is rather depressing, the textbook does not fail to inform the reader that the Asians have started to realize what holds the continent back.

5.3 The evils of autocracy

While the elimination of evil practices is presented as perhaps the most effective way to spur progress, reform towards constitutional monarchism is presented as the right path for achieving unity and strength. A constitution, it is commonly assumed, will make it easier for people to identify with the nation, thereby strengthening their patriotic sentiments (or their loyalty to the throne), which in turn will spur the Chinese to combine their efforts for a common good, or fight enemies as one man. Constitutional monarchism is discussed in very positive wording in the textbooks examined, although teaching materials used at the highest levels in the educational system are more explicit in their explanations of its assumed

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412 Hu Shidan, *Lujiang zhongxuetang dilijiangyi*, 13. (民俗是古非今。老師宿儒尤甚。凡事沿積習。不務改革。往来崇禮貌好儀文。而爾虞我詐視為常事。重農輕女。過於嚴密。教育罕及女子。甚有礙於文明進步。飲食繁雑。不甚精潔。居室湫隘。雖富室亦不通空氣。俱於衛生有妨。工藝商務。若中國及印度波斯。昔日稱為完備。而學者鄙為末務。不加考求。工商多因陋就簡。極其腐敗。近乃粗知識改良。亦社會生活上所宜亟謀更張者也。)
advantages, and more forthright in their critique of the ruling order of absolutism. The teaching material used at the Imperial University, for example, quite outspokenly suggests that China, as the sole independent absolute monarchy in Asia, might stand next in turn to lose its independence due to its outdated political system. It is observed that in Europe, only Russia and Turkey stick to absolute monarchism, while the Asian absolute monarchies of Annam, Burma and Cambodia, have already ceased to exist and that Siam and Korea are about to lose what remains of their sovereignty.\footnote{Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 28. (方今歐羅巴洲大國。惟俄羅斯突厥二國。尚沿用此政體。亞細亜洲。則自古以來皆用之。然中國而外。若安南若緬甸若柬埔寨。已次第滅亡。暹羅朝鮮。僅以不亡。不足自立。)}

Absolute monarchism is seen to be doomed as a government form, and it is understood that China had better abandon it as soon as possible: “Observers say that this kind of government system will disappear in the future from the surface of the earth”.\footnote{Ibid. (論者謂此種政體。將來必絕景於地球也。)} Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Austria and Japan are mentioned as examples of constitutional monarchies, the latter nation here unmistakably mentioned as a model which China could follow in order to maintain its self-rule. It is claimed that Japan’s constitution has given rise to such national unity that “the sovereign and the people are of one mind, [so Japan’s] national strength has come to increase dramatically each passing day”.\footnote{Also Notes on New Geographical Readers discusses constitutional monarchism in very similar wordings: “In Asia there are [the constitutional monarchies of] China, Siam and Persia, in Europe there are [the constitutional monarchies of] Russia and Turkey, but during the latest couple of years some of them have already issued constitutions, while others have announced that they will turn constitutional. From now on, there will hardly remain any pure absolute monarchies on earth.” (在亞洲則為中國、暹羅波斯、在歐洲俄羅斯、土耳其、然近數年來、或已頒布憲章、或已宣言立憲、自今以往、地球之上、幾無純粹之專制國矣) Tan Lian, Notes on New Geographical Readers, Vol. 3, 5.} The problem with autocracy is that it generates unconcerned citizens who due to lack of influence do not care about the destiny of the state (or the wellbeing of the monarch), which also explains why absolute monarchies are in a state of constant political instability, regardless of the individual qualities of the leadership:

[Both] Eastern and Western experts on political science argue that in all states with constitutions, no matter whether monarchies or republics, people are full of love for their country. How is that so? People have the right to vote and the right to be elected and are up to date with what is going on politically in the country, so the gains and losses [of the state] and the joys and sorrows [of the ruler] are naturally of mutual concern for everyone. In the case of countries with autocratic systems of governing, the government does not consult the people in the administration of public affairs, [so information about] the living conditions of ordinary people does not reach the government. The welfare [lit. the gains and losses] of the state and the wellbeing [lit. joys and sorrows] of the monarch are not necessarily of any absolute concern for the people, and the patriotic feelings are usually light. It

\footnote{Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 28-29. (君民同心。國勢蒸蒸日上焉。)}
is not that people are disloyal. It is the circumstances which have caused this state of affairs. Although there are sagacious monarchs and capable and upright prime ministers who spare no efforts in trying to relieve the people from their suffering, sharing likes and dislikes with the people, [their government] results in temporary order, [and their] ways never last long. This [explains why] the days of [peaceful] order since ancient times have been few and the days of disturbance have been many. Consequently, establishing a constitutional system of government is truly something good.  

Despite all the praises of constitutionalism and the warnings of the impending danger of absolutism, there are, however, no cries for immediate change. Modern education has not yet reached all parts of China and the masses lack basic knowledge, which is why China is not yet ready for any drastic modernizations of the political system. Constitutionalism, however, does makes sense in Europe, America and Japan because the educated citizens of these nations are well qualified to shoulder the responsibility of constitutionalism, while it would be pointless, even dangerous, to set up a parliament in China and let representatives from the uneducated masses decide over things they do not understand. The teaching material, aimed at the crème of the new intellectual elite enrolled at the university in the capital, suggests that the state should first of all focus on completing the popularization of modern education (which of course included a large portion of indoctrination), and not until then take measures towards constitutionalism. As long as common people are uneducated and do not understand their own best, they are to be ruled by an educated elite (i.e. the category of privileged few which the students belonged to). The idea that commoners were to be led by an intelligentsia was of course nothing new under the sun. The old servants of the traditional autocratic system (an arrangement now criticized for having produced indifferent subjects), the literati, had also been of the same opinion.

The undertone in all the discussions on absolutism and constitutionalism is that an absolute monarchy, as a manifestation of a lower stage of development, is no match for countries with more advanced forms of governing, so, sooner or later, China must also change its political system in order to survive. It is, nevertheless, always understood that China is already in the midst of a process which will inevitably transform the old empire. The step

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416 Ibid., 29. (東西政學家之言曰。凡立憲法之國。不論君主民主。其國民皆富於愛國心。何也。人人有選舉權被選擧權。國家政事。皆得預聞。則利害休戚。自然相關也。若獨裁政體之國。政府行政。既不下謀國民。國民下情。不能上達政府。國之利害。君之休戚。國民不必盡知。愛國之心。往往淡薄。非不忠也。勢使之然。雖有聖君賢相。勤求民瘼。與同好惡。致一時之治。其道不能持久。是以古來治日常少。亂日常多。然則立憲法政治。誠善矣。)

417 Ibid. (雖然。教育未能遍及全國。國民無溥通之智識。設議院。擧議員。言論是非。往往倒置。匪徒築室道謀。甚且毁瓦畫墁。是以歐美日本。亟亟於國民教育。)
from autocracy towards constitutional monarchism is nothing but a move towards the next phase in an ongoing evolution, and China is simply bound to follow this natural cause of development. The idea that China has proceeded through earlier stages of political development and is now on the very threshold of a major metamorphosis which will turn China into a politically mature nation is especially evident in the discussion of the assumed evolitional political history of China in Zhongguo dili, used in junior normal schools. It is alleged that the Chinese Volk (Zhongguo minzu 中國民族), originally governed by chieftains, fell under centralized leadership with the founding of the first Chinese empire by the Yellow Emperor, a process which also spurred cultural development. Later, after the removal of the immoral Emperor Dizhi from the throne and the selection of the able man Xun as Emperor, the state of politics underwent a change and the form of government developed into aristocracy (guizu zhengti 貴族政體). With the foundation of the Xia dynasty by Emperor Yu, the succession order to the throne was fixed under one imperial linage and the form of government developed into autocratic monarchism (junzhu zhi zhuanzhi zhengti 君主之專制政體). However, since monarchism easily results in the despotic misuse of power, it frequently leads to revolutions when corrupt emperors are dethroned, like the overthrow of the last corrupt despots of the Xia and Shang dynasties by the Chinese heroes Prince Tang and King Wu of Zhou respectively. It is perfectly understood that the political development of China has all too long remained at this comparatively low phase of development in which history has just kept repeating itself. It is, nevertheless, implied that things have started to change and that China is nowadays following the tide of time:

However, although one dynasty has succeeded the other, the political system has not changed. That is to say, [China] has been harassed by barbarians from without and has experienced chaos caused by [disloyal armies at] the frontiers and eunuch [intrigues] from within, but has again and again risen after each setback. The suppression of the spirit of freedom of the [Chinese] Volk has not been reduced, and the people have [remained] unfortunate for ages. Today European ways flow east. The government knows that a constitution is the principle upon which a nation is founded and has dispatched ministers on a tour of investigation. A deadline has been set for the establishing of a constitution, so that the autocratic system of government in a couple of years may be turned into constitutional monarchy.  

- Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 32.
- Ibid. (然朝代雖易。政體不變。即經蠻夷戎狄擾於外。藩鎭宦官亂於內。屢蹶屢興。鉗制民族自由之精神。未嘗少減。國民之無幸福久矣。今日歐風東漸。政治知憲法為立國之本。遣大臣考察。定期限舉行。則不數年後。君主獨裁之政體。或將轉為君主立憲政體乎。)
Although the government is given credit for having taken the initiative to reforms, there are no attempts to hide the dissatisfaction with the autocratic system and the longing for political change. Similarly, the introduction to different systems of government in the middle school textbook *Complete Geography* is very direct in its criticism of absolute monarchism and its praise of constitutional monarchism. Notably, however, only Russia, not China, is mentioned as an example of absolute monarchism, so Russia alone represents all the ills such a system generates. Constitutionalism is pointed out as the form of government shared by all “civilized countries” and is claimed to have the advantage that the monarch does not stand above the law and cannot punish or execute innocent people at will, or enrich himself through collecting taxes as it pleases him.  

Moreover, it is also observed that people in constitutional monarchies and republics alike can remove the head of the state from power if found dictatorial or cruel.

The rather outspoken critique of autocracy and the enthusiasm for constitutional monarchism expressed in textbooks for the more educated stratum of the population may, however, be compared with the short account of politics in the passage on administration and religion in *Jianyi dili keben*, an abbreviated version of the course in geography for the elementary school, aimed at poor children or people who are too old to enter elementary school: “Our country is an independent autocratic Empire. All rights to discuss political affairs and all administrative authority are entirely subordinated to the commands of the sovereign. The power of the sovereign is absolute, [but] in recent time there have been discussions about changing to constitutional government”. No attempts are made to explain the meaning of constitutionalism, or the reasons behind the propositions of changing government form. In addition, the standard textbooks used in the elementary schools are sparse in their comments on absolute monarchism. In the passage on politics in *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, all the reader gets to know about different political systems is that there are basically three forms of government: absolute monarchism, constitutional monarchism and republicanism. The textbook makes it clear that the masses do not have any influence on politics in an absolute monarchy, while people in constitutional monarchies and republics have a word in decision-making. No negative judgments, however, are passed on absolute forms of government. Instead, the destiny of weak peoples is emphasized all the more:

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421 Ibid.
422 Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dili kebenshu*, 15. (我國為獨立帝國。政體專制。凡議政行政之權。皆受命於君上。君權獨尊。近始有改行憲政之議焉。)
Besides these three types [of national administration] there are also vassal states and colonies. The native people [of vassal states and colonies] do not have the power of founding [sovereign] states. Many [emigrants] move from their mother countries to live [in colonies]. Therefore the sovereignty over the land [of vassal states and colonies] falls under the rule of other countries, which also explains why the rights of native people are rejected.\textsuperscript{423}

The passage certainly wants to teach the schoolchildren a lesson in the importance of national strength in a world where might is right, and national expansion always takes place at the expense of weaker peoples. The textbooks generally reveal no sympathy for suppressed peoples. It is commonly understood that the natives in colonies have only their own stupidity, weakness and incompetence to blame for having their land colonized by others, the right of might being understood as the law of nature. The natives in dependencies are claimed to lack the ability to found states, which is why they have been subjugated by stronger nations, and instead of enjoying the same rights as their foreign masters, they have to pay heavy taxes to them. The natives in colonies are said to be even more incapable of establishing any states due to their alleged stupidity and weakness. The course of action among the stronger nations, mostly white ones, has hence been to take over foreign land by means of territorial expansion or annexation, filling the territory with people of their own.\textsuperscript{424}

Although there is no direct critique of the autocratic statecraft of the Chinese empire, the textbooks more than hint at the actions China ought to take in order to strengthen its position and remain independent:

The crown of the Japanese monarch has since ancient times been handed down from generation to generation within the same family without interruptions. As soon as the present monarch Emperor Meiji ascended the throne, he started to pursue the task of building the nation with determination and dedication, aware that the old laws [alt. ways] were insufficient in the struggle for survival. Determined, he altered them, and by an imperial decree he established the Diet chamber and allowed the people to get involved in politics. He established schools in large numbers one after the other, and both the navy and the army were drilled until they reached excellence. Within forty years, [Japan] has managed to match the world powers, which indeed is something honourable.\textsuperscript{425}

\textsuperscript{423} Xie Honglai, \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}. Vol. 3, 10 (三者而外。又有屬國及殖民地。其人民無建國之力。多由母國移居。故國中主權。悉歸他國。而人民權利。亦因以見絀矣。)
\textsuperscript{424} Tan Lian, \textit{Notes on Geographical Readers}. Vol. 3, 5.
\textsuperscript{425} Xie Honglai, \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}. Vol. 3, 18. (日本國君。自古一姓相傳。無更姓一代之事。今皇明治即位以後。勵精圖治。知舊法不足爭存。乃一意更張之。詔開議院。許民參政。設官仿泰西制度。學校林立。陸海兩軍。訓練皆精。今不及四十年。竟得與世界列強相颉颃。可謂榮矣。)
Japan’s constitution is depicted as a kind of gift, from the Japanese Emperor to his people, something which strengthened the Japanese nation by letting people have a say in decision-making, thereby allowing Japan to hold its own against aggressive powers.\textsuperscript{426} The underlying message in the passage is, of course, that China should follow Japan’s example of going constitutional in order to save herself from, to paraphrase a Chinese expression, being “carved up like a melon” (guafen 瓜分) by the hungry powers in their scramble for concessions. However, with Japan’s ongoing colonization of Korea, the suspicion grew that the Japanese empire wanted more slices of the melon. The elementary geography textbook \textit{Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu}, published by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 1910, is unwilling to credit the personification of Japanese might, the Meiji Emperor, with too much glory. Although it is understood that political reform towards constitutionalism is something good, the passage on Japan’s transformation into a constitutional monarchy is composed in such an ambiguous way that it is unclear if it was the Meiji Emperor or Japan’s former dictator, the Shogun, who took the initiative to the political reforms:

\textsuperscript{426} The textbook follows the Japanese example of explaining the Japanese constitution as initiated by the Emperor himself. A Japanese supplementary course in geography for the elementary school published in 1894, for example, offers the following explanation to the birth of the constitution: “The political system in our country has since ancient times been absolute monarchy, but nowadays, after Emperor [Meiji] first had accessed to the throne and then had scrutinized the situation in the world and drawn inspiration from the remote ancient system [of Japan], a council was generously established, whereupon [the emperor] promulgated an imperial decree that all State Affairs should refer to public opinion [alt. that one should let public opinion decide everything]. [This] opened up for the first steps towards the constitutional system; in the year of [Meiji] 22 the constitution was promulgated, and in [Meiji] 23 the National Diet was summoned for the first time. Now our emperor of an unbroken line of sovereigns holds the reins of state, assisted by his ministers and supported by the Imperial Diet, which makes the political system of our country the single example of constitutional monarchy in the Orient.”

\textsuperscript{427} \textit{Shōgakkō yō Nihon chiri hoshū}, 43.

\textsuperscript{427} \textit{Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu}. Vol. 3, 17. (國體為一姓相承之君主國。自神武建國。當我國周惠王至今二千餘年。未嘗易姓。中古將軍擅權。明治初迫於外患。將軍歸政。銳意維新。乃許民參政。改立憲制。) This description of Japan’s way to constitutionalism differs indeed from what one finds in an earlier geography textbook for the primary school, published by Commercial Press in 1902. Observe that the Japanese emperors erroneously are pointed out as having held the political power in pre-Meiji Japan: “The form of government [in Japan] in old times was feudalism, and the crown was handed down from generation to generation...
The emperor-centred constitutional monarchy of Japan, although increasingly seen as an emerging threat to China, is always portrayed as the nation above others to draw inspiration from in order to gain strength and unity. On the other hand, the former Chinese vassal state of Korea, now on the verge of turning into a Japanese colony, exemplifies the destiny of weak countries which cling onto outdated ways, unwilling to reform.\footnote{Missionaries of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, saw Confucianism as a hindrance to both spiritual and material progress. The well-known sinologist and missionary James Legge blamed the alleged stagnation on...}

5.4 The evil combination of ignorance and religion

During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, China experienced serious internal turmoil, often caused by rebellions with fanatic religious overtones, this at a time when Western missionaries arrived in China en masse in order to preach their gospel and “save” Chinese souls. Muslim risings, Christian mission, the Taiping rebellion and the activities of various indigenous cults and societies had by the turn of the century given the Qing government several decades of serious trouble. This scene, it may be assumed, must have strengthened the Confucian-educated elite in their traditional scepticism of religion. Modern educators, on the other hand, feared that old superstition might stand in the way for of knowledge, which also explains the anti-religious approach of the government’s new educational policies. As in the case with politics, textbooks for the lower grades however only touch upon religious issues very briefly, while the courses in geography for students at the higher levels in the educational system discuss the subject more extensively.

Besides the obvious aim of promoting modernization at large, one of the main goals of the newly modernized educational system was to install a sense of reverence for Confucius in the Chinese youth, wherefore the textbooks present Confucianism as compatible with development and progress.\footnote{See section 8.1 in this thesis.} Confucianism is always discussed in terms of a pure doctrine or generation within the same [royal] line. The regents had full control of the government. As soon as the present monarch emperor Meiji had ascended the throne, he rose to action and strengthened the country, dreading the foreign aggression. He established the Diet chamber by an imperial decree and allowed the people to get involved in politics, whereupon the country became strong. Japan became the first constitutional monarchy in Asia.” \cite{Chen Qiansheng, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xi, 10}
philosophy, which, in difference to all religions, is free from all forms of superstition. That is, Confucianism has not played out its role, since modern man, who cannot rely on delusional religious ideas in the modern world of today, is still in need of universal and absolutely true moral values.

Of all the teaching material examined, that used at the Imperial University in Beijing gives the most extensive analysis of religion. Allegedly, the uneducated masses had, for their own good, once upon a time been deliberately fooled by “ancient sages” (gu zhi shengren 古之聖人) to put their faith in religion so that they would be able to choose right before wrong, despite their poor understanding of things. The well-educated Confucian intelligentsia, it is understood, has always been above common men in that, through their moral schooling, they have become so enlightened and refined that they have never been in any need of religion. If mass education is promoted, however, simpleminded and unsophisticated commoners will in the end also become well-informed and refined to such an extent that religion will become unnecessary as a means for instilling a sense of right and wrong in them. Confucianism, it is confirmed, is absolutely not a religion, but rather a philosophy worth all sorts of admiration, which is why scholars in both the East and the West sing the praise of the great sage Confucius:

People may recognize Confucianism as one of the religions and praise Confucius as the Lord [of Confucianism]. By this they probably just want to show their reverence for Confucius, but they do not understand that they thereby in fact show Confucius disrespect. What is referred to as religion cannot usually avoid putting forth theories of the transmigration of the soul, or delight people with the promises of paradise and scare them with the horrors of hell. However, our Saint [Confucius] taught people to trace the very root of things [alt. pursue truth], to make the most of one’s natural instincts, and to live ones life in peacefulness and leave the rest to fate [alt. the will of Heaven]. […] Here follows a long passage which quotes various Classics in order to show the non-religiosity of Confucianism, and that Confucius was primarily concerned with government and human affairs. This is why eminent scholars in the Orient and the Occident alike sing his praise, although belonging to different races. In different tongues they state in unison that the man Confucius was of worldwide importance, both in ancient and modern times, as a great educator, a great politician and a great philosopher. There are no high-

Confucianism, assuming, in unison with other missionaries, that no genuine progress was possible in China without Christianity. Dawson, 68-69.

430 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 25. (宗教者。範圍一切之人心。而納之道德之途者也。上智之人。性質中和。學問粹美。自然合於道德。不出範圍。無待宗教之設。然天下中材之人多。而上智之人少。古之聖人。於是以神道設教。作為福善禍淫之說。或且假設天堂教育之說。推而極之。過去未來之因果報應。以折勸而戒愖之。用心亦良苦矣。[…] 教育與宗教。其原理以道德為歸宿。然宗教之理。實與教育異。教育者。示人以正當之行為。務使推求直確之知識。宗教者則故迂其說。使人若迷若信。怵於禍福而不敢妄為。若使世界教育日昌。民德自然高尚。民智自然開明。宗教迷信之學勢且日衰。)
spirited people who do not respect him and feel kinship with him. Why then do we necessarily have to place Confucius after Sakyamuni, Moses, Christ and Mohammed? Confucianism is sufficient enough for the glory of our ways. When Confucianism has been [correctly] classified, it has neither in ancient times nor today been placed in the category of religions. Venerate Confucianism! Venerate Confucius!431

The call to “Venerate Confucius” was one of the catch-phrases for the government’s new educational policies. It expresses the attempt to turn Confucianism into a state-teaching which, together with an adhering emphasis on obedience (i.e. the principles of loyalty and filial piety), was to be combined with a Japanese-style constitution à la Prussia in order to strengthen and unite the Empire. Although the text persistently stresses that Confucianism is only concerned with earthly life and hence cannot be regarded as a religion, it discusses Confucius in connection with the figureheads of the major religions of the world, which is somewhat self-contradictory. The message is apparently that Confucianism, although the teaching itself does not carry any religious implications, is equal (if not even superior) to all the world religions.

From the argumentation in Notes on New Geographical Readers it may be understood that it is precisely the non-religious quality of Confucianism that has tempered the sword with which the imperial authorities have always battled various erroneous doctrines throughout the ages. It is therefore not to be confused with or coupled with Buddhism and Daoism:

Primary for Confucianism is the leading of a moral life, the managing of state affairs and the pacification of land under heaven. [Confucianism] is free from religious superstition. However, sovereigns throughout the ages have shunned the wild ideas of the various schools of ancient thinkers, such as Buddha’s and Laozi’s concept of nirvana, and have for the purpose of attacking such other religions as Buddhism and Daoism held Confucianism in great veneration. Yet [Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism] are lumped together as “the three teachings”. 432

While Confucianism represents high status, cultivation, political stability and clear-sightedness, Daoism and Buddhism, the former in particular, stand for low status, chaos and superstition. As for the historical background to Daoism, however, the teaching manual explains that Daoism was originally based on the teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi:

431 Ibid, 28. (世人或以儒為宗教之一。而推孔子為之主者。其意蓋欲尊孔子。而不知實所亵孔子也。所謂宗教者。大都不出輪迴之說。與夫天堂地獄忻動恫嚇之言。而吾聖人教人窮理盡性居易俟命。[...] 是以泰東西碩學之士。殊族而交贊。異口而同稱。曰孔子者。古今世界大教育家也。大政治家也。哲學家也。可謂凡有血氣者莫不尊親矣。何必使之儕釋迦牟尼摩西基督謨罕默德之論。乃足為吾道之光哉。今故別而出之。不以儒入宗教之列。尊儒乎。尊孔子耳。）
and once upon a time had also been employed as a means for statesmanship under the reigns of Emperors Wen and Jing during the Han dynasty. It is, however, not this ancient teaching itself, with its “purpose of discarding all desires and worries [in people’s mind]”, that is to be condemned, but its false derivative:

At the end of the Han dynasty a certain Zhang Daoling, making false pretences of [the teachings of] Laozi, began to mislead people by means of secret talismanic writing, no different from what wizards and witches of ancient times used to do, and the original purpose behind the teachings of Laozi was [consequently] lost. Zhang’s descendants settled at Mount Longhu in the prefecture of Guixi in [the province of] Jiangxi and took control over the Dao religion. They are called “Zhang Immortals” or “Zhang Heavenly Masters”. Their followers are called Daoshi [i.e. Daoist priests, or lit. Daoist men of learning and virtue, alt. Daoist scholars] and perform rituals and hold penance services to make a bare living.434

It is pointed out that Lin Qing’s uprising in North China (1813) and the Boxer Rebellion (1900) were brought about by the White Lotus Sect, which allegedly is a branch of Daoism.435 From between the lines one understands that superstition (or perhaps religion at large) might pose a threat to the authorities in that the uneducated masses can be fooled by erroneous doctrines to turn against the establishment. Zhongguo dili, although classifying the White Lotus Sect as an offshoot from Buddhism, also describes it as a dangerous cult common in North China, whose followers, brainwashed by magic conjuring, were the very troublemakers behind Lin Qing’s uprising in Shandong, and the instigators behind the Boxer Uprising in more recent time.436 Confucianism is all the same depicted as the only sane alterative in an environment contaminated by false doctrines, such as Daoism, which is described in a fashion similar to what we have seen in the quote above:

China is generally known for being a state founded on [the principles of] Confucianism. Confucius has been worshipped for hundreds of generations as the shining example [of moral perfection] and as the originator behind the principles for humanity, free from superstitious forms. High and low in the society all revere him. However, [although the teachings of Confucius] have been promulgated and put in practice for long, heathen religions have come to permeate [the society]. One of these religions which up to now has been known to the world is called Daoism. It originated during the end of the Han dynasty when Zhang Daoling under the cloak of Laozi’s ethics [alt. morals] started to deceive people with taboos, curses and secret talismanic writing. His

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433 Ibid. (清淨無為宗旨)
434 Ibid. (漢末有張道陵者、假托老子、以符籙惑人、與古巫覡無異、失老氏之本旨矣、其子孫世居江西貴溪縣之龍虎山、為道教之總管、稱張真人、亦曰張天師、其徒曰道士、藉禮懺以餬口)
435 Ibid.
436 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 32.
descendants have for generations lived in the prefecture of Guixi, and have inherited the title of “Immortals”. Their followers chant scriptures and cultivate themselves [in accordance with their] doctrines. They sponge on society and have turned into a sort of non-productive idlers. 437

While Daoists are depicted as nothing but lazy tricksters and parasites, the image given of Buddhists is not very flattering either. After a short summary of Buddhism, in which the main differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism are discussed, Zhongguo dili gives a depressing portrait of the extent to which the religion has degenerated in China: “Later the Buddhist monks turned ignorant [lit. uneducated] and their moral decay has become [all the more] evident with each day, and the [Buddhist] devotees [nowadays] consist of nothing but women and simple people”. 438 The critique in Notes on New Geographical Readers is very similar: “The Buddhist monks have turned ignorant [lit. uneducated] during the latest couple of centuries and people all look down on them. The people who believe in it are only women and men at the bottom of society”. 439 Buddhism is nevertheless described as an “improvement” of Hinduism (here referred to as Brahmanism), a religion in which the followers allegedly “drink or wash themselves in holy water, but show no sympathy for those who are about to starve to death, and sometimes even hurl children into rivers to feed the crocodiles”, so it allegedly also is “the cruellest of polytheistic religions”. 440 The alleged accomplishment of Buddhism is that it managed to free itself from the harms of the extremely severe Hindi class society, and hence embodies “the principle of equality”. 441 Self-contradictory, the Notes on New Geographical Readers praises Buddhist emphasis on equality on the one hand, but on the other expresses contempt for the religion since it only attracts women and people of humble origin. The statement nevertheless fully exposes the extent to which the compiler adheres to Confucian values. 442

437 Ibid., 31. (中國素以儒教立國名者也。崇祀孔子。百世以来。宗為師表。發明人道之理蘊。不具迷信之形式。上下社會。咸尊奉之。然推行既久。異教浸淫。迄今並鳴於世者。一曰道教。始於漢末之張道陵。託言老子之道德。以禁咒籙惑人。其子孫世居江西之貴溪縣。襲封真人。其徒侶以念經修法。攫食社會。成一種之遊民也。)

438 Ibid., 32. (迨後僧徒無學。敗德日彰。信之者。僅婦女俗人而已。)

439 Tan Lian, Notes on New Geographical Readers. Vol. 2, 23. (近數百年來僧徒無學。人皆賤之。信之者惟婦女及下流社會之男子而已。) Possibly, the notion of the ignorance of Chinese monks was borrowed from Shijie dili, in which one finds similar wordings: “The government does not attempt to restrain Buddhism, but since the Buddhist monks are so ignorant all people look down on them. The number of followers is nevertheless still great.” (佛教者政府不加檢束。然以僧侶之無學。人皆賤之。然其教徒之數仍多。) Shijie dili, 74.


441 Ibid. Vol. 2, 23. (以平等為主義。蓋力除婆羅門教階級之弊)

442 Confucius did not see commoners and women as his equals. Although Confucius maintained that almost every human (except those who already were perfectly wise and those of utter ignorance) could change to the
The teaching material used at the Imperial University similarly describes Daoism and Buddhism as having degenerated totally with the lapse of time, but nevertheless refers to Buddha, as a philosopher and historical person, with reverence. Buddhism, in its original philosophical form, is not an erroneous and superstitious teaching:

Buddha means awakening. The founder of the teaching was Sakyamuni who belonged to the Ksatriya caste [the 2nd of the four castes, the ruling caste]. The aim [of his teaching] is to enlighten people’s minds so that they will realize the Buddha-nature in all beings, rise above worldliness and pursue ultimate happiness through introspection. Complete tranquil extinction, that is nirvana, is beyond all imagination. [Sakyamuni] wanted to deliver [people] from the harms of the caste system, and therefore declared that all living creatures are equal, so he became deeply hated by the followers of Brahmanism. The Buddhist teaching of the Great Conveyance [Mahayana Buddhism] originally lacked the concepts of transmigration [samsara], heaven and hell. Neither did [his followers] worship idols, [but] with the death of Sakyamuni, and with Brahmanism regaining authority, Buddhists started to worship idols. [Buddhists and the Brahmans] sought to resist each other, but in the end [Buddhism] disappeared from the stage and spread eastwards. From the Han and Tang dynasties and onwards it prospered in China, Japan, Korea, Siam, Annam and the South Sea Islands, while it on the contrary vanished in India, where it once had emerged.443

Again we encounter the idea that Buddhism stands for equality, and thereby is far superior to tyrannical Brahmanism with its unfair cast system. The famous Confucian scholar Kang Youwei, the man behind the Hundred Days’ Reform of 1898, not only expounded the meaning of the Confucian classics in order to legitimize institutional change, but also discussed the principle of equality, which he identified with Buddhism, as the cornerstone in an ideal society to come.444 Just as Kang’s praise of the alleged Buddhist virtue of equality

better, he nevertheless found it difficult and tiresome to deal with less cultivated people and women, since they always try to take advantage of you if you are all too friendly with them: “The Master said, women and peole of low birth are very hard to deal with. If you are friendly with them, they get out of hand, and if you keep your distance, they resent it.” Cited in The Analects of Confucius, 217.

443 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 26. (佛者。覺也。其教創自剎帝利族之釋迦牟尼。以明心性超脫苦歸身極樂為宗旨。清靜寂滅。所謂無餘涅槃不可思議者。欲救正婆羅門教等族之弊。故其言曰一切衆生皆平等。婆羅門教徒深惡之而無如何。佛教上乘。本無天堂地獄輪迴之說。亦不拜偶像。及佛滅度後。婆羅恢復權力。佛徒乃參用像教。冀相抵制。然卒不見容。遂改之東方。故漢唐以来。佛教盛行於中國日本朝鲜暹羅安南諸國及南洋各島。而佛所生長之印度。其教反衰。)

444 Kang is obliviously unwilling to identify inequality and suppression as products of the Confucian dominant-subordinate relationships, the very foundation of the ideology he embraces himself. Reluctantly, however, he admits that the earthly paradise he predicts will develop in the future is imbued with the spirit of equality, a central idea in Buddhism: "China’s customs that exalt the ruler and bemean his subjects, the favour the male over the female, and that honour the ‘worthy’ while repressing the ‘worthless’ – these are what we mean by ‘righteousness’...Once popular practices and customs become fixed, they are held to be the epitome of ‘righteous’ principles. Down to the present day, subjects prostrate themselves in awe of the ruler’s majesty and dare not speak out; wives are held down as inferiors and, being uneducated, are kept in ignorance. These are most oppressive ways to treat subjects or wives. I fear that they are not really the epitome of ‘righteous’ principles, but have only become so through popular custom...I say that in another hundred years they will
had political implications, one might guess that the above discussion on Buddhism, as opposed to Brahmanism, harbours an indirect criticism of autocracy at large. That is, Buddhism represents “democratic” qualities, while allegedly primitive, oppressive and superstitious Brahmanism stands for the opposite, so the passage may be interpreted a call for political reforms. Whether Confucian ideology with its emphasis on dominant-subordinate relationships at all can embrace the concept of equality let alone, it is nevertheless always perfectly understood that Buddhism in its present form, as practised in China, since long has lost all its former dignity and has turned into a superstitious and lowly religion, alien from the original teaching of the “sage of the Sakyas”.

While Buddhism allegedly has degenerated in China with an ignorant Buddhist hierarchy only being able to convert females and people from the lower classes, the situation supposedly looks different in Japan. Notes on New Geographical Readers remarks: “[Buddhism] was conveyed [to Japan] during [the reign] of the Japanese emperor Kinmei [509-571] and has since then experienced its ups and downs throughout the ages, but amongst the high Buddhist priests there have [always] been extremely many men of knowledge, and today [Buddhism] still has many devotees”. An almost identical statement is found in Shijie dili, so it seems probable that the statement was borrowed from this somewhat earlier textbook. Similarly, the middle school textbook Complete Geography, which argues that the original teaching of Sakyamuni is atheistic, states that many historically prominent persons in Japan have been monks, and that the religion nowadays has many followers which understand Western ways, though it is observed that the importance of Buddhism is on the decline in the country. The Chinese monks and their Japanese counterparts are besides claimed to be “as far apart as clouds and mud”, a statement which more than enough demonstrates the extent to which Buddhism was considered to have fallen in China, in comparison to Japan.

The notions on Buddhism in the textbooks seem to echo the ideas of Inoue Enryū, one of the founders of Seikyōsha and a promoter of patriotic Buddhism. Inoue was a student of

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446 Shijie dili, 145. (佛教。自欽明帝時傳來。爾後雖有盛衰。而高僧之智識者甚多。今尚有其信徒甚多。)
447 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 35, 171.
448 Ibid., 171. (相去霄壤矣)
Western philosophy who, inspired by English Neo-Hegelianism, researched Buddhism with the intention to prove that Buddhism was superior to Christianity, compatible with Western philosophy and in harmony with modern science. According to Inoue, Buddhism, although it had reached Japan from India via China, has been a strong force behind the development of Japanese civilization, and has, throughout the time span of over one thousand years, permeated the Japanese mind so deeply that it has become one with Japan’s “national essence”. The teaching has on the contrary been completely lost in India due to cultural decline, while it has degenerated in China, where the monks are ignorant and illiterate and do not know true Buddhism.449

The Chinese schoolchildren were, as we have seen from the examples above, also taught that Buddhism is evil in China, where it in a degenerated form is practised by illiterate masses under the guidance of an uneducated priesthood, but perfectly harmless in Japan, where it is taught and practised by educated and rational people, and hence possible to combine with “civilized life”. The religions of Japan are otherwise only scarcely discussed in the textbooks examined. In the short passages on Japanese religion the polytheistic and animistic nature of indigenous Japanese religious life is always passed by in silence. Complete Geography, the textbook which discusses Japan most extensively, only remarks that “Shinto is a religion in which ancestors are worshipped”, and simply concludes that it is therefore “roughly the same as Confucianism”.450 Similarly, Notes on New Geographical Readers only explains that Shinto is a religion in which “the souls of ones ancestors are honoured by services and the spirits of national heroes and men of virtue are worshipped”, and that “there are no scriptures which could be called sacred writings”.451 The statement is practically identical with the one found in Shijie dili, which indicates that it was borrowed from this source.452

There are no comments on the worship of the sun-goddess Amaterasu, or any other gods in the Japanese pantheon, and no mention of the semi-religious status of the Japanese Emperor for that matter. The Chinese textbook compilers seem to have been wrongly informed about, or perhaps did not fully grasp, the complexity of Japanese indigenous religion.

450 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 171. (神道崇祀祖宗、略同儒教)
452 Shijie dili, 145. Essentially, the only difference is that Shijie dili also remarks that Shinto “can not be called a religion in the pure sense of the word.” (神道者。祭祀祖宗之威靈。崇拜有勛功於國家之將。及賢哲者。別無可稱經典。不得紊然名為宗教。)
However, considering the lack of clarity with which the issue of Japanese indigenous religion often is addressed in Meiji Japanese geography textbooks as well, it is no wonder why Chinese educators did not manage to present a more accurate picture of Japanese religious life.\textsuperscript{453} One can on the other hand not exclude the possibility that Chinese textbook compilers deliberately refrained from discussing aspects of Japanese popular religion which they might have considered to be all too primitive or odd, such as the worship of many gods and the attribution of living soul to inanimate objects and natural phenomena, or the worship of the Japanese Mikado as a semi-god. Most likely, however, the emperor-centred state-cult of Japan was, at least initially, seen as nothing but a Japanese version of the teaching of China’s own great sage Confucius. That is, the Japanese achievement of bringing together the nation as a “nation-state family” (kazoku kokka) under the parole of the Confucian principles of loyalty and filial piety was likely understood as a manifestation of the uniting properties of Confucianism, which, combined with constitutional monarchism, would have the same promising effect as in Japan, if applied at home.

\textit{Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian}’s account of 1902, in which the process of “civilization” appears to be deliberately discussed in connection to an alleged preference of Confucianism amongst the Japanese elite, implies that the process somehow was set off by this privileged category of men:

\begin{itemize}
\item The polytheistic and animistic characteristics of Japanese indigenous religion appear to have been a hot potato for Meiji Japanese textbook compilers who were eager to present Japan as a civilized nation. In Noguchi’s secondary geography textbook from 1896, for example, it is explained that the textbook, “due to lack of space”, will not fully discuss the “rights and wrongs or advantages and disadvantages” of religion. It is nevertheless admitted that there is a connection between the level of human advancement and religion, just like there is a correlation between the level of human advancement and education. Fetishism is linked with the lowest stage of human development, polytheism with so-called half-civilization, and monotheism with the higher forms of social evolution. This background given, there are for obvious reasons no attempts made to discuss the animistic and polytheistic traditions of Japan. Emphasis is instead laid on the alleged meagre interest in, and pragmatic attitude towards religious matters in Japan, many Japanese allegedly having become so emotionally unconcerned about religious matters that they do not even know which Buddhist sect they belong to. The textbook does not fail to inform the reader that history has proven that religious disputes have caused sufferings and bloodbaths in many foreign countries, something the Japanese allegedly to a greater extent have been spared from. Whether this assertion is true or not, one might nevertheless argue that it is implied that the Japanese nation, due to its alleged high level of religious indifference, stands above all nations which have engaged in the barbarity of religious wars, notwithstanding their monotheistic traditions. In an attempt to trace the alleged Japanese cold attitude toward religion it is observed that Confucianism at an early stage was introduced in the country, which has prevented the Japanese people from becoming obsessed with religion. That is to say, Confucianism is presented as a vaccine against fanatic and dangerous religiosity which otherwise might threaten to tear the society apart. It is admitted that the Japanese people may lack the unifying force that a common religion (read Christianity) might provide, but it is on the other hand added that the Japanese are equipped with the for the Japanese people allegedly unique qualities of loyalty and filial piety, which allow them to act in harmonious cooperation.
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As for religions, there are Shinkyō [i.e. Shinto], Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, and people are allowed to pick their free choice. However, most of the people who belong to the upper strata of society honour Confucianism. After the [Meiji] Restoration education has constantly been advancing towards civilization, and newspaper offices and schools are found all over the country.\textsuperscript{454}

One might guess that the intention behind this passage is to present an image of progress as something which also could be initiated by the Confucian educated elite in China, similarly to what one imagined had happened in Japan. The somewhat later textbook \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}, in which the accounts on Japan are very similar to those in \textit{Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian}, does not, however, mention any alleged Confucian preferences amongst the Japanese upper classes. Instead, the textbook, having first listed the common religions of Japan (Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism), notes an alleged increase in the number of Christians in the country, and observes that no religion is forced upon the Japanese population.\textsuperscript{455} It thereby further emphasize the Japanese government’s tolerant attitude towards religious matters and Japan’s role as a model to follow, the mentioning of the liberty of faith in Japan certainly intended to confirm the image of Japan as an advanced nation that has managed to shake off the yoke of autocracy and suppression. In the elementary textbook \textit{Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu}, published by the Chinese Ministry of Education, however, all the references to freedom of religious belief in Japan have been omitted, which may indicate that the Qing authorities wanted to avoid the issue.\textsuperscript{456}

As understood from the discussion above, it is the combination of religion and ignorance which is considered to be truly harmful, and not necessarily religion itself. Religion must nevertheless be combined with education, preferably including a large portion of Confucian schooling, as protection against superstition and fanaticism. The textbooks distinguish however between more advanced, acceptable religions, and primitive, unacceptable ones, which are impossible to combine with reason and rationality. In the latter category one finds fetishism/animism (\textit{fanwu jiao 凡物教}, i.e. “[worship] everything religion”) and shamanism, associated with “primitive” peoples both within and without the borders of the Chinese empire. Lowliest of all beliefs is fetishism/animism, which, according to the teaching material used at the Imperial University in Beijing, is so superstitious that it really

\textsuperscript{454} Chen Qiansheng, \textit{Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian}. Vol. 1. 10. (宗教。則神道教、佛教、儒教、基督教。聽人自由。而上等之人。多尚儒道。維新以來。教育日進於文明。報館學堂。遍於國內。)
\textsuperscript{455} Xie Honglai, \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}. Vol. 3. 17.
\textsuperscript{456} \textit{Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu}. Vol. 3. 16. Much of the contents in the chapter on Japan otherwise appear to have been borrowed from Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian and/or \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}. 144
does not deserve to be called a religion. It is allegedly found in Africa and on the South East Islands, but also practised among people belonging to the lowest strata of the Chinese society, which is pointed out as something extremely shameful and embarrassing. Shamanism is transcribed as samanjiao 萨蠻教 in which the second character 蠻 has the meaning “barbarian”, which indicates the degree to which it was held in low esteem. Allegedly, shamanism is an extremely superstitious belief, in which “invisible gods and spirits are believed to inflict more harm on people than to bestow blessings upon them, why it is common with exorcism and witchcraft”. In Notes on New Geographical Readers animism is sorted under the category of “Barbarian religions”, and is branded as the lowest form of religion. The “black slaves” in Africa, the brown race in the South Sea Islands and the Miao people in China are claimed to adhere to this allegedly “ridiculously superstitious” religion, in which everything from plants to poisonous snakes are worshipped.

Although the textbooks examined (especially those aimed at the younger schoolchildren) are very sparse on information about religious matters, the ones that do address the issue always depict monotheistic religions as more “civilized” than polytheistic religions (i.e. Hinduism). Protestantism tends to stand out as the most advanced faith. In the lectures held at the Capital College, one learns that Christianity has “evolved” (jinhua 進化) from Judaism, and that Protestants “believe in freedom and are not as tied down with conventions as Catholics”. The Orthodox Church is claimed to be “roughly the same” as the Catholic Church, with the difference that it is not under the authority of the Pope. Islam is described as superstitious teaching, and the Muslims are blamed for having forced their religion upon others, besides being pointed out as reluctant to change because the Koran maintains the idea that Mohammed is the last prophet, so the Muslims only stick to what the Koran says. Similarly, Complete Geography accentuates that Islam was spread through warfare, and maintains that the Orthodox Church is “the same as Catholic Church”, with the only

457 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 28. (凡物教者。以吉凶禍福為主宰。崇拜一切禽獸昆蟲木石之類。阿非利加及南洋諸島土人。大率如此。其實迷謬妖妄。不成宗教。即我國下流社會。亦有此風。最為可恥。)

458 Ibid., 27-28. (薩蠻教者。其教以吉凶禍福為主宰。崇拜無形之神靈。謂此神靈降福。不如降禍之多。故有禳除之事。或又妖邪術教者。)


460 Zou Daijun, Jingshi daxuetang zhongguo dili jiangyi, 27. (其教預言吉凶禍福。轉以威力服異己者。著書曰可蘭。且謂自己以後。更無先知。故其徒僅守遺經。勿敢變革。)
difference that the Russian Tsar is its head, and not the Pope. Protestantism, on the other hand, is described as an “improvement” of Catholicism.462

The way the religions of the world are ranked appears to have been strongly influenced by Western (Protestant) ways of conceiving the world.463 However, the textbooks always provide an image of Confucianism as compatible with, or perhaps even superior to, all the more “advanced” religions of the world. Confucianism, although originally a philosophy mainly embraced by the educated elite, was apparently considered to be so deeply rooted in the spirit of the Chinese people at large that it could function as a unifying force for the whole empire, if duly promoted among the Chinese masses in the modern schools. Confucianism, now with an enhanced emphasis on the virtue of loyalty, would give rise to responsible, orderly and trustworthy subjects, and implant the seeds of resistance against excessive and unreasoning religious enthusiasm in the minds of the Chinese people, once and for all, which in turn would save China from considerable trouble, such as the chaos of the Boxer Rebellion.

That religion can be dynamite, and therefore must be handled with care, is understood from the following passage, which concludes the chapter on religion in Zhongguo dili:

One religion is called Christianity and is divided into two sects. The Old School, that is to say Catholicism, laid the basis for missionary work already during the Ming dynasty, and today the believers are increasingly many. The missionaries are mainly French and are several hundred in numbers. The New School, that is to say Protestantism, has still more followers. Americans constitute the majority of the missionaries, followed by Brits and Germans. [Common] people and the teaching do not harmonize, which has caused a serious international problem. Measures must be taken in order to deal with the aftermath [of the crisis].464

The passage, which provides the most negative image of Christianity in all the textbooks examined, likely alludes to the Boxers’ murdering of missionaries, their siege of the foreign legation area in Beijing, and the “international problem” which followed as a consequence of the joint forces of the eight powers’ occupation of Beijing in 1900. The textbook does not

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462 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 37.
463 In American textbooks from the 19th century virtue and humanitarianism is associated with Christianity alone, above all with Protestantism. Elson, p. 46. In Swedish geography textbooks the monotheistic religions Christianity, Judaism and Islam are ranked higher than Buddhism and Hinduism, in turn ranked higher than shamanistic religions, while fetishism is placed at the bottom of the scale as the ultimate example of utter superstition. Within Christianity, presented as the most prominent of all religions, Protestantism is given an exclusive position in that only Lutheran thinking is considered to be compatible with scientific thinking. Olsson, 126-129.
464 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 32. (一曰基督教。分為二派。即天主教。明代已立傳教基礎。至近代信者益多。宣教士多法國人。有百數。一新教。即耶穌教。信徒更多。宣教士英國人占多數。英德次之。民教不和。至成實際上一大問題。不可不設法以善其後也。)
however make any attempts to discuss the crisis any further, and gives no suggestions of how it should be resolved. The subject is obviously all too sensitive, and is promptly dropped.
6 Ancient glory and sources of pride and hope

6.1 China and Asia as the cradle of civilization

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, China, and the Asian continent at large, is generally depicted as backward and in urgent need of new knowledge and reforms. The textbooks nevertheless express great pride over China’s glorious ancient past, and it is often understood that China, as the world’s major originator of cultural attainments, deserves a better destiny than being bullied by the Great Powers. Progress and development is never portrayed as something essentially Western, and the textbooks seldom fail to remind the reader that China once upon a time occupied a higher stage of development than Europe. If only the Chinese pulled themselves together and reformed the old empire, China would face a bright future, and in the long run perhaps even regain the upper hand in the race towards higher forms of development. In the primary geography textbook Xiaoxue wanguodili xinbian from 1902, the following Sinocentric passage in the chapter on Asia argues that all Western attainments have evolved from Chinese wisdom:

[Asia] became civilized first [of all the continents], and mankind has spread across the world from here. [All] reason and [all] skills and techniques in the world have been passed on from China to India, and [then] from India to Persia and Egypt. From Egypt [the knowledge] has been passed on to Greece and Rome, [and then from Greece and Rome further on to] all the countries in Europe and America. China has Confucius and India Sakyamuni, both great men of the world.465

The notion that all Western attainments of any significance somehow are the products of China’s ancient world of ideas indeed runs contrary to the belief that Chinese civilization had originated in Egypt, the ancient Middle East or India, which was widespread in Europe from the 16th century until the early 20th century.466 The inclination to ascribe a Chinese origin to

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465 Chen Qiansheng. Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian. Vol. 1. 5. (開化最早。全地人口。由此播遷。世界義理工技由中國傳於印度。由印度傳於波斯埃及。由埃及傳於希臘羅馬。由希臘羅馬傳於歐美各國。中國有孔子。印度釋迦牟尼。皆世界之偉人也。)
466 Endymion Wilkinson. Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 346. Compare the passage cited above with Hegel’s description of the spread of Greek culture and science into Asia: “[…] Alexander did not found an extensive kingdom for his family, but he founded a kingdom of the Greek nation over Asia; for Greek culture and science have since his time taken root there. The Greek kingdoms of Asia Minor, and particularly of Egypt, were for centuries the home of science; and
Western technology was nevertheless typical for the so-called Yangwu Movement which advocated the adoption of Western technology during the period between 1860 and 1895, and the passage cited above may be a remnant from that time. It is nevertheless noteworthy that the passage occurs in a textbook compiled by a man who later, as the editor of the influential journal *Xin qingnian* (La Jeunesse), would call for the abolition of Confucianism (*Kongjiao* 孔教), national essence (*guocui* 國粹) and virtues such as loyalty and filial piety, which were to be replaced with an emphasis on (Western) science and democracy.

In the somewhat later textbook *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, also published by Commercial Press, however, no suggestion is made that originally ancient Chinese knowhow somehow had made its way to Europe, as described in the quote above. Asia is nevertheless still claimed to be the first continent to become civilized (*kaihua* 開化), which also is given as the reason to why Asia is the most populated continent, and it is besides stated that most religions and technical skills in the world originated here. In the complementary explanations to the textbook, found in *Notes on New Geographical Readers*, however, the Chinese are pointed out as the first people to become civilized (*kaihua*), although it is observed that the Chinese “have progressed at a comparatively slow speed, which is why white people regard them as half-civilized”.

The introduction to the chapter on Asia in the middle school geography textbook *Complete Geography*, compiled by the same educator as *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, also describes Asia as the primordial engine behind all progress and development:

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468 Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “Benzhi zuian zhi dabianshu” 本誌罪案之答辯 [Our journal’s reply to the charges against us], *Xin qingnian* 新青年. French title: La Jeunesse (Jan. 1918), 10. Chen had three years earlier declared that he would rather prefer the extinction of old “national essence” (*guocui*) than the extinction of the Chinese *Volk* (*minzu*). Chen Duxiu, “Jinggao qingnian” 敬告青年 [A respectful announcement to the youth], *Xin qingnian* [New youth] (Sept. 1915), 3.
Among all religions in the whole world, there is none that is not the product of this soil. Among all countries known as the most ancient ones, there is none which was not founded here. Of all scholarship, philosophy, arts and excellent skills in the west, there is none which is not the offspring of this soil. Splendid Asia! Splendid Asia!

This interpretation of Asia’s role in the world certainly reflects direct or indirect influence from the ideas of Shiga Shigetaka. In Liang Qichao’s “Yazhou dili dashilun” (General outlines of Asian geography) from 1902, in turn based on Shiga’s essay “Ajia chiri kōkyū no hōshin” (Approaches to research on Asian geography), one finds a passage which runs in a strikingly similar fashion. Liang sings the praise of the greatness of Asia, and notes that the continent is inhabited by yellow, white and Malayan ethnicities, that all language families have originated in Asia, and that mankind originated in the central parts of the continent some 250,000 years ago. It is pointed out that all the founders of the great religions came from Asia, and that the world’s most ancient civilizations were founded there. Above all, however, European attainments are pointed out as having derived from Asian knowhow:

More or less all Western scholarship, philosophy, arts and excellent skills spring from countries such as India, China, Assyria, Babylon, Phoenicia, Persia or Arabia, and there are no [attainments] which are not the offspring of this soil. However, not only in the earliest times [did Asia excel], but in more recent times have Asians with this continent as their ground in fact twice managed to establish the world’s greatest Empires, that is Genghis Khan and Timur. Splendid Asia! Splendid Asia!

Here, the alleged greatness of Asia is not merely cultural attainments and innovations, but apparently also Mongolian empire building. In the textbooks Lessons in Elementary Geography and Complete Geography, however, the references to the alleged splendour of Mongolian imperialism have been excluded. The reason behind this can of course only be guessed at, but it is plausible that the textbook compiler, like many of his contemporaries, did not regard the Mongol rule over China during the Yuan dynasty as especially honourable, and perhaps even associated this period of foreign suzerainty with that of the present Manchu rule. Besides, in the passage cited above, Western attainments are clearly pointed out as sprung

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471 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 39. (全世界所有之宗教、無一非此土之產物也、號稱世界最古之國、無一非此土之肇、而泰西一切文學哲學、美術巧藝無一非此土之子孫也、大哉亞細亞。大哉亞細亞)
473 Ibid., 644. (而泰西一切文學、哲學、美術巧藝、其淵源大率自印度、中國、敘利亞、巴比倫尼亞、腓尼西亞、波斯、阿剌伯等國而来、無一非此土之子孫也。又豈惟古代而已、即洎近世、而亞細亞人、實兩度根據此大陸、以造世界第一大帝國、則成汗吉思、帖木耳其人也。大哉亞細亞。大哉亞細亞！)
from the traditions of a wide range of different Oriental high-cultures, while the corresponding accounts in *Lessons in Elementary Geography* and *Complete Geography* do not offer any detailed information about the alleged Asian origin of western knowledge. The eulogy on the splendour of Asia, as a transmitter of knowledge and sophistication, instead seems to have been deliberately altered to suite the traditional image of the Middle Kingdom as an expanding centre of true civilization with the power of attracting less civilized neighbours. In other words, the descriptions of Western knowledge as an offshoot from an Asian stem of wisdom filled the function of reconfirming the traditional idea that everything good under heaven is derived from Chinese advancement, innovation and genius.474

The intention behind discussing Western technology and science in terms of them being derivations of ancient Asian (read Chinese) wisdom was likely to make new approaches, methods and techniques, which otherwise might appear rather alien to the broader layers of the population, more widely accepted. The message is that there is nothing wrong or shameful about studying Western science and technology since the act itself implies taking back lost knowledge, which in the first place had sprung from the own backyard. Since the application of new Western techniques and methods is nothing but the recycling of ancient eastern knowhow, there are no reasons to harbour a sense of inferiority towards Westerners, or become overly impressed by their technology for that matter. Consider for example the following notion in a teaching manual for the lower primary school, which alludes to the supposed hydrological projects of the legendary Emperor Yu, the (mythological) founder of the Xia dynasty, who allegedly tunnelled through mountains and hollowed out the Dragon Gate (Longmen 龍門) in the province of Shanxi: “In recent times Western countries have started to tunnel out mountains when laying railroads. People find this being something extraordinary, but do not know that the ancients long ago also carried out the wonders of tunnelling mountains”.475

It is impossible to tell whether the educator behind the teaching manual truly believed that the technology employed by Chinese ancients was really compatible with the latest in engineering of that day, but it is clear that he found the marvel at Western technical skills

474 Asia was first and foremost associated with China, also by the most fervent advocates of foreign-inspired reforms, such as Liang Qichao, who in his “Zhongguo dili dashi lun” even exclaims that “Asia is the master of the entire globe, China [lit. the Middle Kingdom] is the master of Asia, and [China] Proper the master of China”. (亞洲者，全地球之宗主也、中國者、亞洲之宗主也、本部者，又中國宗主也。) Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo dili dashi lun” 中國地理大勢論 [General outlines of Chinese geography], in Yinbingshi quanji, 652. Certainly, men who harboured more traditional ideas than Liang saw even more China as the centre of Asia, if not even as the very nave of the world where everything in a remote antiquity once upon a time had begun.

475 Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa*. Vol. 3, 13. (近時泰西開築鐵路。鑿山通道。人輒迓為異事。而不知鑿山奇績。古人早有行之者。)
inappropriate, and wanted to boost some self-confidence and pride in the young generation of China by reminding them of the glory of China’s ancient past. It can nevertheless be concluded that what might perhaps might be referred to as “Sinocentric diffusionism”, similar to that in Chinese geography textbooks of the late Qing period, survived, at least into the early 1920s, apparently filling a function in the nationalistic discourse. In a lecture held in March 1924, Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) made the following remark:

Except for knowledge, we also have our inherent capabilities. Today when the Chinese see the sophistication and advancement of foreign machinery and science, [they understand that] their present abilities are of course not equal to the abilities of foreigners. But what about the capabilities of the Chinese some thousand years ago? Once upon a time, the capabilities of the Chinese were far greater than those of foreigners. All things which in foreign countries today are considered to be most important were once upon a time invented in China.476

The revolutionist Sun Zhongshan’s Sinocentrism, if measured by the standards of the leftist writer Lu Xun, would probably fall under the same category as the alleged patriotism of Zhang Zhidong and other like-minded people. In 1918 Lu Xun had the following to say about what he reckoned was self-conceited patriotism, which he associated with mob mentality and the arrogant attitude which comes with taking too much pride in the imaginary glory of the own “national essence”:

Unfortunately China has an inclination towards this kind of self-conceit: There is nothing the ancients have done or said that is not all good, and one should rather worry about whether one sufficiently acts in accordance with [the ancients’] principles. How can one then venture to speak of reforms? This kind of opinion held by self-conceited patriots can vary somewhat depending on the group [alt. circle or faction], but the foundation is the same. Altogether one can discern the following five types [of self-conceit]: A says: “China’s land is vast and rich in natural resources. It was the first [country] to become civilized and it is the most morally outstanding [country] in the world.” This is absolute self-conceit. B says: “Although foreign countries are in the possession of a high material civilisation, China’s spiritual civilization is much better.” C says: “All the things one finds in foreign countries — China once upon a time had them all; every science has its origin in the words of a particular [Chinese] philosopher.” These two kinds [of self-conceit] have branched out from the Gu-jin Zhong-wai circle, persons who accord with Zhang Zhidong’s saying “Chinese learning for the essence, Western learning for utility”. D says: “Foreign countries also have beggars (or he says) [foreign countries] also have straw thatched hovels, prostitutes, bedbugs.” This is half-hearted defiance. E says: “It is fine with me if China is barbaric.” He continues: “You say Chinese thinking is stupid and confused, but that’s exactly the crystallization [i.e. the result

476 Sun Zhongshan, “Sanminzhuyi (yi jiu er si nian) Minzuzhuyi (yi jiu er si nian yiyue — sanyue)”, in Sun Zhongshan xuanji. Vol. 2, 656. (我們除了知識之外，還有固有的能力。現在中國人看見了外國的機器發達、科學昌明，中國人現在的能力，當然不及外國人。但是在幾千年前，中國人的能力怎麼樣呢。從前中國人的能力，還要比外國人大得多。外國現在最重要的東西，都是中國從前發明的。)
or essence] of the undertakings of our people. Now that we have been stupid and confused since the days of our forefathers, we can as well pass on our stupidity and confusion to our descendants, we have been muddleheaded in the past and will continue to be muddleheaded into the future. (We are four hundred million people,) [do you really think that] you can wipe us out?477

6.2 The Chinese as an ancient people of conquerors and colonizers

During the early 20th century the Yellow Emperor, a mythological hero frequently referred to in the Classics, was turned into something of an icon by the revolutionaries in their attempt to create a new and strong Han Chinese identity which could challenge the Manchu rule.478 Anti-Manchu rhetoric was racialized by men like Zhang Binglin (1869-1936), who argued that the Han Chinese, as the descendents of the Yellow Emperor, should not accept to be under the rule of tribes of different descent than themselves.479 This stance was different from that of intellectuals like Kang Youwei, who maintained that Manchus, Mongols and Han Chinese alike belonged to the same “race”, and argued, from a culturalistic point of view, that the Qing dynasty was in its right to rule China since the Manchus had accepted Chinese ways.480 In the Chinese geography textbooks examined, the Han people are never explicitly discussed in terms of being racially superior to the Manchus. The Han people is, as will be revealed below, instead depicted as something of a master race in terms of having defeated, pushed away, if

477 Lu Xun, “Yi jiu yi ba nian”, in Refeng, 19-20. (不幸中國偏祇多這一種自大：古人所作所說的事，沒有一件不好，遵行還怕不及，怎敢說到改革？這種愛國的自大家的意見，雖各派略有不同，根柢總是一致，計算起來，可分作下列五種：甲云：『中國地大物博，開化最早；道德天下第一。』這是完全自負。乙云『外國物質文明雖高，中國精神文明更好。』丙云：『外國的東西，中國都已有過；某種科學，即某子所說的云云。』這兩種都是『古今中外派』的支流；依據張之洞的格言，以『中學為體西學為用』的人物。丁云：『外國也有叫化子，(或云)也有草舍，娼妓，臭虫。』這是消極的反抗。戊云：『中國便是野蠻的好，』又云：『你說中國思想昏亂，那正是我民族所造成的事業的結晶。從祖先昏亂起，直要昏亂到子孫；從過去昏亂起，直要昏亂到未來。(我們是四萬萬人，)你能把我們滅絕麽？』


479 Kai-wing Chou, “Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han “Race” in Modern China”, in The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 40. I here leave open the question open to whether there existed any equivalent to racism in pre-modern China or not, or whether the Chinese in ancient times identified themselves as racially distinct from other peoples. For further reading on related topics see Frank Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China; Alastair Bonnett, “Who was white? The disappearance of non-European white identities and the formation of European racial whiteness”, Ethnic and Racial Studies 21 (1998), 1029-1055.

480 Chou, 43.
not even having exterminated, the native inhabitants of China. The idea that the Han Chinese as a superior race drove away the Miao people (i.e. the “race” which is pointed out as the aboriginals of China in the textbooks) is however hardly a product sprung from Chinese traditional understanding of the world. Rather it is a construction, heavily relying on the Social Darwinian assumption that “superior races” are bound to defeat “inferior races”, which filled the function of boosting national confidence by describing the Han people, the majority of China’s population, as a superior master race/Herrenvolk.

The Han-nationalistic National Essence Circle was deeply influenced by the theories of Terrien de Lacoupérie, as put forward in his Western origins of the early Chinese civilization from 2300 B.C to 200 A.D. published in 1894. According to de Lacoupérie, the Bak Sings, an ancient people of west Asia, had once upon a time arrived in China through the Gansu corridor. They defeated (and intermixed with) the native inhabitants, and became the dominating power in the valley of the Yellow River. The Bak Sings were the first Chinese, and their chieftain, Kudur Nakhunti, was no other than the Yellow Emperor.481 During the turn of the century, Lacoupérie’s theory of a supposed Western origin of the Chinese, now translated into Japanese, soon caught the attention of Chinese radicals (such as Zhang Binglin), and came to challenge the traditional idea of Chinese centrality and historical primacy, suggesting that the Chinese had originally migrated from the Tigris-Euphrates area, and finally settled in their new homeland — China.482 This alleged Western origin of the Chinese people was accepted by many intellectuals besides Zhang Binglin, such as Huang Jie, Jiang Guangyun (d. 1929) and Song Jiaoren (1881-1913), while others, for example Liang Qichao and Liu Shipei, who, although inspired by Lacoupérie’s ideas, claimed the Kunlun Mountains to be the native land from which the Chinese had originated.483 It was this later adaptation of Lacoupérie’s theory of a Western origin of Chinese civilization which obviously was considered suitable to pass on to the Chinese schoolchildren. None of the textbooks

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481 Dikötter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China, 119-120.
482 Huters, 41. Lacoupérie’s ideas were popularized through a chapter in the bestseller Shina bunmei shi (History of Chinese Civilization), published in 1900 and written by two non-academic historians, who introduced a simplified version of Lacoupérie’s theories, but also made some additions without informing the reader about it. A Chinese translation of Shina bunmei shi was published in 1903. Ishikawa, “Anti-Manchu Racism and the Rise of Anthropology in Early 20th Century China”, 22-23.
483 Xu Xun, 280. It can however be observed that Liang Qichao does not explicitly refer to the Chinese, but to the “Yellow race”, when describing this alleged ancient Volkerwanderung eastwards in his essay “Zhongguo dili dashi lun”. By using the less explicit term “the Yellow race” Liang does not exclude other East Asians, such as the Manchus, from sharing a common ancestry with the Han Chinese. Liang argues that “the first ancestors to our Yellow race” once upon a time “descended from the Pamirs on a journey eastwards” (我黄族之始祖本自帕米爾高原迤邐東下). Further on in the text, he claims that “the Yellow race originated in the Kunlun Mountains and successively descended eastwards” (黄族初發軔於昆侖之墟，次第東下). Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo dili dashi lun”, in Yīnbìngshì quanji, 653, 657.
examined refer to any plausible Babylonian origin of the Chinese people, which Lacoupérie argued for. Instead, it is the very route through which the Bak Sings allegedly reached the Chinese plains, usually the Pamirs or the Kunlun Mountains, which are pointed out as the homeland of the Chinese. This revised and compromised version of Lacoupérie’s theories appropriately placed the original homeland of the Han people closer to the Middle Kingdom, which traditionally had been considered to be the very cradle of civilization.

Although the textbooks never claim the Han people to be the first inhabitants of the Chinese heartland, it is always maintained that it was the Han people who brought the torch of civilization to the Central Plains (the downstream regions of the Yellow River) where it illuminated an otherwise dark world:

[The people who] founded and opened up China [lit. the Middle Kingdom] were the Han people, who initially had travelled eastwards from the Pamirs along the streams of the [Yellow] river, expelling the Miao people and gradually civilizing the river banks. Having already increased in large numbers, they further colonized the [areas around] the Yangzi River and Huai River, and finally reached the Southern Sea and [thereby came to] occupy China Proper. [Men of Han ancestry] have as a rule held the privileges as emperors and kings. Already in ancient time they stressed the value of morality and correct governing, and became the first civilized people.484

All the “primitive” tribes scattered throughout the provinces of Sichuan, Hunan, Yunnan and Guizhou, but also in more distant places such as the south-western part of Tibet, Annam and

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484 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 29. (創開中國者為漢族。其先自帕米爾高原。沿河流東下。驅除苗族。漸敷文化於河濱。孳生既然繁。更殖民於江淮。遂達南海。中國本部。皆為所據。常握帝王之特權。夙重道德。講政理。為最早文明之族。) Some Meiji Japanese textbooks also mention the Han people in terms of later invaders who came to dominate the native inhabitants of China in remote antiquity. An intermediate geography textbook published in 1899, for example, states that the Miao people once upon a time controlled the Central Plains of China, but were later driven away by the Han people, which is why the Miao people nowadays only are found in the southwestern mountain regions in drastically decreasing numbers. Yazu Masanaga, Chūchirigaku, 60. Considering the extent to which Chinese intellectuals were influenced by impulses from Japan, it seems very plausible that the textbook compilers in their construction of the Han Chinese as a colonizing and superior Asian master race also might have borrowed some of their rhetoric from how the so-called Japanese “Yamato race” was described in relationship to the native inhabitants of Japan. Meiji textbooks frequently refer to Japan’s (mythological) historical past and Japan’s legendary first emperor, mentioned in the chronicles Kojiki and Nihon shoki, to exemplify the greatness of the “Yamato race”. In a geography textbook for the elementary school published in 1894 the Japanese schoolchild is told that Japan 3000 years ago had few inhabitants and was uncivilized (文化開ケズ), the aborigines living in holes in the ground like wild animals. According to the textbook, the process during which the land was gradually “opened up”/civilized (土地開ケ) and the Japanese population started to increase, began some 2500 years ago, with Emperor Jimmu’s pacification of the central parts of Japan by his military expedition to the east, and the founding of his capital in the Yamato region. The Tohoku region was during that time allegedly inhabited by the undaunted and barbarian Ezo race (i.e. the Ainu people), the Kyushu region by the doughty and fierce Kumaso race, while other locations across Japan were inhabited by pit-dwelling aborigines. Shōgakkō yō Nihon chiri hoshū, 36-37. Also Uchida’s Yochi shiryaku, published during early Meiji, gives a similar account of the process of civilization (here the term kaika 開化 is used) in Japan. Uchida Masao, Yochi shiryaku. Vol. 1, 66. The process of civilization does not signify the adoption of Chinese institution and culture, but instead the expansion of the early state formation of Japan and the subjugation of the indigenous inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago.
Siam, are traced back to the aboriginal inhabitants of China. These peoples, it is explained, although commonly referred to as Miao, are nevertheless known under different names in different parts of the country. In the border area between Hunan and Guizhou they are known as Sheng Miao 生苗 (wild Miao tribes) and Shu Miao 熟苗 (assimilated Miao tribes), in the border regions of Hunan, Guangxi and Guangdong the aboriginals are called Yao 瑶, in the western part of Guizhou they are called Guoluo (猓玀), in Yunnan Liao (獠), and in Sichuan Bo (僰). The supposed descendants of the ancient aboriginal “Miao people”, i.e. all the non-Han Chinese tribal minorities of China, appear as the very antipode to the superior Han people. The Miao people is even pointed out as China’s most inferior race, which allegedly is doomed to extinction through natural selection. In other teaching materials, similar wordings are used, emphasizing an alleged unfitness for survival among the Chinese aboriginals. The section on Hunan in the teaching manual Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa, for example, remarks on the tribal population of the province:

In the south-western part of the province there are Miao and Yue peoples [alt. races], who are the descendants of an ancient people. They initially lived between Lake Dongting and Lake Poyang, as well as along the upper and lower reaches of the [Yangzi] river, and were no other than the San Miao of ancient times. At the time when the Han people had begun to increase in numbers, [the San Miao] were unable to match [the Han people] in intelligence and [hence] had no other alternative than to escape to live in the mountain valleys. They have only been able to prolong their survival temporarily; strong in fighting and fond of slaughtering as they are, they have carried on their self-exterrmination through killing each other.

The descriptions of the “primitive” tribes of China are clearly influenced by racist and Social Darwinian ideas of European origin. One can nevertheless still distinguish some characteristic traits of the traditional Sinocentric understanding of the world, in which Chinese culture is considered to have a civilizing, transforming, or at least “taming” effect on peripheral “barbarians”. In Notes on New Geographical Readers, for example, the following

485 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 30. The way the “primitive” tribes of China are classified in the textbooks may differ, but it is nevertheless always understood that their ancestors in remote antiquity had been forced to give way to the dominant Han people. In Complete Geography, for example, the “Miao people”, i.e. the descendants of the aboriginals who once upon a time lived in the Central Plains, are subdivided into Zhang (獐), Yao (猺) and Li (黎), found in southern Sichuan, northwest Yunnan, northeast Tibet, in the highlands of Guizhou, and in certain areas of the southern island of Hainan. Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 69.

486 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 30.

487 Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa. Vol. 2, 16. (省之西南。有苗越民族。乃太古民之遺裔也。此輩初居洞庭鄱陽間。及沿江上下。即古之三苗。迄漢族繁殖。智力不敵。不得不遁居山谷。以苟延性命。而健斗好殺。同類相殘。依然如故。)
observations, although not passing any racist judgements upon the Miao people, nevertheless make it absolutely clear that it is the Han Chinese man and his ways which is the norm:

Amongst the Miao people there is the distinction between the sheng [wild] and the shu [assimilated]. Diet and living amongst the assimilated Miao partly go in Han style, while the wild Miao, who eat [wild beasts’] flesh and then dress in the hides, are totally different in temperament. Their level of cruelty is abnormally high, and if there are any disagreements, they immediately make war, bloodthirstily fighting with the utmost intrepidity, [so they] are especially hard to control.488

The textbooks always distinguish between the various “primitive” tribes of south China, which are considered to be a racially more or less homogeneous group, and the various peoples of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang. The accounts on the backgrounds of the non-Han ethnicities of the Chinese Empire are otherwise often contradictory, and the textbooks’ classifications of the various peoples of the Empire can vary significantly from each other. Complete Geography, for example, argues that there are four zhongzu (races) of China: the Miao people, the Han people, Tunguses and the Hui people, while the Tibetans are counted as a sub-branch to the Hui people.489 In Lessons in Elementary Geography, on the other hand, the “Yellow race” (the textbook observes that the Europeans call it the Mongolian race) of China is divided into five races/peoples; Miao, Han, Tunguses, Tatars and Tibetans. The Tatars are in turn subdivided into two sub-branches; Mongols and Turks/Hui, while the Tibetans supposedly are of a mixed Tatar and Indian background.490 In a later version of the textbook the classification has rewritten. Now the “Yellow race” of the Empire has six sub-

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488 Tan Lian, Notes on New Geographical Readers. Vol. 2, 13. (苗族有生熟之分、熟苗飲食居處、半參漢族、生苗則食肉衣皮、性情迥別、悍戾異常、脫有顱髪、即抵死血戰、駕馭殊非易易) The Chinese traditionally distinguished between so-called shengfan 生番, i.e. unyielding and extremely primitive tribes, and shufan 熟番, tribes which had accepted Chinese suzerainty and had accepted the process of acculturation. Sheng (“raw”) and shu (“cooked”) originally signified barbarians who eat raw food and those who eat cooked food respectively. The practice to ascribe “barbarity” to other peoples on the basis of their supposed diet, clothes and housing has a long tradition in China. Liji [Book of Rites], reads: “[The barbarians] in the east are called Yi. They have dishevelled hair, tattooed bodies and dress in hides. Some of them eat uncooked food. [Those] in the south are called Man. They have tattooed foreheads and are pigeon –toed. Some of them do not eat cooked food. [Those] in the west are called Rong. They have dishevelled hair and dress in hides. Some of them do not eat grains. [Those] in the north are called Di. They wear clothes made of feathers and furs and live in caves. Some of them do not eat grains.” (東方曰夷。被髪文身。衣皮。有不火食者矣。南方曰蠻。雕題交趾。有不火食者矣。西方曰戎。被髪。衣皮。有不粒食者矣。北方曰狄。衣羽毛穴居。有不粒食者矣。) Liji 禮記: Wangzhi 王制, Liji Chen Hao zhu, 74.

489 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 69. The Mongols are in this textbook apparently not counted as one of the main branches of the “Yellow race” in China.

branches; i.e. the Miao, Han, Tunguse, Mongol, Turkic/Hui and Tibetan branches.\textsuperscript{491} The commentary explanations to the textbook, \textit{Notes on New Geographical Readers}, however, explains that the “Yellow race” can be roughly divided into two main subdivisions, i.e. the Kunlun branch and the Altai branch. Han, Tibetans and Hui are classified as belonging to the former, while Tunguses and Tatars are classified as belonging to the latter.\textsuperscript{492} The main point nevertheless seems to be that both Han and Manchu alike essentially belong to the same race, i.e. the “Yellow race”, or the “Golden race”, which also is known amongst Westerners as the “Mongolian race”.\textsuperscript{493} The reason given to why Westerners employ the latter term is that they associate the “Yellow race” with the Mongols, Europe having endured great humiliation during the Mongolian invasion during the Yuan dynasty. The term is hence to be considered as an honourable name for the “Yellow race”, since the Mongols were feared and respected for their valour and ferocity by the Europeans.\textsuperscript{494} One can nevertheless sense that the epithet “Mongolian” really did not carry any positive connotations, likely because it was too much associated with Chinese subjugation under the rule of “barbarians” from Central Asia.\textsuperscript{495} The alleged Western fear and respect of Mongols is nevertheless turned into something positive, as an example of how the “Yellow race” once upon a time had taught the Europeans a lesson in bravery and warfare.\textsuperscript{496}


\textsuperscript{492} Tan Lian, \textit{Notes on New Geographical Readers}. Vol. 2, 18. (此種分二大派，曰昆侖派、曰阿爾泰派，漢族回族西藏族屬昆侖派、通古斯族韃靼族屬阿爾泰派)

\textsuperscript{493} Ibid. These terms were likely borrowed from Shiga Shigetaka who points out that the “Yellow race” also is known as the “Mongolian race” and the “Golden race”. Shiga, 10.

\textsuperscript{494} Ibid. (黃種或稱為金色種，西人稱為蒙古利亞種、因元代蒙古人侵入歐洲，歐人大受其摧殘、畏其種族勇猛，故加此名，實為黃種之美名詞也)

\textsuperscript{495} In a Chinese textbook in geology from 1903, one finds an illustration of the five races, obviously borrowed from a foreign textbook (Yazu Masanaga’s intermediate geography textbook from 1899 has the same illustration). However, while the picture of what apparently is a Chinese man (he is dressed in Chinese traditional garments) is entitled “Mongolian race - Chinese” (蒙種支那人) in the Japanese textbook, it has been re-titled “the Yellow race” (黃色種人) in the Chinese textbook. The illustrations are identical, except in one small but important detail. The queue the Chinese is seen wearing in the illustration in the Japanese textbook has been removed in the Chinese version of the picture. Qian Chengju, \textit{Mengxue diwen jiaokeshu}, 30; Yazu Masanaga, \textit{Chūchirigaku}, 11. By removing the queue the compiler likely wanted to express his dislike for the Manchu regime, although it is also possible that the compiler just wanted to present a more modern image of the Chinese. Nevertheless, the change of the title indicates that the compiler thought of the term “Mongolian race” as derogative, and hence preferred the term “Yellow race”.

\textsuperscript{496} Also the teaching material used at Jingshì yixueguan observes that Europeans refer to Chinese people as belonging to the Mongolian race since the very sight of Chinese people remind them of the horrors they experienced during the Yuan dynasty. Han Pucun, \textit{Jingshì yixueguan yu władz jiangyi}, lesson 12, 1-2. Rhetoric which emphasises European fear of Mongols is also found in Japanese Meiji textbooks. In the geography textbook \textit{Shõgaku chiri [Primary school geography]}, published in 1900, European children are claimed to become so frightened that they stop crying when someone shouts “the Mongols are coming”. \textit{Shõgaku chiri 小學地理 [Primary school geography]}: Bankoku no bu 萬國之部 [the volume on all countries]. Tokyo: Fukyūsha, 1900. Reprinted in \textit{Nihon kyōkasho taikei, kindaihen}, Vol. 16, ed. Tokiomi Kaigo (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965), 241.

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The Han chauvinism in the textbooks is never openly anti-Manchu, and the assumed superior qualities of the Han people are instead enforced by references to their alleged conquer of the Central Plains. For example, the following passage in Lessons in Elementary Geography quickly tones down the differences between Han and Manchu, after first giving a description of the alleged *Völkerwanderung* of the Han people and their supposed triumph over the Miao people:

One [of the sub-races of the Yellow race in China] is called the Miao people. In remote antiquity they were the first people to occupy the Central Plains. Later the Han race came from the west, [whereupon the Miao people] were gradually pushed aside and retreated into the mountains of the southwest. [These aboriginals were] no other than [the ancestors of] today’s Yao and Miao races and other such peoples. The second race of China is called the Han people. They originally lived north of the Beiling Mountains, but took the place of the Miao people after having entered the Central Plains. They first gained ascendancy along the river banks on both sides of the Yellow River, but increasing in population they gradually started to overflow the area between the Yangzzi River and the Huai River, and ultimately reached the Southern Sea. They have reproduced themselves in the largest of numbers and have spread [across the country] most extensively. They make up the part of the populace in the whole country which is most influential. The third race is called the Tungus people, who originally lived in Manchuria and of whom many belong to the same clan as the imperial family. They have troops garrisoned [across China] and have since long intermixed with the Han people so there hardly are any evident differences in physical appearance or customs [between the two peoples].

The otherwise predominantly racially oriented description of the population of China all of a sudden takes a somewhat culturalistic twist, in which the alleged high degree to which the Tunguses (read Manchus) have adopted Han ways seems to prove their “Chineseness”. The message may be Han-nationalistic, but the textbook’s attitude is nevertheless non-aggressive towards the ruling ethnicity, which is pointed out as having been exposed to the influences of the Han masses to such an extent that they more or less have become one and the same with the dominant Han majority, both racially and culturally.

While Lessons in Elementary Geography imprecisely locates the original homeland of the Han people somewhere north of the Beiling Mountains, the Notes on New Geographical Readers is more exact, explaining that the ancestors of the Han people, the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, originally lived in the Pamirs, but some 5000 years ago started to move

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497 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 25. (一曰苗族。上古首據中原。其後漢種西來。漸為所迫，退居西南山中。即今諸苗種等人是也。二曰漢族。初居北嶺之北。入代苗族處中原。先興起於黃河兩岸。漸繁衍於江淮之間。遂達南海。滋生最眾。蔓延最廣。為全國最有權力之族。三曰通古斯族。初居滿洲。多為帝室宗親。駐防兵卒。以久與漢族混合。容貌風俗。罕有殊別。)
eastwards from the Kunlun mountains. The aboriginals, who allegedly could not match the Han people in intelligence, took their escape to the mountain regions southwards, were they have been living their savage lives for thousands of years without making any advancement of civilization. It is nevertheless understood that the Han people, from having experienced peaks of strength and prosperity during Qin, Han and Tang dynasties, have entered a phase of regression from the Five Dynasties (907-959 A.D.) onwards, and have become far too weak and wimpy. The underlying message is certainly that the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, with all their latent potential as an originally culturally progressive and dominant people, should re-evoke their former strength. The remarks are however not necessarily to be interpreted as an implicit call for the Han people to restore their former might and splendour by immediately overthrowing Manchu rule, but might as well be understood as an attempt of encouraging a more martial spirit among the Chinese population at large, which de facto was one of the goals of the new educational system. If the intellectually superior Chinese only regained the vigour of the good old days, the textbook seems to imply, they would be better suited to withstand foreign aggression, and prove themselves to be victorious in the ever ongoing struggle for survival, just as they in remote antiquity had overpowered the “Miao people” and conquered what now is China.

The Yellow Emperor was the example, above all, which confirmed that the Chinese by heritage were true warriors, and only had to revitalize their inborn qualities. In his preface to his Zhongguo zhi Wushidao 中國之武士道 (China’s Bushido) Liang Qichao, enraged over the claims in the West and in Japan that the Chinese are not of a warlike character, even mentions the alleged achievements of the Yellow Emperor as the first example of an inherited Chinese fighting spirit: “Our divine ancestor the Yellow Emperor descended from the Kunluns, conquered and subjugated [territory] in all directions, put down peoples of other origins, and passed on his martial virtues to us, his descendants”. The Chinese educators, who were highly aware of how the Great Powers already had managed to lay foreign land under their feet by driving away, massacring and suppressing native inhabitants, clearly saw Western (and Japanese) expansion as the
manifestation of formidable strength which also posed an alarming threat to China. By
describing the Han people as a master race which also had colonized vast areas and had
triumphed in the battle of the survival of the fittest, the textbook compilers likely wanted to
emphasize that the Han people was equal to any colonial nation. By calling the attention to the
glorious past of the Han people, the young generation of China was to develop a love for their
nation and a sense of pride in their common cultural and racial heritage, which would
strengthen the Chinese nation so that it one day would be able to rise as one man and show the
world what the descendants of the Yellow Emperor truly were made of. However, one might
of course suspect that there might also have been motives of domestic political nature behind
the image of the Han Chinese as a master race. That is, the allusions to Han superiority could
also be interpreted as implying that the Han people as the dominant “race” were the legitimate
rulers of China. Nevertheless, as the examples above indicate, racism in China was during late
Qing primarily directed towards the native “primitive” inhabitants of China, and not as much
towards later conquerors of Chinese soil (i.e. Mongols and Manchus). The fact that the Han
people, the Manchus, the Mongols, the Tibetans and the Hui were represented by different
colours in the early Republic’s flag,\textsuperscript{502} while the tribal population of China was not, also
points in that direction. Besides, the national anthem of 1915 only mentions “five races” of
China (i.e. the same “races” represented in the new flag), which also indicates the extent to
which the tribal peoples of southern China were excluded from the imagined community of
the new republic:

\begin{verbatim}
China stands strong in the universe
And expands in all directions.
The people of China come from the Kunlun Peaks.
The rivers, streams and huge mountains never end.
The five races of the Republic began in the days of Yao.
A hundred thousand ten thousand years! [sic]\textsuperscript{503}
\end{verbatim}

It must have been apparent to everyone who had studied in the new schools during the end of
Qing that it was the Han people who were the true masters of the nation, the lyrics obviously
alluding to the story of how the Han people in remote antiquity descended from the Kunlun
mountains, defeating the aboriginals of the Central Plains and spreading across China.
Possibly recalling what he had been taught in school as a child, the famous poet Wen Yiduo

\textsuperscript{502} Harrison, 144.
\textsuperscript{503} Cited in Harrison, 146.
(1899-1946) composed the following poem during his stay in the United States in the early 1920s, deeply homesick and tired of the racism he was exposed to over there:

I am Chinese, I am Chinese,
I am the divine blood of the Yellow Emperor,
I came from the highest place in the world,
Pamir is my ancestral place,
My race is like the Yellow River,
We flow down the Kunlun mountain slope,
We flow across the Asian continent,
From us have flown exquisite customs.
Mighty nation! Mighty nation! 504

504 Cited in Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 158.
7 Regional differences within the Chinese Empire

7.1 The backward southwest and the progressive coastal areas in the southeast

The Chinese inland, except the navigable areas along the major rivers, is generally depicted as hard to develop due to the poor communications. The simplified geography textbook *Jianyi dili keben*, for example, states that natural environments without access to open waters are considered to be less beneficial than coastal landscapes: “[…] the development in the interior [of China] is bound to advance at a slow pace in comparison with the sea and river ports. This due to the difficulty respectively the ease with which communication is possible.” It is commonly understood that the coastal line in the far south has a great advantage in that new impulses from abroad quickly reach the area.

*Lessons in Elementary Geography* divides China Proper into three main zones from north to south, but also distinguishes between the easily accessible and well-informed Southeast China and the isolated and uninformed Southwest:

The Northern Region is called the Yellow River drainage basin. It is the area where the [Chinese] state was founded in antiquity. Successive generations of emperors and kings have located their capitals here. The central region is called the Yangzi drainage basin, and is what one now refers to as “the fertile land”. It has since ancient times been an area where men of talent [lit. heroes] not yet have had the opportunity to give free play to their true abilities [lit. use military force]. The southern region is called the Pearl River drainage basin. The people in the eastern part were the first to be in contact with foreign countries. In the western part there are numerous mountains and deep bamboo forests. The inhabitants are [therefore] seldom informed about foreign matters and still stick to ancient customs.

The passage nostalgically recalls the memory of a glorious ancient China, and although it is understood that Central China has not yet reached its full potential, China’s historical past is remembered with a sense of pride. It is also implied that people in the remote inland, surrounded by natural barriers which hinder the spread of new ideas, cling onto ancient practices due to lack of better knowledge. Bygone times are in this sense also associated with

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505 Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dili keben*, 15. (然內地進化。必較遲於江海口岸。此又交通難易之故。)
506 Xie Honglai, *Lessons in Elementary Geography*. Vol. 1, 3. (北區曰黃河灌域。為上古建國之地。歷代帝王之都在焉。中區曰長江灌域。今所謂膏腴之壤。自古為英雄無用武之地。南區曰珠江灌域。其東部人民。通外國最早。西部叢山深箐。居民罕知外事。猶有古風。)
backwardness and isolation (as opposite to modern times, progress and communication). It could perhaps be argued that the passage reflects a dualistic worldview. On the one hand it mirrors the traditional perspective which idealises China’s historical past as the true source of civilized ways, but on the other hand it reflects an imported perspective which stresses the importance of mastering new knowledge in the pursuit of modern civilization to come. That is to say, the land of the two great river systems, the Yellow River and the Yangzi River, represents China’s glorious antiquity, while the southeast embodies the potentials of a China of tomorrow. In contrast, the southwest represents isolation from fresh impulses from modern civilization, but also remoteness from the heartland of China and the cradle of (Chinese) civilization. This is pattern of describing China Proper is more or less discernible in all the textbooks examined.

The deep Southwest is above all associated with non-Han Chineseness, and the isolated provinces of Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan, with a predominantly mountainous topography and large non-Han Chinese tribal populations, hence stand out as particularly primitive and raw, while the cities in this distant hinterland are portrayed as backward outposts surrounded by utter savagery. *Jianyi dili keben* describes the environment of the river port of Wuzhou in Guangxi, at that time an important trading market in the area, as follows:

[Wuzhou is surrounded by] many mountains on all sides. The topography is high. There is an abundance of medicinal herbs and the mineral resources are plenty. The Miao people and other barbarians live side by side. Miasmic diseases pester the people. The customs are fierce and warlike, and agriculture unproductive.⁵⁰⁷

In the chapter on Guizhou, one finds a similar description of the vicinity of the province capital of Guiyang:

Outside the province city there are many Miao, Yao, Xi and Dong tribes. Mountain passes run one above the other. The topography is high with steep terrain, and there are tall forests and dense bamboo thickets where many miasmic epidemics thrive. As for the flora, there are many firs and lacquer trees, and as for the mineral resources, there is much quicksilver. The soil is infertile and communications inconvenient. People mainly

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⁵⁰⁷ Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dili keben*. 11. (四境多山。地勢高聳。藥材繁衍。礦產亦多。苗蠻雜處。烟瘴侵人。民俗強武。農業未旺。) The inhabitants of Guilin in the same province are in the primary geography textbook *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu* described in a rather similar manner. The people are pointed out as ferocious and profit-hungry, but it is also remarked that they are so poor that they cannot survive on their own. The textbook also notes that Dong and Yao tribes have caused disturbances during the latest decades, on top of the pressure that France and Great Britain have exerted in the area. Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu*. Vol. 1, 22. (其民凶悍嗜利，貧不能自存，加以英法逼處，侗瑤騷動，數十年來，時肇禍亂)
engage in agriculture, are simple, plain and of little refinement. The level of civilization among the local chiefs along the southern border is rather low.\footnote{Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dili keben*, 12. (省城而外。多苗猺谿峒。關隘重重。地勢險阻。長林密箐。中多瘴癘。植物多杉漆。礦產多水銀。土性瘠薄。不便交通。民多業農。簡朴寡文。南境諸土司。文化較淺。） Shijie dili also comments on the rich findings of minerals and the poor climate in the province. The province is otherwise described as full of Miao tribesmen, and the population at large as fierce and evil. *Shijie dili*, 125.}

In this passage, it is the topography, the many non-Han ethnicities and the infertile soil which are pointed out as the reasons for the poor state of affairs in Guizhou. The primary geography textbook *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu*, which also comments upon the poor communications in the province, the infertile earth, the many troublesome tribes and the poverty in the province, nevertheless emphasizes the rich natural resources in the region, which still remain unexploited. Allegedly, it is the meagre soil which hitherto has discouraged Han Chinese from moving to Guizhou, and it is the lack of a strong Han population which in turn has made it possible for various tribes to survive there. However, as soon as the natural resources open up to exploitation, the textbook promises, the Han Chinese will come to the province en masse, and all the non-Han tribes “will no longer have any place to hide”.\footnote{Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu*. Vol. 2, 18. (全境苗蠻雑處。號稱難治。多設土司以分領職。漢族因其地瘠也。絕少遷居彼土者。故溪峒苗獠。猶得保存其間。嗣後礦務振興。利源開辟。而漢族乃麇聚黔中。此輩將無藏身之地。）} In the eyes of the compiler, even infertile areas with a hopeless topography and a climate which causes diseases can, if only blessed with rich natural resources and cleansed from “savage” elements, be turned into useful land in the hands of a Han Chinese majority.

However, despite all the latent potential for future exploitation, isolated mountain areas in the southwest, those inhabited by “savage” ethnicities in particular, are still associated with what is considered to be earlier stages of evolitional development and backwardness at large. The non-Han Chinese minorities in the southwest are commonly described as defeated peoples who in ancient times had been driven away from their original settings, whereupon they had resettled in isolated areas in the Chinese periphery. The textbooks never express any sympathy for them. Han Chinese expansion is seen as something of a natural development, in which the Han Chinese only continue a process which had started in remote antiquity, when the ancestors of the Han Chinese people begun their colonization of what was to become China, by first chasing away the native inhabitants.

There are few detailed accounts of the customs or traditions of the non-Han Chinese ethnicities in the southwest, but the short descriptions dwell upon what was considered to be
odd, strange and savage. The teaching manual explains that the non-Han Chinese tribes in Guizhou are believed to have taken their escape to the area during the ancient dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou.\textsuperscript{510} It is noted that Chinese officials were not located in Guizhou until the Yuan and Ming dynasties, and that the tribes in the province, allegedly the last ones to be influenced by Chinese ways, still only are under indirect Chinese rule through local chiefs, who in turn answer to the authorities. In what appears to be an attempt to further demonstrate the level of barbarity among the natives of the province, the teaching manual describes the wedding traditions among the Gelao tribe, in which a girl about to get married has her front and back hair cut off and three front teeth knocked out.\textsuperscript{511} Geography of the Chinese Empire offers the following account of Miao people, which also includes a description of their supposed wedding ceremony:

Their coverlets and clothes are made of patterned silk fabrics. They like singing and dancing, presume upon the art of casting spells, and cast bronze drums which they value as precious objects. Their armaments are bow and arrow, knife, spear, sword and shield. Their nobles marry many women. To enter into matrimony the couple [just] goes into the mountain forests to dance and sing, and after they have enjoyed each other they become husband and wife.\textsuperscript{512}

The aboriginals of the southwest are associated with superstition, rebellion, absurdity and immoral behaviour, and the feelings towards them are as much coloured by fear as by contempt and ridicule. It is often implied that they might still pose a potential threat to the Han Chinese population, so they should also be kept in strict restrain, if necessary by the means of military actions. In Guizhou, “Miao and Han live side by side, and there are often fights and conflicts [between them]. With Xi Baotian’s thorough wipe-out during the Tongzhi Era [1862-1874] the Miao have slowly been tamed into obedience.”\textsuperscript{513}

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\textsuperscript{510} Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa. Vol. 2, 20-21. (蓋三苗九黎之族。自三代以來。車居其地。)

\textsuperscript{511} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{512} Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 2, 14. (其人被服繒繢。好歌舞。挾巫蠱之術。鑄銅鼓。一為重器。其兵弓矢矛劍盾。其貴人一娶數女。其婚姻男女人山林跳歌。相悅則為夫婦云。) Obviously, eroticizing “the other” was during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century not just a European phenomenon alone, which Said seems to insinuate in his Orientalism. As for the exoticizing and eroticizing of Chinese minorities in contemporary China, see Dru C. Gladney, “Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities”, in Consuming Ethnicity and Nationalism: Asian Experiences, ed. by Kosaku Yoshino (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), 48-88.

\textsuperscript{513} Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 163. (苗漢雜居。時有爭鬩。至同治席寶田之痛剿。始漸馴服。) Lessons in Primary Geography gives the following description of Guizhou which depicts the native tribes as aggressive and hostile, but on the other hand also emphasize the degree to which the authorities have managed to establish stability in the province: “The folkways are unsophisticated and in the southern part [of Guizhou] the barbarian Liao tribes make frequent appearances [in swift raids]. Over a long time [the Han
minorities in the southwest is always made to appear as the triumph of rational (Chinese) civilization over foolish barbarity, and the textbooks largely mirror the Sinocentric idea in which the Middle Kingdom is considered superior to its (more or less barbaric) surrounding, and therefore is in its right to dominate it. “Primitive” tribes are frequently described as something like sub-humans who do not deserve any other destiny than expulsion, if not extermination. Notes on New Geographical Readers gives the following suggestions of which measures ought to be taken in order to subdue one of the mountain tribes in Guangxi:

Among the mountains Miao and Yao tribes live side by side. The Yaoshan Mountains with its myriads of peaks stretches endlessly. [The mountain region] has a circumference of several hundreds of li and borders with the four prefectures of Liuzhou, Xunzhou, Wuzhou and Pingle. Numerous mountain paths run crisscross with passages in all directions. The Yao people are as stupid as deer and pigs, and it is hard to appeal to them with reason. Last year [these] bandits used the Yaoshan Mountains as a post of retreat from where they appeared and disappeared in swift raids. They roamed about and were difficult to control. Troops for protection had to be thoroughly stationed at all places where the Yaoshan Mountains meet plain land. The fact that one single group of fierce bandits managed to exhaust the four prefectures’ government troops by making them run for their lives bear witness of the bandits’ maliciousness. In the past Feng Zicai once reduced the rebellious Li tribes in the Lishan Mountains to submission by cutting down the trees along the mountains, penetrating deep into the mountains and thoroughly wiping them out, and then constructing [a net of] intersecting roads [cutting through their territory], whereupon the Li people lost their viciousness. Now that things look similarly critical for the Yaoshan Mountains, one should use the same method [in order to quell the Yao tribes].

Although it is commonly understood that tribesmen can become “tamed” through acculturation or warfare and thereby can come close to the fringes of (Chinese) civilization, it also implied that the isolated and barbarian environment of the southwest may have had a bad influence on the Han Chinese inhabitants there. In Geography of the Chinese Empire the Taiping rebellion is blamed on the bad temper of the inhabitants of Guangxi, where the rebellion started: “The spirit of the people [in Guangxi] is fierce, and during [the reign of] Xianfeng [emperor 1851-
1861], Hong [Xiuquan, 1813-1864, the head of the Taiping rebels] and Yang [Xiuqing, d. 1856, one of the leaders of the rebellion] instigated their disastrous [rebellion] here."515

In contrast, the coastal provinces, such as Guangdong, are seen in a comparatively positive light. The Cantonese are associated with the open sea and the outer world, and not with the jungled and mountainous hinterland infested with backward tribesmen.516 The more detailed accounts on Guangzhou do however also discuss less attractive aspects of the inhabitants. Geography of the Chinese Empire gives the following account, which describes the Cantonese as progressive, enterprising, and equipped with something of an adventurous disposition which allows them to brave the sea and settle abroad:

The people are industrious and clever, and [their achievements within the fields of] commerce and industry are indeed significant. Moreover, they have the courage to brave dangers and have left many traces across all the five continents. They are able to endure hard work and are good at accumulating wealth, and have even been exposed to the envy of Europeans and Americans.517

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515 Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 145. (民氣慓悍。咸豐間洪楊發難於此。)
516 The image of southern Chinese mountainous inland provinces, predominately inhabited by non-Han Chinese ethnicities, bears strong resemblance to the picture of those areas in Meiji Japanese schoolbooks. Yazu’s intermediate geography textbook from 1899, for example, describes the inhabitants of Guangxi as "stupid and obstinate", and Guizhou and Yunnan are only mentioned in terms of their isolated location, infertile soil, unfavourable climate and hidden mineral resources. Yazu Masanaga, Chûchirigaku, 58. According to Yoda Yukata’s geography textbook from 1911, aimed at the second and third years in higher schools for girls, the mountainous tableland of Guizhou and Yunnan has particularly poor communications, and is "culturally undeveloped" (文化開けず。). It is however noticed that the south Chinese flatland along the coast, as well as the delta areas of the Min and the Pearl Rivers, have a beneficial climate and a high production, and that these densely populated areas have a high ratio of emigrants who seek employment abroad. A picture portraying a half-naked and barefoot Miao tribesman equipped with bow and arrows illustrated the backwardness of Guizhou and Yunnan, which is contrasted by an illustration of a cable car in Hong Kong. Yoda Yukata, Joshi chiri kyôtôkasho: Gaikoku hen, 19, 21.
517 Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 134. (其民勤巧。商工之業頗有可觀。且敢於冒險。五洲多有其足跡。耐勞善畜。甚遭歐美人之妒。) Meiji Japanese geography textbooks, which usually do not have much good to say about the Chinese, do however give some credits to the enterprising spirit of the Chinese who were ready to move abroad, although one can also sense a feeling of mistrust or suspicion directed towards them. A secondary geography textbook from the early 1890’s, which otherwise is full of remarks on the alleged backwardness of the Chinese, nevertheless praises the Chinese for their industriousness, perseverance and ability of accumulating wealth (qualities claimed to probably be unmatched in the whole world), but also adds the following comment: “These diligent Chinese brave the waves of the deep seas, and in their search for employment they have spread across the South Sea Islands, and have even displayed a tendency to push their way across the United States of America”. (此等ノ勉強ナル支那人ハ、遠洋ノ波濤ヲ冒シ、業ヲ求メテ南洋諸島ニ傳播シ追々ハ北米合衆國ニ至りスルノ傾向ヲ呈セリ。) Nakamura Goroku, Chûtô chiri bankokachi, Vol. 4, 30. In another textbook, published almost twenty years later, the tone is different, and the focus is now on the unjust treatment of the diligent and thrifty Chinese by jealous Westerners: “Moreover, [the delta areas of the Yangzi River and the West River] overflow [with people] and many emigrate to newly developed land in South East Asia, Oceania, America and Africa etc. They are industrious and frugal by nature and do not shun hard work, and are particularly good at doing business. For that reason the white man has started to hold grudge against them, and actions have even been taken in places to prevent them from immigrating.” (此他、溢れてアジアの東南部及びオセアニア、アメリカ、アフリカ等の新開地に移住するもの多く、性勤儉にして勞を厭はず。殊に商業に長ぜり。甚と白人の忌むところとなり。其移住を拒まる處あるに到れリ。) Yamasaki Naokata, Gaikoku chirikyôkasho. Vol. 1, 31-32.
Nevertheless, although the textbook starts off describing the Cantonese in a very flattering way, the image of the Cantonese is far from all good: “However, [people belonging to the] lower strata of society have all the evil customs of opium-smoking, gambling, looting and uncleanliness, which also fully explains why they are disliked by [other] people”. On the one hand, the Cantonese are forward and enterprising, but on the other hand, they are violent and unrefined. Above all, it is the Cantonese from the lower classes who are the target of the criticism:

[The people are, due to their] folk customs, fierce, diligent, clever and superstitious [lit. they worship spirits and gods]. They were the first to have contacts with foreign countries. Therefore huge numbers of them cross the seas in search for profit, leaving traces all over the globe. The language differs from that spoken north of the [Wuling] mountain ranges, and [the inhabitants] have even created vulgar characters [i.e. informal variants of Chinese characters] which are convenient for [the members] of the lower strata of society to use.

The textbooks convey a sense of pride over the degree to which the forward and enterprising Cantonese have managed to spread across the world, although they at the same time express contempt towards their lack of refinement and cultivation (perhaps needless to say, it was mainly the poor and uneducated who were forced to leave their native soil for foreign countries). The Cantonese/overseas Chinese are hence seen as progressive, but at the same time as rather uncivilized in that the majority of the population lack the sophistication of the elite culture of the Middle Kingdom.

Since the Confucian Canon continued to be taught in the modern schools along with the modern subjects, the schoolchildren probably could not avoid associating the alleged profit-seeking tendency among overseas Chinese of Cantonese origin with what the master had to say about profit-seekers and those of low status with little or no education. Confucius discusses profit as something of an absolute opposite to the desirable principle of righteousness, arguing that lesser men only understand the former principle, while gentlemen understand the latter. Men of humble origin, Confucius maintains, were in ancient times

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518 Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 134. (然下流社會有烟賭劫掠不潔諸惡習，亦足取憎於人焉。) As pointed out in Darroch’s review of China’s first state-approved textbooks, the picture given of overseas Chinese was not very positive in the First Grade Chinese Reader for Primary School either: “The plight of Chinese who emigrate to foreign countries is also related, but it is confessed that much of the dislike to them, evinced by foreigners, is due to the dirty habits and low state of civilization of those emigrants”. Darroch, 212.

519 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 129. (民俗強悍勤敏、尚鬼媚神、通外國最早、故航海覓利者、人數衆多、足跡備全球、語言與畿北迥異、且造俗字、以便下流社會之用。)

520 The Analects of Confucius, 105.
straightforward, but have turned crafty in more recent times.\textsuperscript{521} Mencius, who follows the same trait of thoughts, also expresses his contempt for profit-seeking and stresses the importance of the principles of humanity and righteousness, concluding that the hunt for profit only generates selfishness and greed, which in the long term might even harm the very foundation of the state.\textsuperscript{522} From a traditional Confucian perspective, the Cantonese who head abroad in search of profit are easily associated with small-minded or mean people only interested in personal gain, lacking the fundamental moral values on which a well-functioning society relies. The Cantonese are however never explicitly pointed out as simply greedy in the textbooks, although the teaching manual \textit{Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa} bluntly describes the inhabitants of Shantou (the chief port of eastern Guangdong well known for its many emigrants to South East Asia) as “industrious and thrifty and able to endure hard labour” but on the other hand “without nothing but profit-seeking on their mind” and “without any sense of shame”.\textsuperscript{523}

Merchants, with which the Cantonese doubtlessly were associated, had traditionally been a category distrusted by the literati in pre-modern China. Nevertheless, in late imperial China merchants could move into the gentry class without great difficulty.\textsuperscript{524} Money acquired through trade was invested in education which would allow the sons of wealthy merchants to pass the civil service examinations, and sometimes social status was gained through the purchase of academic degrees or official posts.\textsuperscript{525} However, since also the new educational system continued to teach the Confucian classics, the schoolchildren, of which many probably came from merchant families, were still schooled in a tradition which at its core despised profit, the very force behind making business.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, some of the early modern geography textbooks describe coastal people as, although intelligent and well-informed, rather...
untrustworthy, and it is possible that this idea, combined with the traditional image of the shrewd merchant, might have given the schoolchildren the preconception that the Cantonese (and for that matter other Chinese in coastal areas primarily associated with foreign trade) were somewhat unreliable and unpredictable in comparison with simple and naïve peasants in the Chinese inland.

In the classical work *Lüshi chunqiu* [Master Lü’s spring and autumn annals] those who have “abandoned the root and serve the branch” (舍本而事末), i.e. people who do not practice agriculture but engage in business and trade, are claimed to have “far-flung ambitions” (遠志) which is why “their minds never are at peace” (無有居心). Allegedly, their occupation has made them shrewd (好智) which is why they also are deceitful (多詐) and hence good at “bending laws and ordinances” (巧法令). The peasants, on the other hand, are “easy to use” (易用) due to their alleged simplicity (樸), and appear as something of an antithesis to the shrewd, tricky and unreliable merchants. Since moving hardly is an option for “unselfish” (少私義) peasants bound to their soil, they stay at the same place their entire lives, in contrast to merchants, who do not hesitate to run away in case of war.526 Behind the suspiciousness towards traders as an independent and mobile category, different from the peasants in that they were difficult to mastermind or exploit, obviously lurked the fear that they somehow might undermine the authority of the political establishment with their “far-flung ambitions”. Traditionally, the Chinese who sought their fortune abroad were commonly seen as unfilial because they had left their parents uncared for at home, or even as traitors, disloyal to the throne.527 Since the Cantonese were associated with foreign countries and emigration, the traditional negative image of the overseas Chinese may also have affected how the Cantonese at large were perceived. In *Lessons in Elementary Geography* from 1906 one finds the following account:

By custom [the Cantonese] are fierce, diligent and clever, and ready to take risks in order to attain great achievements. However, they superstitiously believe in spirits and gods and are quarrelsome and truculent. They were the first to be in contact with foreign countries so those who go overseas are most numerous.528

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526 *Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋: Shang nong 上農 (Sibucongkan, Shanghai, 1912). *Lüshi chunqiu* is an important anthology put together by Lü Buwei (dead 235 B.C.) who at the end of his life served as a chancellor of Qin.
Indeed, the schoolchildren may have related the alleged quarrelsome character of the Cantonese with what they had learned from Mencius, which pointed out “a quarrelsome and truculent disposition” (好勇鬨佹) as one of five examples of lack of filial piety.\(^{529}\) The activities of the anti-Qing societies in the South and in Chinese communities abroad, as well as the many lineage and village feuds which haunted the South, might of course have played a large role in shaping this image of the Cantonese as unreliable troublemakers. None of these sources of social disturbance are however discussed in any of the textbooks examined. In Advanced Geographical Readers, a later version of Lessons in Elementary Geography published in 1910, i.e. shortly before the revolution, the comments on the alleged superstitious and quarrelsome character of the Cantonese have been removed in the passage cited above. Now the single image of the Cantonese conveyed is that of a fierce, but clever and daring people. One can only guess at the reasons behind this revision, but it seems likely that the earlier version was seen as all too offensive to the Cantonese. It is of course also plausible that it was considered unnecessary, if not even unwise, to emphasize disloyal and rebellious tendencies in the southern provinces when the empire was in urgent need of unity and stability.\(^{530}\)

The image of the Cantonese is indeed multifaceted and complex, especially when one considers the implications behind the non-traditional ideas which were introduced in the modern geography textbooks. Given that the Han people are described as an ancient master race who once colonized China, the image of brave southerners who leave the continent for foreign lands may have completed the picture of Han expansion and Chinese Völkerwanderung towards virgin soil. That is, the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, having reached the south-eastern corner of the continent, carry on their victorious course, now heading for new land abroad. Despite their rather unrefined manners and defiant nature, the alleged energy and drive of the Cantonese may have proved that the Han people was still a

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\(^{529}\) “‘What the world commonly calls undutiful in a son falls under five heads,’ said Mencius. ‘First, the neglect of one’s parents through laziness of limb. Second, the neglect of one’s parents through indulgence in the games of po and yi and fondness for drink. Third, the neglect of one’s parents through miserliness in money matters and partiality towards one’s wife. Fourth, indulgence in sensual pleasures to the shame of one’s parents. Fifth, a quarrelsome and truculent disposition that jeopardizes the safety of one’s parents.’ Mencius, transl. D.C. Lau. Vol. 1, 173.

\(^{530}\) The simplified textbook Jianyi dili keben does not mention any negative qualities of the Cantonese either, but simply describes them as “diligent, smart and good at doing business” (民皆勤敏。善於經商。). The textbook also notes that many of those who leave China to engage in business abroad are of Cantonese origin, and hence follows the pattern of emphasizing the links between the Cantonese and the outer world. Tong Zhenzao, Jianyi dili keben, 11.
vigorouse people, fit to survive in a brutal world in which stagnated and weak people perish. From this perspective, an unyielding and daring mind-set was perhaps not necessarily identified with disloyalty and rebellion alone, but also with strength, expansion and (racial) survival.\textsuperscript{531} The alleged fierceness of the Cantonese does not necessarily stand for something negative only (contrary to the alleged fierceness of “barbarian” tribesmen of the southwest). Considering the ideology behind the new school system which aimed at implanting a sense of martial alertness in the schoolchildren, it is possible that the fierceness ascribed to the Cantonese is to be identified as an example of a natural fighting spirit, perhaps even associated with the desirable quality of “reverence for militancy” (尚武).\textsuperscript{532} From the government’s point of view, however, aggressiveness was of course only something positive if combined with loyalty to the ruling dynasty, which also was one of the mottoes of the new educational policy.

As we have seen from the examples above, the accounts on the Cantonese largely mirror traditional contempt and distrust towards people of low origin, traders and emigrants, but nevertheless convey a modern reinterpretation of the Cantonese as risk-taking, industrious, adventurous and enterprising entrepreneurs, travelling far and wide and spreading all over the world. The image of the Cantonese is hence also that of brave seafarers, mastering their own

\textsuperscript{531} The influential Cantonese intellectual Liang Qichao argued that China was weaker than the European powers due to “the Chinese lack of an enterprising [alt. progressive] and adventurous disposition” (中國人無進取冒險之性質), so Chinese consequently should develop these desirable qualities. The Chinese should particularly learn from the Anglo-Saxons who, in Liang’s view, at the time being were superior to all other “Teutons” because their “spirit of independence and self-reliance” (獨立自助之風) was more developed. As the ultimate proof of Anglo-Saxon superiority, Liang points at how the Anglo-Saxons, originally the natives of some isolated islands in the far north of Europe, have managed to “reproduce their race in large numbers in the two continents America and Australia” (殖民其種族於亞美利加、澳大利亞兩大陸) and “hail their national flag where the sun sets and where the sun rises, having secured authority over junctions and passages of strategic importance across the five continents and the four seas, and [thus remain] unchallenged under Heaven” (揚其國旗於日所出入處，鞏其權力於五洲四海衝要咽喉之地，而天下莫之能敵也）。Liang Qichao, “Jiu yousheng liebai zhi li yi zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai yi zheng xinmin zhi jieguo er lunji qufa zhi suoyi‖ [To illustrate the development of the new citizens through the principle of the survival of the fittest and accordingly discourse upon the propriety of taking example from others], in Yingbingshi quanji, 11. In the long run, however, Liang had faith in the Chinese ability of challenging the white man. In his “Lun Zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai” [On the future of the Chinese race], published in 1899, Zhang made the following statement: “Someday, in the twentieth century we Chinese will be the most powerful race in the world. … Who will have the actual power in days to come to open up the world? Our Chinese race! The whites are arrogant and not up to hardship. The blacks and browns are lazy and unintelligent. Therefore, except for us yellows, there is no race that could undertake such a task. North America and Australia today are areas for the white race’s colonies. South America and Africa will someday be areas for the yellow race’s colonies, … of that there is no doubt.” Cited in Pusey, 313.

\textsuperscript{532} Liang Qichao argued that the Chinese were in need of a Chinese equivalent to \textit{Bushidō}, the Way of the Warrior — the Japanese soul or spirit which, according to Liang, had been an important factor behind the successful accomplishments of the reforms in Japan. Liang, who disappointedly concluded that he had not been able to identify a Chinese soul in China, nevertheless saw the seed of Chinese \textit{Bushidō} in the fighting spirit apparent in Chinese villages at war with each other. This fighting spirit however needed to be complemented with patriotism in order to construct a Chinese “soul”. Pusey, 269-270.
destiny and heading for new land in search for new opportunities (and not that of abused “coolies” brought to white man’s land). In view of the firm belief in progress and the strong fear of stagnation which marked the thinking of the modern educators of the early 20th century, some of the qualities ascribed to the Cantonese (and the Fujianese for that matter - more about them below) were certainly interpreted as something very desirable which people in other parts of the Chinese Empire ought to draw inspiration from.

*Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu* draws clear parallels between an “adventurous [alt. risk-taking] disposition” (冒險性質) and international (maritime) trade. Allegedly, the old Greek and Roman seafarers who engaged in trade with distant land were in the possession of such a disposition, and their ancient civilizations also turned prosperous due to the wealth their trade generated.\(^533\) The alleged character of seafaring tradesman is described as a great advantage in the constant struggle for new markets, wealth and influence. That is to say, in order to compete efficiently, one must be ready to take more chances and proceed beyond one’s own safety zone. It is implied that Brits and Americans in modern times have gained the upper hand on the expense of China since the Chinese have not been adventurous and daring enough:

Today, Englishmen and Americans are of the most adventurous turn of mind, so they have taken the leading position in the whole world in the [ongoing] trade war. Our Chinese [people] are of the least adventurous disposition, so our trading routes do not reach as far as [those of] the Englishmen and the Americans. Only Fujianese and Cantonese people are of a rather adventurous disposition.\(^534\)

The image of the Fujianese is indeed analogous to that of the Cantonese. That is, they are also associated with the open sea, emigration and foreign trade, and appear as forward and as risk taking as the Cantonese. *Lessons in Primary Geography*, for example, gives credit to the Fujianese for their thrift and diligence, and comments upon their skills in trade, as well as the high numbers of them who leave for the South Sea Islands (i.e. Southeast Asia) to engage in business.\(^535\) *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu* praise the inhabitants of the port of Fuzhou, the capital of the province of Fujian, for the same reasons, but also observes their capacity of braving hardship and danger despite the harmful and humid climate in the province. Allegedly, the overwhelming part of the overseas Chinese in the South Sea Islands

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\(^{533}\) Hou Hongjian, *Zhongdeng dili jiaokeshu*, 67.

\(^{534}\) Ibid. (今英美人之性質，亦最為冒險。故以商戰稱雄於全球。我中國最少冒險性質。故貿易之道。不如英美人遠甚。惟福建廣東兩省人民，較有冒險。)


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have their roots in this city, and from the context it is understood that it is their supposed willingness to take risks which allows them to brave the waves and head overseas.\(^{536}\)

In the teaching manual the eulogy on the inhabitants of Fuzhou continues. After it has first been made clear that all Chinese are good businessmen, it is stated that the inhabitants of Fuzhou excel in both small and large scale trading, while people from Guangdong only are good at the former, and people from Ningbo only at the latter.\(^{537}\) The manual also observes that most overseas in the Japanese port of Nagasaki are from Fuzhou and “engage in trade and show off the high quality of their goods”.\(^{538}\)

However, as with the stereotyped Cantonese, the image of the Fujianese is not entirely positive. *Lessons in Elementary Geography*, which also comments upon the large numbers of Fujianese who leave for South East Asia, describes them as equipped with “a tough and daring disposition”, but adds that they also “have the evil custom of drowning female [infants]”.\(^{539}\) Although the latter statement has been removed in the later, revised version of the textbook, it nevertheless reveals that the seafaring Fujianese were not considered to be very refined in the first place (at least not by the compiler of this very textbook). There are however other examples which reveal how mobile southerners of low social standing were looked upon. In the teaching manual the Fujianese and Cantonese who have moved to the island of Hainan are claimed to have such evil customs that they have even ended up as pirates.\(^{540}\) One understands that it is not poverty that lies behind their piracy, but the lack of sound morals, which has allowed them to develop their violent manners, greed and disrespect for authorities. The Fujianese and Cantonese settlers are however not measured with the same standard as the troublesome and disobedient natives, the Li tribesmen, who are sorted under the two traditional categories of wild (sheng) and assimilated (shu) barbarians.\(^{541}\) The Fujian and Cantonese settlers are, despite their criminal activities, still considered to be more civilized than the Li ethnicity, but are nevertheless seen as something of degenerated rascals.

\(^{536}\) Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu*. Vol. 1, 68. (其地天氣溫濕，不宜於養生，而民俗勤儉，善貿易，能冒艱險，僑寓於南洋羣島，以福州人最多。)

\(^{537}\) Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguodili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa*. Vol. 1, 17. (中國人雖皆屬善於商務。然各有長，寧波人則巧於大貿易，廣東人則巧於小貿易，惟有福州人則兩盡其長。)

\(^{538}\) Ibid. (現在居留於日本長崎者。福州人為多。坐賈炫鬻，所在皆是。)

\(^{539}\) Xie Honglai, *Lessons in Elementary Geography*. Vol. 2, 2. (性情剛勇，有溺女之惡俗。) *Jianyi dilikeben*, on the other hand, only observes that many Fujianese engage in business on the South Sea Islands, but does not comment upon the supposed character of the Fujianese. Tong Zhenzao, *Jianyi dilikeben*, 7. (人民營業。多往南洋各島者。)

\(^{540}\) Guan Qi, *Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguodili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa*. Vol. 1, 24. (琼州居民。自閩粵遷去。其風俗不善，往往流為海賊。)

\(^{541}\) Ibid. (島中有黎族向稱化外。分生熟二種，極難治。)
due to their moral bankruptcy and total lack of refinement, which have turned them into seaborne bandits.

7.2 The city of Shanghai

There is no question about which part of China is considered to be most sophisticated, stylish and classy. It is the Yangzi valley where “the popular interest in refined ways flourishes the most”. From the passages on Shanghai, geographically located at the gateway to the Yangzi River and with close proximity to the sea, one understands that the city enjoys twofold blessing. That is, Shanghai stands out as a port of progress and modernity, embedded in an environment of utter sophistication and elegance. The element of water is, as we have seen above, considered to harbour the promise of development, and is associated with initiative and expansion in the sense that access to open water provides easy transportation. The dynamism in the coastal areas, identified with progress and modernity, was indeed seen as something of an antithesis to inland stagnation. At the same time, the areas along the lower course of the Yangzi were highly associated with the refinement of scholarly traditions and great wealth. None of the textbooks however suggest that the residents of Shanghai would have a distinct nature, character or disposition. Conceivably, the residents fell into the category of Chinese living south of the Yangzi River in the province of Jiangsu (see next chapter), but it is of course also possible that the Shanghainese were not considered to possess any distinct characteristics which singled them out as typically “Shanghainese”. After all, Shanghai had a comparatively short history as a metropolis, and attracted people from various paths of life and different parts of the empire. Whatever the case might have been, Shanghai is always described in particularly positive light, and the reader probably drew the conclusion that its inhabitants were as refined and modern as the city itself. Consider for example the following description of Shanghai in Lessons in Primary Geography:

542 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 103. (文風最盛)
543 In Japanese textbooks, the foreign trade in the open ports along the Chinese coast is commonly described as having a positive influence on the inhabitants. In an elementary geography textbook published in 1895, for example, the Shanghainese are said to be industrious and to associate with people from foreign countries, and the city people of Guangdong are given credit for being up-to-date with what is happening abroad, and for being smart businessmen. Matsushima K., Kinsei shōchirigaku: Gaikoku no bu, 35-36.
Since Shanghai started to have trading relations [with other countries], it has functioned as an important thoroughfare in the line of communications. Here we get onboard, and catch a far and wide sight [of Shanghai] through the boat’s window. The streets are wide and clean and bustling of noise. Suddenly we hear the toot from a steam whistle, and the boat leaves the shore. We follow the vast expanse of water northeast down the Huangpu River until we reach Port Wusong. There are western-styled batteries on both shores and for the convenience of boat traffic at night there is a lighthouse in the sea where the river pours out. Wusong was opened up as a commercial port in the twentieth year of the reign of the Guangxu Emperor [1894] and has very little commerce. There is a forty li long railroad which leads to Shanghai. There are recent plans of extending the railroad to Jiangning via Suzhou.

Various attributes of progress and development are mentioned in the passage; the allegedly clean and broad streets, the steam boat traffic, the modern defence system of the city, the lighthouse and the railroad. The text is illustrated with a picture of the Bund and the western-style buildings along the Huangpu River, in which new means of transportation (i.e. horse cabs and rickshaws) are also visible, and with one in which six Chinese men are seen operating one of the modern cannons at the batteries of Wusong. The foreign presence in Shanghai is not mentioned with a single word. The modernity of the city and its surroundings is on the other hand stressed all the more, and certainly the schoolchild could not avoid identifying the sea port of Shanghai with communication, wealth, strength and a brighter future.

544 Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 1, 1-2. (上海自通商以来。為我國交通要道。自此登舟。憑窗縱眺。街衢廣潔。人物喧闐。俄聞汽笛嗚嗚然。舟行離岸。徐沿黃浦而下。水流通。東北行三十里。抵吳淞口。兩岸建西式敞臺。海口有燈塔。以便船舶夜行。光緒二十年。闢為商埠。商業寥寥。有鐵道四十里。通上海。近擬接展路線。由蘇州而達江寗。)

545 The rickshaw (Jap. Jinrikisha 人力車), a light two-wheeled vehicle drawn by manpower, is a Japanese invention from the latter half of the 19th century. It likely drew inspiration from the horse-drawn carriage which recently had been introduced in Japan. The vehicle became increasingly popular and soon found its way to Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Hong Kong. Tsuchida Mitsufumi, “Rickshaw”, in Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 6: 311.

546 Jianyi dili keben similarly notes that Shanghai is a flourishing city open to foreign trade, that a railroad runs from Shanghai to Wusong, and that a new line soon will open between Shanghai and Nanjing. The text is illustrated with the same picture of the Bund. The heavy foreign presence in the city is passed by in silence. Tong Zhenzao, Jianyi dili keben, 5. The somewhat earlier textbook Shijie dili, on the other hand, follows the Japanese example of emphasising the contrasts between the foreign concessions and the rest of the city: “However, the city streets are unbearably narrow, but in the English, French and American concessions the streets are wide and grand”. Shijie dili, 114. (然街路狹隘。甚為可厭。若英法美之租界。則街道廣大。)

Meiji Japanese geography textbooks stress the foreign aspects of Shanghai, and usually emphasize foreign “superiority” contrasted with notions of Chinese “backwardness”. In Uchida Masao’s Yochi shiryaku (first published in 1870) one finds the following description of Shanghai: “As the leading trading market in China, this place has an import and export value which roughly corresponds to the value of the other twelve ports together. Silk, paper as well as furniture, general merchandise and foodstuffs are sold in the lines of stores in the conglomeration of streets. The Europeans’ houses are clean and neat, but the natives’ houses are all low, their streets narrow, and it is filthy in many places. The stench is especially terrible during the summer months, and is to no small extent harmful to people’s health. […] People visiting Shanghai for their first time can wonder at all the native odd manners and customs, the streets bustling with activity, the numerous vessels, the sound of the
description of Shanghai. Business is prosperous, the city streets are in good order, and the houses are lofty and spacious. The textbook does however note that the port is in foreign hands and divided into concessions, but does not discuss the matter any further.\textsuperscript{547} Similarly, also \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography} provides an image of Shanghai as a thoroughly civilized city, and point at all kinds of modern installations and facilities available in Shanghai, for example the net of horse cabs which criss-cross the city, running water, gas lamps and telephones. The textbook also mentions various manifestations of modern trade, industry and architecture, i.e. various new institutions and services, such as customs, police stations, post offices, banks, shipping agencies, and the many multi-storied buildings with ornamented fronts, which must have been clear to sight to everyone visiting the city.\textsuperscript{548} However, since the textbooks for the lower levels largely avoid discussing the presence of foreign concessions in the descriptions of Shanghai, the attributes of modernity solely stand out as typical for the city as a whole and not as significant for the zones under foreign administration alone. Very possibly, the educators behind the textbooks found it crucial to give the youngest schoolchildren a positive image of things related with progress, development and modernity, and therefore avoided topics which might tarnish the image of Shanghai. If the advancement of Shanghai was only associated with the foreign enclaves, it might perhaps cause the schoolchildren to relate modernization with foreign domination and extraterritorial rights, and by extension with inequality and national disgrace. This, one must assume, was probably something which the educators were eager to avoid.

The reluctance to discuss the foreign concessions in the passages on Shanghai by no means implies that the extraterritorial laws are a no-no issue in the textbooks. They are simply

\begin{quote}
Chinese officials beating their gongs, and women with their small bound feet passing by.” (支那貿易場ノ第一ニシテ大略此地ノ出入他ノ港ノ總數ニ匹敵ス帛類、紙類、及家具、百貨及食料等ヲ買ル市店相接シ道路雜沓甚シ欧羅巴人ノ家屋ハ清潔ナレモ國人ノ家屋ハ皆矮ク市街狹クシテ汚穢ナル処多ク夏月ハ殊ニ臭気甚シククテノ健康ヲ害シル少カラズ) Shibue Tamotsu, \textit{Kōtō shōgaku bankoku chiri}高等小學萬國地理 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1893), 87-88. In a Japanese geography textbook used in the secondary school, published in 1905, all the reader gets to know about Shanghai is that the city has 1500 Japanese residents, a Japanese general consulate, Japanese bank, post and telegraph services, and that Japanese steamboat lines connect Shanghai with other Chinese cities and Japan. \textit{Chūtō shinchiri kyōkasho}: Gaikoku no bu. Vol. 1, 31.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{547} Guan Qi, \textit{Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguodili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa}. Vol. 1, 8.
\textsuperscript{548} Xie Honglai, \textit{Lessons in Elementary Geography}. Vol. 1, 31-32.
discussed elsewhere, and not in connection with the eulogies on Shanghai as a modern city. In Lessons in Elementary Geography, for example, the hateful extraterritorial rights are dealt with in a separate chapter, which points at the injustice that foreigners living in China are under the jurisdiction of their homelands, while Chinese abroad always are under jurisdiction of the local authorities. The reason behind this unfair treatment is, as the textbook puts it, that “all countries see us as a country of low status in civilization, and therefore do not treat us as equals. This is a national shame. [We should] put an end to our disgrace.”549 Complete Geography, aimed at more mature middle school students, does however discuss the injustice of the extraterritorial rights in the passage on Shanghai. After the usual descriptions of Shanghai as a modern city, one finds the following observation: “The Westerners have a park beside the Huangpu River. Green leaves shade the whole area, and there are flowers [in bloom] all through the four seasons. It is only that people from our country are forbidden entry. Certainly the situation has become that of guests acting as hosts.”550 The textbook also points out that there are about 500 000 Chinese living in the three foreign concessions of Shanghai, but merely some seven thousand Europeans.551 The message is clear indeed. Shanghai truly belongs to the majority of Chinese residents in the city, and not to the small minority of “guests” who have started to take themselves liberties and act like they owned the city. Progress and modernity is something desirable, but not foreign domination and discrimination directed towards the Chinese people.

7.3 Southerners and Northerners

The province of Jiangsu at the lower reaches of the Yangzi River is held in the greatest esteem and is eulogized for its wealth and refinement. Lessons in Elementary Geography describes the province as something of a promised land of milk and honey, stating that the province is “the most affluent area in our country”.552 It is especially the part of Jiangsu south of the Yangzi River (where Shanghai, Nanjing and Suzhou are located) which is the focus of

549 Ibid. Vol. 2, 29. (是諸國以文明降等之國視我。而不以平等相待也。國之恥歟。抑吾之羞。)
550 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 106. (西人有公園。在黃浦江畔。緑陰滿地。四序皆花。惟禁我國人入內。蓋為主之勢耳。)
551 Ibid.
552 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1, 29. (為我國最饒福之區。)
attention: “The territory south of the river, despite being a narrow piece of land, nevertheless outshines all the other provinces in wealth and density of population. The quintessence of the entire [Chinese] state is concentrated here”.\textsuperscript{553} One understands that the heart of Chinese culture and refinement are to be found in this part of China, rather than in the Yellow River basin, where the centre of Chinese high culture once upon a time had been located.\textsuperscript{554} As for the inhabitants of Jiangsu, they are said to “have extravagant customs and exquisite clothes and food”.\textsuperscript{555} In Complete Geography the people of the provincial capital Jiangning (in 1912 the new Chinese capital under the name Nanjing – the Southern capital) are said to “have the custom of setting high value on the arts of the pen and have a liking extravagance, the exquisiteness of their clothes and food ranking the highest among all the provinces”.\textsuperscript{556} The people of Jiangsu’s neighbouring province Zhejiang (the area north of the city of Hangzhou belongs to the Yangzi River delta) “by custom have a liking for luxury and extravagance, and value scholarly learning and status”.\textsuperscript{557} Similar messages are repeated in textbooks for the youngest schoolchildren, where again we find notions on the superior qualities of the lower reaches of the Yangzi. Lessons in Primary Geography describes the advantageous physical geography of the Jiangsu province with its low topography and lack of high mountains and mountain ranges, but also the easy access to the waters of the Yangzi River and the Lake Taihu which provide convenient communications. The land is fertile, the population large, and the products of the province many. The inhabitants south of the Yangzi River are “cultivated and meek and have extravagant customs”, while people in the area north of the river are claimed to be “rather unrefined, militarily powerful and diligent in business, but less

\textsuperscript{553} Ibid., 31. (江以南。壤地褊小。而富庶甲於各行省。全國精華。咸萃於是。)
\textsuperscript{554} The section on Henan (one of the provinces in the Yellow River basin) in Lessons in Primary Geography states: “During feudal times of the Zhou dynasty, all the cultivated states were concentrated here.” Lessons in Primary Geography, Vol. 2, 2. (當周代封建時。文教之邦。咸萃於是。)
\textsuperscript{555} Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1. 31. (民俗奢華。服食精美。) In Shijie dili the city of Yangzhou is pointed out as especially refined and prosperous. The people are said to have a liking for luxuries and to be very lazy. The women’s outfits are pointed out as especially beautiful in the province. Shijie dili, 115.
\textsuperscript{556} Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 104. (民俗重文好奢、服食之美、為各省冠)
\textsuperscript{557} Ibid., 113. (風俗華侈、重儒貴重、) The inhabitants of the seaport Wenzhou (in the southern part of Zhejiang) are however described as “stubborn and brave and fond of fighting” in Lessons in Primary Geography.\textsuperscript{558} (民俗強勇好鬬) Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 3, 13. In Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu they are described as having an “agile and fierce disposition”, besides being “pugnacious in their actions” and having “many indecent halls of worship” (其民性質剽悍,動事争斗,每多淫祠). Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu, Vol. 1, 13. Shijie dili also describes the people of Wenzhou as particularly fierce, but also points out that foreign trade is undeveloped. The city streets of Wenzhou are however said to be broad and clean. Shijie dili, 118. Clearly people from this coastal city, far closer to the province of Fujian than to the Yangzi delta, were considered to share more common characteristics with their likes further down the coast than with the refined people of the lower Yangzi region.
able to stand hardship”.\textsuperscript{558} Here, the Yangzi River appears to be something of a geographical demarcation line between two different kinds of Chinese, i.e. a northern type and a southern type. The idea that the Yangzi River separated militaristic northerners from cultured southerners might very well be inherited from Southern Song (1126-1279), when territory north of the river was occupied by invading northerners of nomadic origin. Be it as it may, \textit{Zhongguo dili}, a geography textbook for the normal schools published in 1906, points out that there are certain differences between northerners and southerners, which are explained by the following historical background:

The characteristics of the Chinese people have constantly changed with the ages. Throughout the Yin dynasty people valued sincerity and during the Zhou dynasty scholarship; during the Qin dynasty militarism was honoured which is why people turned strong and fierce. During the Han dynasty when the Classics were held in high esteem the literati had high morals. […] After the Jin dynasty the North became inhabited by Manchurian and Mongolian races who lived together [with the Han population]. These were [alt. are] as a general rule warlike and vigorous whilst the Han people in the South were [alt. are] easy-going, timid and weak. The temperaments [of the Chinese] are consequently split into a southern and a northern branch.\textsuperscript{559}

Since the passage does not define “the North” or “the South”, one can only guess that the directions signify north and south of the Yangzi River. It is nevertheless clear that “Chineseness” was not seen as something stagnant and unchangeable, although the alleged difference between northerners and southerners appears to have been partly discussed from a racial perspective. The southerners were obviously considered to be refined and cultivated, but on the other hand all too weak, while the alleged martial strength and energy of northerners was to be understood as something positive, considering the extent to which the honouring of a militaristic spirit was encouraged in the new schools at the time. The textbook does however not fail to note that the customs in the north and in the south are more or less the same, and that all Chinese compatriots share the good qualities of being hardworking and

\textsuperscript{558} \textit{Lessons in Primary Geography}. Vol. 1, 5. (江以南民情文弱。俗尚奢靡。江以北民多樸僿。武力相高。營業尤勤。而恆苦不給。) Also \textit{Jianyi dili keben} remarks on the extravagance (華侈) of the people living south of the Yangzi River in the province of Jiangsu. Tong Zhenzao, \textit{Jianyi dili keben}, 5. According to the lower primary school textbook \textit{Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu}, people living in the vicinity of Lake Taihu (south of the river) are good businessmen, and people in the plentiful and populous Changshu set great value to extravagance, and have, together with the nearby people of Suzhou, the best food and the most beautiful clothes in China. Guan Qi, \textit{Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xinjiaokeshu}, Vol. 1, 10. (農產豐盈, 民俗富庶, 故習尚奢華, 與蘇州民俗相同, 服食之美, 冠於各處)

\textsuperscript{559} Xu Nianci, \textit{Zhongguo dili}, 31. (中國人民之氣質。恆因時代而變遷。殷尚質。周尚文。秦尚武斷而民強悍。漢崇經學而士多氣節。[…] 然晉以來。北方為滿州蒙古等人種所雜居。頗有武勇活潑之概。南方之漢種人。優柔無餘。其性質遂有南北之分。)
thrifty, having high ideals, besides being good at running businesses. If northerners and southerners were described as all too different from each other, the students might be given the politically incorrect idea that national unity was impossible, which would have been considered as hampering the efforts of strengthening China as an entity.

In his essay “Zhongguo dili dashi lun” (General Outlines of Geography) of 1902 Liang Qichao argued that the cultures in the valleys of both the Yellow and the Yangzi rivers came to typify things Chinese from the Han dynasty and onwards, which was a shift from the dominance of the Yellow River valley as the single embodiment of China. Liang observes that the Pearl River valley later also became an influential area along the development of the regions in the far south, which is why there nowadays are three dominant geographical zones which form Chinese identity. Liang explains that the Central part of China (i.e. the Yangzi River valley) was referred to as “the South” before the Pearl River valley emerged as a powerful region, and emphasizes that the term must be understood from this historical setting. That is, although occupying the central parts of China of today, the inhabitants of the Yangzi valley are, so to speak, the Southerners of ancient times, while the people of the Pearl River valley are the Southerners of the present. The southern type discussed in the passage cited above does not resemble the stereotype picture of the Cantonese or the Fujianese, but rather of the supposed type inhabiting the Yangzi valley. Most likely, it is also this latter category which the textbook compiler had in mind when he described the alleged qualities of Chinese southerners.

One can generally discern three types of Han-Chinese, rather than just northerners and southerners. Complete Geography, for example, makes the following observation:

Temperament: [The Chinese] are mild tempered, frugal and able to endure hard labour. They are diligent in making money, devoted to their parents and have a love for the antiqued, [but are on the other hand] self-important and make light of others. In the Central part [of China] there remain numerous ancient customs. People conservatively stick to old customs and lack an enterprising spirit. They familiar themselves with literary works and have refined interests. People in the Southern part are agile, rude, tough, bold and capable of great achievements. They have since long traded [with foreign countries] and therefore have a firm grasp of circumstances abroad. People in the Northern part are simple and modest and have dignified manners, but are not as good at shouldering hard work as people from the central or the southern parts of the country.

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560 Ibid.
561 Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo dili dashi lun”, in Yingbingshi quanji, 653.
562 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 69 (性情 溫和、節儉而耐勞、勤於貨殖、孝親好古、重己輕人、中部多存古風、墨守舊習、乏進取之氣、習為詞章、有閑雅之致、南部人、敏捷慷慨、膽大有為、以通商久、故多識外情、北部之人、質朴厚重、其任勞苦、不如中南二部)
Much in this passage cited above is apparently borrowed from the Japanese geographer Yazu Masanaga, who in his *Chūchirigaku* (Intermediate geography) expresses strikingly similar ideas in such similar wordings that one only can come to this conclusion (if not the passages are based on a third, common source). The passage indeed exemplifies the extent to which Chinese educators were influenced by Meiji Japanese images of China in their attempt to define their own nation. However, although the descriptions of the inhabitants of Central China are almost identical in the two textbooks, there are major differences in how northerners are described. In Yazu’s accounts, the Chinese population in the north is, due to an alleged partly Manchu background, of a “simple, straight and unrefined character” (朴直粗野). That is to say, while Yazu’s partially Manchu northerners are of a frank, simple but rather rough nature, the Chinese northerners described in *Complete Geography* appear as somewhat upright and solemn puritans, who are nevertheless less able to stand hard labour than other Chinese. Both textbooks claim southerners to be rather daring and well informed about foreign affairs. However, Yazu notes that the many and long-established foreign contacts have made them less stubborn than other Chinese, and moreover claims that the population of China is lacking in national unity due to ethnical and lingual diversity, issues which *Complete Geography* does not touch upon. It can be noted that *Complete Geography* does not specify exactly which provinces that define the areas of North China, Central China respectively South China. In Yazu’s textbook, however, the distinctions are very clear.

One can of course only guess at the reason for why the image of northerners as depicted by Yazu was rejected in *Complete Geography*. Perhaps his description of northerners was considered all too disparaging towards the Manchus. Maybe the claims of Manchu influence on the North Chinese folk character, allegedly caused by intermixture between Han and Manchu, were considered inappropriate or wrong, and therefore replaced with something

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563 Yazu Masanaga, *Chūchirigaku*, 61-62. Similar distinctions between northerners, southerners and the inhabitants of the central parts of China are also found in other Meiji Japanese textbook. Consider the following notion in a Japanese geography textbook for the secondary school, published in 1905: “Among the Han people, those in North China are at a culturally low level, value simplicity and have a weak desire for extravagances, but the people in the central and southern parts have extravagant manners and customs, and their intelligence is well developed. Especially the Cantonese are of a brisk and adventurous disposition, and have the most sumptuous customs.” (漢族中北支那の住民は、文化の度低く、質朴簡素を尚び、奢侈の念薄けれども、中部及び廣東地方の人民は、習華美、民智發達す。殊に廣東人は活潑敢為、風俗最も豪華なり。) *Chūtō shinchiri kyōkasho: Gaikoku no bu* Vol. 1, 45.

564 Yazu Masanaga, *Chūchirigaku*, 62. In the chapter on Manchuria, the Tunguses (i.e. the Manchus) are described as rather fierce and daring (慓悍) and of a rather large bodily constitution. They are said to have intermixed with the Han in China Proper after their seizure of power. Yazu Masanaga, *Chūchirigaku*, 70.

565 Ibid., 62.

566 According to Yazu’s definitions, Zhili, Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Shaanxi and Gansu constitute North China, while Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan form Central China, and Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan form South China. Ibid., 47-56.
more suitable. Likely, Complete Geography’s picture of Northerners largely reflects the image of people from Shandong, the province just north of Jiangsu. Lessons in Elementary Geography, compiled by the same educator as that of Complete Geography, claims the people of Shandong to be equipped with “an imposing physique” and to customarily be “honest and sincere”.567 It can however be observed that the textbook Geography of the Chinese Empire provides a rather different picture of Shandong people: “Their ways are fierce, [but] they are diligent and frugal and put their strength into farming. There are however remnants of wicked religious sects [in the province] which is why uprisings time and again break out there.”568

7.4 The Northern capital

The rulers of Qing, the Manchus, where the descendants of tribal, nomadic peoples from the great plains beyond the Great Wall, and were, although proud of their non-Han Chinese heritage, sensitive to anything which might be interpreted as alluding to their alleged barbarity.569 According to Western ideas which entered China during the end of the Qing dynasty, nomadism was a lower stage of social evolution. From this perspective, nomadism was hence seen as less “civilized” than economies based on agriculture. The new ideas on social development might very well have strengthened already existing traditional conviction that the Han-Chinese were culturally superior to the peoples beyond the Great Wall. On the other hand, the imperial family in the Chinese capital was, though Manchu, the pivot in the Confucian state, and hence by extension the utter manifestation of the Middle Kingdom, if not even of civilization itself. Nevertheless, all the textbooks examined, although full of comments on the alleged characteristics of the Han people, are rather sparse in their information on the ruling Manchus. However, the textbooks can still provide us with glimpses of the imperial capital, where the most powerful Manchus resided. In Jianyi dili keben, for example, there is the following portrayal of the capital:

568 Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 18. (風俗強悍。勤儉力農。然有邪教之遺孽。非時暴動焉。)
569 Harrison, 33.
The capital is located in Shuntianfu in Zhili. The city walls and moats are imposing and strong. Originally it was the ancient capital of the former Ming dynasty, but the [present] dynasty which rules the nation follows this tradition. [The city] faces the Bohai Bay in the East and the Great Wall in the North with topographical features which makes it easy to protect. It consists of two parts: the Inner and the Outer city. Most of the bannermen and the relatives of the emperor live in the Inner City. Departments, institutes and government offices are also located here. The various foreign embassies are located in the south-eastern corner. It is a special ward where [foreign nations] have stationed troops for self-protection. This is indeed a big disgrace to our nation! In the Inner City lies the Imperial City. Here within is in turn the Forbidden City located. The Forbidden City has a circumference of six li. The Emperor has his residence here. The central and northern part of the Outer City is where business people gather. Trade is thriving and prosperous.570

The situation with foreign troops occupying a centrally located part of the imperial capital was for obvious reasons considered to be a disgrace for China. In the lower primary school textbook Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu one finds a rather similar (although somewhat more detailed) description of the capital. Beijing is portrayed as a prosperous city, easily accessed by train or boat, and as a metropolis where people from all sorts of backgrounds gather. The streets on the outer side of the Zhengyangmen gate, where the railway station is situated, are said to be broad and in good order, and the general impression given of the city (and its vicinity) is that of a well organized and beautiful capital.571 Also this textbook points at the present situation with the foreign legation as problematic and unfair:

Within the Inner City, in the south-eastern corner, lies the Dongjiaomin alley [the Legation Quarter] where various countries have their embassies and have stationed troops for their protection. The people of our nation are not allowed to settle here and live together [with the foreigners].572

Although the textbooks do not hide the fact that the capital was a very segregated city, the ruling Manchu elite and the Han Chinese majority living in different parts of the city, it is the foreign diplomats and their armed guards who are depicted as intruders that have taken themselves liberties, and not the Manchus.573 In Lessons in Primary Geography, which also

570 Tong Zhenzao, Jianyi dilikeben, 2. (京師在直隸之順天府。城池雄壯。本前明舊都。國朝因之。東臨渤 海。北倚長城。形勢雄固。凡內外二城。旗藉貴戚。多居內城。部院衙署亦在焉。各國使館。則於城之 東南隅。特區一界。任其屯兵自衛。實我國大恥也。内城中有皇城。其中復有紫禁城。禁城周圍六里。 皇居在焉。外城中北一帶。商賈所集。貿易繁盛。)
571 Guan Qi, Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu. Vol. 1, 1-3. One of the illustrations to the chapter on Beijing depicts a train (probably in order to present a modern image of the capital) while other illustrations, picturing imposing buildings in traditional style, enforce the grandeur of the city.
572 Ibid., 2. (內城東南隅有東交民巷。各國公使館在焉。駐兵防守。我國人民。不得雜居其間。)
573 The division of the city into one Chinese and one Manchu town are commonly commented upon in Meiji Japanese textbooks. In a secondary textbook published in 1893, one finds the following accounts: “The city
comments upon the injustice in not allowing Chinese to reside in the Legation Quarter, it is made clear that the Manchus also are Chinese (huaren), and are treated as unjustly as the Han-Chinese by the foreigners:

In the south-eastern part of the city, hospitals, banks and the customs office have been established. [The area] is enclosed on all sides by a long wall. Troops have been stationed for protection, and an opening has been cut open in the wall for passage. Chinese, no matter Manchu or Han, are not allowed to settle within the quarter. 574

Except for the comments upon the unwelcome presence of foreign troops in Beijing, the textbooks generally emphasize the splendour and majesty of the capital. Lessons in Elementary Geography (1906) do however mention a less flattering aspect of the city:

Jingshi [i.e. Beijing] is the national capital [lit. “the best region”]. Officials and merchants gather here, which is why it is very bustling and prosperous. But although the streets are broad and wide, they are rugged and uneven. When the weather is clear the roads are dusty, and when it rains they are muddy. When the residents commute by means of carts they all find it very troublesome. 575
Apparently, this disrespectful way of describing the imperial capital was not accepted by the authorities. In the later version of the textbook from 1910, the references to the bad roads have been replaced with still another eulogium on the splendour of Beijing: “Officials and merchants gather here, which is why it is very bustling and prosperous. The streets are broad and wide and the city stands out as the crown of all the provinces.”

As in the case with the Shanghainese, none of the textbooks suggests that the people of Beijing have any particular nature or temperament which sorts them out from other Chinese.

### 7.5 The Chinese inland

The textbooks are comparatively sparse on information about the Han Chinese population in the provinces located in the interior of China. Of all the textbooks examined, Complete Geography gives the most extensive descriptions of the inhabitants of the Chinese inland. In this textbook, the centrally located province of Hubei stands out as a centre of modern learning with its many modern schools and newly established teachers’ college, and the province hence comes out as progressive, rather than conservative. This of course runs contrary to the idea that the central part of China is rather old-fashioned and hostile to changes, which is also expressed in the same textbook. The people in the province are nevertheless claimed to have a taste for the extravagant, which otherwise accords with the general image of the people of the lower Yangzi region.

The ways of the inhabitants of the province of Sichuan, further up the river, are usually passed by in silence. This is somewhat surprising, considering the fact that Sichuan is one of the biggest provinces of China, with a very large population. Complete Geography perhaps gives us a clue of how the inhabitants of this inland province were looked upon during the early 20th century: “People are by custom frugal, and are naturally disposed for cultivating lands and growing crops, but are also good at running businesses”. Beyond Hubei, the flamboyant and scholarly type found further down the river seems to be replaced by a more frugal and simple type. The farther one departs from the Yangzi valley and heads inland, the

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577 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 119-120.
578 Ibid., 119. (風俗繁華)
579 Ibid., 126. (民俗節儉、性宜耕作、而善營業。)
less refined the inhabitants appear. This is especially evident when one leaves the plains for
the “barbarian” highlands: “In the western part [of Sichuan] there are numerous mountains
where the Liao and [other] barbarians live side by side, and it is nothing but an area in the
outer fringes of civilization”. Similarly, the region in the southern part of the centrally
located province of Hunan, bordering the south-western provinces of Guangxi and Guizhou,
was also looked upon as “barbarian”: “In the mountains along the southern border there are
Yao and Miao people. They are the remnants of an ancient people, who also live scattered
amongst our race [in the province]”. As for the Han Chinese inhabitants of the province,
they are claimed to be of “an honest and simple disposition”. Generally, the Han Chinese
inlanders emerge as more uncomplicated, down-to-earth and economical in comparison with
the forceful and vigorous people along the south coast and the extravagant people of the lower
Yangzi region. The inhabitants of Hunan’s neighbouring province Jiangxi, for example, are
said to “value agriculture and reading” and to “have the custom of being thrifty and
temperate”. Also the descriptions of the inhabitants of the inland provinces in the north
seem to follow a similar pattern. For example, the people of the province of Shaanxi, which
borders Sichuan in the south, are said to “have simple and straight ways”. Although it is
made clear that the cradle of Chinese civilization is located in the inner provinces of the
Yellow River valley, the inhabitants always appear less sophisticated than the people of the
rich Yangzi delta. The poor inland province of Shanxi is given a considerable amount of
space in the textbooks in comparison with the other northern inland provinces. Complete
Geography explains that the poor quality of the soil and severe drought have made life hard
for the people, who have taken up poppy-farming to make a living. As for the inhabitants of
the province, the textbook states:

By custom [the inhabitants of Shanxi] like to be careful with their spending and are skilled in profit making. The
bigger half of all the banking facilities in every province has been set up by people from this province, and with

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580 Ibid. (西方山嶺叢錯，蠻獠雜處，不啻化外．)
581 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 2. (南境山中。有猺人苗人。為上古遺民。亦與我
族雜處。)
582 Ibid. (性質誠朴。)
583 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 111. (民重耕讀，風俗儉約。) In the section on Jiangxi in Jianyi dili
kebenshu the inhabitants of the province are said to be “simple and frugal” (朴儉). Tong Zhenzao, Jianyi dili
kebenshu, 6.
584 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1, 25. (風俗朴直。)
585 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 94.

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the exception for the [international] trade in the ports, they are more or less in the command of all money transactions throughout the whole country.\textsuperscript{586}

From the context it is understood that the alleged economical vein of inland people is due to the low production of the land. However, the people of Shanxi appear just a bit too business-minded, perhaps even stingy and profit-loving. In Lessons in Elementary Geography one finds almost identical comments upon the ways of the people of Shanxi.\textsuperscript{587} In this textbook, however, one also finds some remarks on the activities of the “Boxer bandits” in the province: “During the Boxer Rebellion [the rebels] murdered foreigners. They were extremely cruel and sadistic. Today [the people of Shanxi] are slightly more enlightened”.\textsuperscript{588} These observations have, however, been erased in the revised version of the textbook, perhaps because they were considered to be too offensive to the people from this region, or perhaps because the government did not want the students to dwell too much on the anti-foreign rising in the year 1900, at which time not only were many missionaries killed, but also the legations at Beijing were besieged.

The negative image of Shanxi is also apparent in the teaching manual Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa. The section on the province first sums up the history of human evolution, and then, against this background, discusses the custom of living in “caves”, allegedly common in the eastern part of the province. People in this region, at least regarding this practice, are obviously considered to have stagnated at a very early stage in the human evolution:

In remote antiquity when people lived in caves and were of meagre intelligence, they did not engage in the building of houses. Later, when they entered the age of nomadism, after first having gone through the hunting and fishing age, the making of tents became common. When man progressed from nomadism to agriculture and became domiciled, humans started to build houses, though these at first were still very simple and nothing but crude huts with straw thatched roofs and walls made of reed and clay. During later ages when technology developed, architecture gradually reached perfection. In places such as the eastern border regions of Shanxi,

\textsuperscript{586} Ibid., 95. (風俗好儉，善於營利，各省匯票號，大都為本省人所設，除通商口岸外，幾握全國轉移貨币之權。)
\textsuperscript{587} Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1, 22. Lessons in Primary Geography also offers a similar, but somewhat abbreviated description of the people of Shanxi: “The people are skilled in profit making. The banking facilities set up in every province are for the most part the businesses of people from Shanxi.” Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 2, 9. (人民善於營利，各行省所設匯票號，大都山西之業。)
\textsuperscript{588} Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1, 23. (拳匪之亂，戕殺外人。備極慘酷。今則稍稍開通矣。)
where the majority of the people live in the mountains, it is very difficult to build houses. Therefore the custom of living in caves has remained to this day and has not yet undergone any change.\textsuperscript{589}

Although Shanxi people with assets are given some credit for being good at establishing and running banks and other businesses in other provinces, where they settle for many years in order to make a living,\textsuperscript{590} the general picture of the inhabitants in this inland province is that of absolute backwardness, decadence and indolence:

The province of Shanxi was originally the land of the state of Jin in the Epoch of Spring and Autumn, and is therefore also referred to as “the province of Jin”. It has a high topography and a continental climate. The people are very lazy and do not work on a regular basis and have in recent time started to suffer the evils of opium. Their laziness is taken to extreme heights. They are fond of opera. This inclination is particularly extreme in the vicinity of the city of Taiyuan, where opium lamps and beds have been installed in the theatres so people can smoke while listening. Women depend on their men for their survival and contribute even less to any source of revenue.\textsuperscript{591}

The Han Chinese living in Gansu and Qinghai, located further westwards, are given little attention in the textbooks. It is, however, understood that these Chinese are of a simple kind, living in frontier areas heavily exposed to “barbarian” ways.\textsuperscript{592}

\textsuperscript{589} Guan Qi, \textit{Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa}. Vol. 3, 12. (上古穴居而處。民智淺陋。不事建築。後世由佃漁時代。變為遊牧時代。則天幕之制乃興。復由遊牧進而為農業。民有常處。始營宮室。然其初甚鄙陋。以草為蓋。以蘆為壁。以土為墻。如是而已。後世工業進化。宮室建築。漸臻完備。若山西東境。民多山居。建築艱難。故穴居之俗。至今未革。)

\textsuperscript{590} Ibid., 13. (山西人之有資本者。長於出外營上。累年不歸。匯號字號以及大宗商務。每有山西人經理其事。能力頗足。亦屬特性。)

\textsuperscript{591} Ibid., 12. (山西人之有資本者。長於出外營上。累年不歸。匯號字號以及大宗商務。每有山西人經理其事。能力頗足。亦屬特性。)

\textsuperscript{592} It can be observed that Liang Qichao also held the people of Shanxi in low esteem, and made the following remark on Shanxi in his essay “Zhongguo dili dashi lun” (General Outlines of Chinese Geography): “Shanxi corresponds to the three Jin states of ancient time. The region had since long shared border with the Hu tribes, who most frequently carried out pillage raids [in the region], which explains why [the inhabitants of Shanxi came to develop] their fortitudinous ways and their taste for accumulating [wealth, this to an extent that they] up to this day still can outshine [the rest of] China in business. However, [people from Shanxi] are unrefined and unenlightened, and today there are still people who live in caves.” Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo dili dashi lun”, in \textit{Yingbingshi quanji}. 664. (山西古三晉也;夙邊胡,踐掠最數,故其俗堅忍而好蓄藏,至今猶能以商豪於中國;然朴塞固陋,今猶有穴居者。)

\textsuperscript{592} The western margins of China proper, largely populated by peoples from the Inner Asian Zone, will be discussed more thoroughly in section 7.9.
7.6 The population of the far northeast

Although there are few accounts of the Manchu ethnicity in Chinese textbooks, some of them include short passages on the inhabitants of Manchuria which tend to depict the population in this northern part of the empire as somewhat rough and unrefined. *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian* gives a very brief but rather disparaging description of the allegedly primarily Tungus population of Manchuria. The region is pointed out as being inhabited by bearded bandits and lacking in civilized ways (“scholarly learning does not prosper”). *Complete Geography*, on the other hand, acknowledges that the native inhabitants of Manchuria are of Tungus origin but remarks that the region is nowadays primarily inhabited by Han Chinese immigrants, so that Chinese has also become the dominant language. Most of the common people are said to combine hunting and fishing with agriculture, while the bannermen are “good at shooting, value righteousness and usually put their faith in Buddhism”. *Lessons in Elementary Geography* also claims that the native population in the far north is of Tungus origin, although it is emphasized that they do not differ significantly from the Han majority in customs and language. The overall picture given of the “Three North Eastern Provinces” (Dong sansheng 東三省 i.e. Heilongjiang, Jilin and Fengtian) in Manchuria is, however, that of a poverty-stricken region which has suffered from the calamities of bandits and war in recent time. *Geography of the Chinese Empire* gives the most negative image of the inhabitants of Manchuria. The majority of the people are not explicitly pointed out as Tungus or Chinese but as a people of an undefined mixed heritage of a predominantly Han Chinese stock of Zhili and Shanxi origin, intermixed with Manchu and Mongol elements. The population is described as lazy opium smokers, stuck in alcoholism and superstition. All men and women above the age of ten are said to be addicted to the local spirits made from sorghum, and the local Mongols and Manchus allegedly refrain from taking medicine when ill, instead putting their faith in

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593 Chen Qiansheng, *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*. Vol. 1, 9. (文學不興)
594 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 80. (善射·好義·俗佛教)
595 Xie Honglai, *Lessons in Elementary Geography*. Vol. 1, 12. *Shijie dili* also stresses the similarities between the Manchus and the Han population of Manchuria: “The Manchus belong to the Tungus race, but the Liaodong area has since ancient times experienced Han immigration [to such an extent that] today, regarding the population of Manchuria, nine out of ten are Han people. The Manchus are extremely few, and besides, the small minority of native Manchus have intermixed with the Han people and communicate in Chinese, and their customs do not differ significantly from [Chinese ways] either”. (滿洲人屬通古斯種。然遼東之地，漢人自古移住。今以人口言之。滿洲住民，十之九為漢人。滿洲人極少。且少數土著之滿洲人，與漢人相混。通用漢語，風俗亦無大差。)* Shijie dili*, 127.
Buddhist or Shamanist practices.\textsuperscript{596}

The image of the inhabitants in this northern part of the Empire, the very heartland of the Manchus, appears, as we have seen above, to be predominantly negative. Direct and openly critical remarks on the Manchus (or Tungus) are, however, extremely rare. However, some of the textbooks do suggest that the Manchus and Mongols share a common ancestry, which to some extent might have cast the Manchus in a bad light, considering the negative image of the Mongols as primitive nomads. Geography of the Chinese Empire, for example, refers to Western anthropology and explains that the Manchus and the Mongols alike are of Tungus ancestry. It is also observed that Manchus and Mongols place their infants on the \textit{kang}, which is allegedly why they become flat-headed. The Manchus, however, are claimed to lack the ash-grey eye colour said to be found among certain Mongol tribes. Zhongguo dili also claims the Tungus have the same physical appearance as the Mongols, although with the exception that fewer of them have grey eyes.\textsuperscript{597} The textbook gives a rather thorough historical account of peoples and dynasties in the north with an alleged Tungus background, and it is explained that the present dynasty is of Tungus origin. As for the characteristics of the Tungus, it is only noted that they are “the most complex people”.\textsuperscript{598} Notes on New Geographical Readers explains that both the Mongols and the Manchus originated from the Eastern Hu tribes and once lived on the eastern side of the Baikal Lake in Siberia,\textsuperscript{599} but it is otherwise very sparse in information on this ethnicity.

\section*{7.7 The Mongols}

If little written about the Manchus in the textbooks examined, there are more and lengthier accounts of the Mongols. The Mongols tend to be depicted as if they had lost all their former dignity, and the portrayals of the glory of the Mongols in bygone days are commonly contrasted with accounts of their present situation. Geography of the Chinese Empire, for example, discusses how the once so proud and freedom-loving Mongols have nowadays lost their strength, initiative and fighting spirit:

\textsuperscript{596} Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 3, 173.
\textsuperscript{597} Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 29.
\textsuperscript{598} Ibid. (此族最複雜)
In ancient times [the Mongols had] a prevailing spirit of independence. Their principles of freedom and equality, their beautiful custom of tolerance [towards non-Mongols] and their character of bravery in battle once allowed them to gain supremacy over all surrounding peoples [alt. races]. Nowadays they are on a stumbling retreat. Having once experienced a setback they have been unable to goad themselves up. They are criticised for being superstitious, for having the habit of overeating [lit. eating in bed], for being lazy and dirty and so on by modern explorers. It is very deplorable indeed.  

This passage seems to have been borrowed from *Shijie dili*, which presents an almost identical description of the Mongols that also projects the liberal virtues of independence, freedom and equality on the Mongols of ancient times. At least partially, *Geography of the Chinese Empire* actually seems to blame the Qing government for the alleged degeneration of the Mongols. The Mongols have supposedly been exposed to the influence of Chinese authority and Lamaism to such a degree that they have altered their old ways. This idea was probably also borrowed from *Shijie dili*, which uses very similar wording, but is more specific about how the government employs religion in order to control the peoples of the Empire. According to *Shijie dili*, the Qing government upholds Lamaism in order to influence and thereby reduce the fierceness of the Mongols, and protects Confucianism to win the hearts of the Han population, while it cracks down on Islam and the White Lotus Sect. The government reveals a more permissive attitude towards other, less subversive religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Daoism. The notion that the Qing government used Confucianism to win the trust of the Han Chinese majority is not encountered in any other textbook examined. As pointed out by Borthwick, the department which certified textbooks

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600 Tu Ji, *Geography of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, 11. (昔日獨立不覊之氣象。自由平等之主義。及寬以容眾之美風。勇於戰斗之氣質。嘗對於四圍亞細亞之種族。而立於至高無上之位置者。今則跼蹙退步。一蹶不能自振。從以迷信、蓐食、怠惰、不潔、等習。使近世探險者據為口實。良可慨矣。)

601 *Shijie dili*, 76. (蓋獨立不覊之氣象。自由平等之主義。及寬以容眾之美風。勇於戰斗之氣質。嘗對於四圍亞細亞之種族而立於無上優等之位置。烟消影滅。不可復睹。郤以迷信。大食。怠惰。不潔等。使近世探險家據為評語焉。良可慨已。)

602 The idea that Lamaism somehow has deprived the Mongols from their martial and daring spirit is also encountered in Meiji Japanese textbooks. In a Japanese textbook for the secondary school published in 1901, the Mongols, who allegedly once were famous for their “fierceness and valour in arms” (剽悍雄武), are claimed to have been weakened by the Qing rulers by the means of Lamaism, which is why their wild spirit of ancient times has been held back. However, the textbook also notes that the Manchus, once upon a time allegedly called “the strength of the North” (北方の強), nowadays have assimilated Han-Chinese culture to such a degree, besides having given up their own language in favour of Chinese, that they have lost their old identity. Ono Masayoshi, *Chūtō shinchiri*: *Gaikoku no bu*, 37, 39. Japanese Meiji textbooks also tend to express reverence for the primitive but on the other hand courageous and tough northern warriors of ancient times. In an elementary geography textbook from 1894, for example, the peoples of Mongolia and Manchuria are given as examples of “incomparably brave and unyielding northerners” (剛勇無比ノ北人) beyond the Great wall, who have managed to invade and subdue China (here referred to as *Kando*, or the land of Han). *Bankoku chiri shoho* 萬國地理初步 [A beginner’s course in world geography] (Tokyo: Shūeidō, 1894). Vol. 1, 9.

603 *Shijie dili*, 76.
once censured a geography textbook because it made the politically incorrect observation that the Manchus supported Confucianism in order to win the sympathies of the Han people.\textsuperscript{604} Apparently, it was more acceptable to imply that the Qing authorities controlled the Mongols by means of Lamaism.

Although lamenting the alleged Mongol loss of vitality and ancient virtues, \textit{Geography of the Chinese Empire} nevertheless expresses pride over the Han Chinese recapture of Chinese soil during the Ming dynasty, when the Mongols were said to have been driven out into the desert. This textbook, eager to remark that the Han Chinese are also basically full of “military prowess and bravery” (武勇), also reminds the reader how the Han people once drove away the Miao people, besides mentioning the alleged golden age of Han-Chinese strength: the Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties.\textsuperscript{605} After having first boosted the moral of the reader by these references to former Chinese glory and military strength, the textbook criticises the Chinese obsession with civil affairs, which is said to have resulted in physical weakness. The criticism of the physically poor condition of the Chinese is contrasted with a portrayal of the Mongols as physically extremely fit, and it is noted that both men and women alike can ride and are fond of horseracing. It is also claimed that the Mongols, although perhaps not very tall, are usually sturdier and stronger than most Europeans (the same observation is made in \textit{Shijie dili}).\textsuperscript{606}

The new educational policies promoted exercise and encouraged a “martial spirit” (shangwu 尚武), and the description of the allegedly physically fit Mongols was certainly aimed at spurring the students to embrace the new ideals of militarism and physical education and to understand the importance of becoming a master of both the pen and the sword. If only the Chinese were to pay more attention to the importance of physical exercise and valour in arms, the textbook seems to imply, the Chinese would have the potential of becoming as strong as the Mongols, thereby outshining the Europeans in physical strength.

\textit{Chudeng xiaoxue Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu}, which also comments on the riding skills of both men and women, give credit to the Mongols for their perseverance. It is claimed that, thanks to this strength, the Mongols of Genghis Khan once upon a time could advance behind the Congling Mountains towards Europe. However, it is concluded that the Mongols have lost their vigour of bygone days as a result of their devotion to Lamaism, which has made them

\textsuperscript{604} Borthwick, 75.
\textsuperscript{605} Tu Ji, \textit{Geography of the Chinese Empire}. Vol. 2, 10.
\textsuperscript{606} Ibid., 11.
The idea that the Mongols have been exposed to the harms of Lamaism is repeated in the section on the Tsetsen khanate in the teaching manual. The Mongol strength of former days is attributed to their hunting lifestyle, in which the practice of archery and horse riding from a tender age fostered an ability to withstand pain and hardships, and both sexes are said never to leave the horseback except for eating and sleeping. The Mongols are furthermore claimed to do things swiftly due to their nomadic life. In the chapter on Qinghai, the Mongols are pointed out as especially big and robust, brave and fierce, besides being able to endure hardship and preferring simplicity and frankness.

Despite all the good qualities a tough lifestyle might foster, it is very clear that the Mongol way of living was not considered very civilized, and the tents of the nomads in Qinghai are depicted as simple, poor and “barbarian”. It is nevertheless understood that nomads can become Chinese if they only abandon their old ways in favour of Chinese ones. In the section on Niuzhuang in Manchuria, it is noted that the tribes who lived in the area once upon a time were nomads. With the massive Han-migration from Shandong and Zhili to the area came Han Chinese ways, which the native inhabitants have come to adopt to such an extent that they more or less have turned Chinese. The Mongolian nomads, who instead have been heavily influenced by Tibetan culture in the form of Lamaism, are in contrast depicted as only having turned worse. After a description of the eye-dazzling Lama temple in Ulan Bator, the account of the Tsetsen khanate ends with the rhetorical question “How should [the Mongols] be rid of their superstition?”

As understood from the examples above, the general image of the Mongols is on the one hand that of admirable physical strength and heroic deeds of martial prowess in bygone times, and on the other hand that of barbaric rawness and backwardness. The decline of Mongolian power is above all blamed on Lamaism, but sometimes other explanations of their alleged degeneration are presented. Zhongguo dili explains how the Mongols (which here are also referred to as Tatars) once upon a time spread southwards from the area around the Lake Baikal in Siberia into Mongolia, and how Genghis Khan almost managed to conquer the

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609 Ibid., 19. (蒙古人強壯。且勇悍耐勞。鮮猜疑。尚質朴)
610 Ibid., 18. (遊牧民之家居。荒陋如野蠻。)
611 Ibid. Vol. 1, 28-29. (人民多自直隸山東移居者。土著甚少。以故風俗習慣。率多變為漢人。而固有之風俗。漸為撲滅。)
612 Ibid. Vol. 3, 29. Lessons in Primary Geography also comments upon the outspread superstition among the Mongols. In the passage on Ulan Bator the reader is told that the place is held in great esteem as a holy city by the Mongols because they believe the lamas in the temples to be living Buddhas. The Mongols are otherwise simply described as short, fierce and uncultivated. Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 2, 21-22.
whole of Asia (with the exception of Japan and Arabia) and even launched attacks on the central part of Europe. Following the usual pattern, the textbook emphasizes that the situation for the Mongols nowadays looks totally different from that of their golden age during the Yuan dynasty. The major reason given for the decline of Mongolian power is the rise of the Ming dynasty, and it is emphasized that all that remains of Mongolian power is two Khanates, both of which are Russian protectorates.\footnote{Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 29. In the Notes on New Geographical Readers, however, the Mongol loss of their vast territories is explained by the rise of Russia and Persia, besides the British annexation of India. Tan Lian, Notes on New Geographical Reader: Vol. 2, 18.} It is also emphasized that the Mongols, after the Mongol regression which followed the fall of the Yuan dynasty, have intermixed with the Han people, Manchus, Turks and Russians to such a degree that genuine Mongols are nowadays found only in some populaces in Helanshan, Qinghai, and south and north of the Gobi desert.\footnote{Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 29.} The Mongols are nevertheless given credit for their warrior-like customs, and the textbook comments on their skills in horse riding found amongst both men and women.\footnote{Ibid.}\footnote{Ibid.} In particular, however, it is the Mongolian noblesse which is praised for its martial lifestyle: “The nobles’ eyes are grey, their foreheads slightly slanting, their cheekbones protruding and the growth of beard scanty. They are of strong and robust physique, brave and skilful in fighting.”\footnote{Ibid. (其貴族。目睛灰色。額微削。顴隆起。體力強壯。勇敢善斗。)}

On the whole, the textbooks seem to imply that if only the Han Chinese of the present acquired the strength of Mongols of the past, they would have much to gain in their struggle against intruding foreigners. As already pointed out above, Notes on Geographical Readers remarks that the term “Mongolian race” as a synonym of “Yellow race” is to be considered honourable since the Mongols were feared and respected by Europeans. Chinese schoolchildren were apparently taught to be proud of the Mongols as fellow members of the same “Yellow race”, in that the Mongols had once upon a time had defeated and subdued white people. From this point of view, the power and strength of the Mongols in bygone days proved that the “Yellow race” was in essence not by any means weaker than the “White race”. At the same time, however, the schoolchildren were taught that the Mongols are of another kind than the Han Chinese, and differing from them in that they are less refined, if not even barbarian. In Lessons in Elementary Geography the following observation is made:

[The Mongols] are not of the same race as the Han people. By custom they value horsemanship and archery. By nature they are able to endure hard work, are agile, nimble and fierce, and always search for excuses to start

\footnote{Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 29.}
hostilities [alt. are vengeful]. They are ignorant of tilling and planting and engage in animal husbandry. Their clothes are coarse and crude and their ceremonies for courtesy simple and rough. They believe in Buddhism and venerate lamas. They dress in leather, drink fermented milk [alt. eat yoghurt and cheese] and live in tents.\footnote{Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 19. (種族與漢民不同。俗尚騎射。性能耐勞。輕捷剽悍。好尋仇。不知耕稼。務畜牧。衣服粗陋。禮儀簡略。奉佛教。崇敬喇嘛。衣皮食酪。居於帳幕。)}

The feelings towards the Mongols oscillate between admiration and contempt, and between a sense of racial fellow-feeling and alienation. However, in most of the textbooks, in particular those for the lower grades in which the accounts are usually briefer, the image of the Mongols emerges as predominantly negative, and the textbooks generally tend to dwell more on their present backwardness than on their glorious past.\footnote{Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography gives a somewhat lengthier, but otherwise rather similar description of the Mongols. There are however some differences: the Mongols “seldom wash themselves, [wear] coarse and crude clothes, are good-tempered and unable to exert themselves, have little sense for propriety and lack refinement and have languages and letters different from [the language and letters in] the Central Plains”. Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 136.} As already noted in Chapter five in this thesis, Lessons in Elementary Geography divides the peoples of the Empire into five races/peoples (the Miao, Han, Tungan, Tatar and Tibetan races/peoples), and classifies the Mongols as a sub-branch of the Tatars:

The fourth [race/people] is called the Tatar race [alt. people], that is to say the descendants of the Huns. They are tough, fearless and fond of fighting. In ancient times they were once famous for their military achievements, but are now on the decline. [The Tatars] are besides separated into Mongols, who live in Mongolia and Qinghai, practice nomadism and are simple, mean and uncultivated, and Turks, also known as the Hui people since most of them are Muslims, who live in Xinjiang, Shaanxi and Gansu.\footnote{Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 25-26. (四曰韃靼。即古匈奴之後。剛勇好斗。古昔嘗以武功著名世界。今衰微。又分二支。一曰蒙古人。居蒙古青海。尚遊牧。朴陋無文。一曰土耳其人。以其多奉回教。故又曰回人。居新疆及陜甘等處。)}

In the revised version of the textbook, however, the classification of the peoples of the Empire looks somewhat different. Now the peoples/races of China are Miao, Han, Tungan, Mongols, Turks (Hui) and Tibetans, and the Mongol and the Turkic populations of the Empire are no longer branded as Tatars,\footnote{Xie Honglai, Advanced Geographical Readers. Vol. 2, 19-20.} maybe because the term could also be employed as a derogative...
expression for the Manchu elite and was therefore considered inappropriate. The term “Tatar” has instead been altered to “Mongol” in the passage cited above, while the Turks are treated as a totally separate people/race. Although the wording is otherwise virtually the same as before, the account of the alleged former glory and present decline of the Tatarians has been turned into the story of the rise and fall of the Mongols alone.

7.8 The Tibetans

As understood from the examples above, Lamaism is commonly given as one of the main reasons for the Mongol decay, the religion somehow having deprived the Mongols of their fierceness and fighting spirit. The Mongols have become pacified, lost their initiative and started to degenerate. Considering the Tibetan origin of the religion, it might be assumed that the general picture of Tibetans must be that of a people that lacks aggressiveness. This is, however, only partially the case. That is to say, while, for example, Complete Geography brands the Tibetans as soft and gentle and averse to warfare, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian argues that the Tibetans (here referred to as the “Tubo race”) are so barbarously fierce that only few visitors to Tibet come back alive. Geography of the Chinese Empire, on the other hand, describes the Tibetans as content and compassionate, although valiant in battle. Whether Lamaism was considered to have bereaved the Tibetans of their fighting instinct or not, the religion is nevertheless depicted as a false and irrational doctrine. Consequently, the passages on Tibet in the textbooks describe the Tibetans as extremely superstitious with dreadful or shocking customs and practices. Complete Geography, among other textbooks, depicts the polygamous practices of Tibet as especially disgusting: “By custom the women are strong and the men weak. Households with three or four brothers together marry one and the

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622 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 140. It is however also noted that the Tibetans do not allow foreigners to enter Tibet and are very stringent in their precautions.
623 Chen Qiansheng, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian. Vol. 1, 8. The character combination 土番種, above translated as the “Tubo race”, implies the meaning of “uncivilized breed” (the two first characters together carry the meaning of “uncivilized natives”, the character 種 the meaning of “sort”, “race” and “breed” etc). “Tubo” is usually written with the characters 吐蕃, and was originally the name of a state on the Tibetan Plateau during the Tang dynasty.
same woman, which truly is a vile custom.” 625 Especially the textbooks aimed at the lower grades seldom attempt to give any explanations of the ideas behind native religious practices, and the descriptions of Tibetans (and of other non-Han Chinese for that matter) are usually presented in the form of short and blunt statements which hardly can have provided the Chinese school children with a deeper understanding of Tibetan religious life or culture. Usually the textbooks draw attention to what is odd and peculiar, such as the alleged superstitious worship of Dalai Lama as a “Heavenly God” and the belief in holy lakes. 626

In short, the general picture of the Tibetans is simply that of irrational and foolish barbarity. In Lessons in Primary Geography, Tibetan folk customs are described as “dirty and low” and the people are said to “seldom understand the normal order of things”. 627 Here the funeral rituals are given as examples of the bizarre customs of the Tibetans: “When a person dies, the body is abandoned as food to eagles and dogs, which is called celestial burial, or the body is thrown into a river, which is called water burial.” 628 The inhabitants of Litang (a town in the western part of Sichuan inhabited by Tibetans) are discussed in terms of “barbarians” who “dress in the hides from the animals they have eaten and have no sense of hygiene”. 629 Only the tribe chiefs subordinate to the Qing administration are said to obey the national dress regulations, 630 and it is thus understood that the inhabitants have barely been blessed with influences of Chinese civilization.

The alleged backwardness of Tibet is largely blamed on Lamaism. Zhongguo dili, however, blames this backwardness (“their culture has not developed” 文化不興) on the infertile soil of the region. 631 As for the background of the Tibetans, the textbook explains that they are the descendants of Tubo (吐蕃), who in turn stem from one of the tribes of Xianbei (a people in Manchuria and eastern Mongolia from the 2nd to 7th centuries). Due to the alleged

625 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 140. (其俗女强男弱、家有兄弟三四人、每共娶一妻、诚陋俗也。)
626 Geography of the Chinese Empire describes the polygamy as a result of Tibetan monasticism, and notices that men of humble origin marry the same woman while rich men on the other hand have many wives. As much as one third of the Tibetan population, it is argued, never gets married. The textbook’s judgement on the Tibetans is very harsh: “People are being fooled by sorcery [and the Tibetan customs are] immeasurably dissolute”. (以邪術惑人。荒淫無度。) Tu Ji, Geography of the Chinese Empire. Vol. 2, 13, Vol. 3, 230. Lessons in Elementary Geography, which otherwise is rather sparse on information on the Tibetans, does however comment upon Tibetan-styled polygamy which allows several men to marry the same woman. The Tibetans are otherwise described as “physically robust and able to stand hardships” (壯健耐苦) besides being “attached to their land and unwilling to leave it” (安土重遷). Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 2, 23.
627 Chen Qiansheng, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian. Vol. 1, 8.
628 Ibid. (人死則棄之飼鷹犬。號曰天葬。或掷之河中。謂之水葬。)
629 Ibid., 18-19. (食肉衣皮。不知污潔。)
630 Ibid. Also the inhabitants of Batang (another town in western Sichuan near the Tibetan border) are said to have the same customs.
631 Xu Nianci, Zhongguo dili, 30.
kinship with this ancient people, the textbook suggests that the Tibetans “can be called a special branch of the Mongol race [alt. people]”. There are, however, various explanations of the origin of the Tibetans. Lessons in Elementary Geography, for example, suggests that the Tibetans are the result of racial mixture between Tatars and people from India. However, in Notes on New Geographical Readers, which explains that the “Yellow race” can be roughly divided into two main subdivisions, the Kunlun and the Altai branch, the Xizangzu (the Tibetan race/people) is classified as belonging to the former branch, together with the Han race/people and the Hui race/people, while the Tungus race/people and the Tatar race/people are classified as belonging to the latter branch.

7.9 The population of the far west

Despite the mutually contradictory or inconsistent accounts of the alleged racial and/or historical origins of the non-Han peoples outside the Great Wall, the general image of the inhabitants within or close to the Central Asian Zone is nevertheless that of a tough, bold, simple and rather primitive populace. However, while the textbooks might lament the present deplorable situation of the Mongols, seemingly longing for the Mongolian valour of ancient times when the “Yellow race” subjugated Europeans, this is certainly not the case when it comes to the Turkic and/or Muslim population of the far west. The images of the natives of Xinjiang and the Muslim population of Gansu are particularly negative. The passage on Xinjiang in Complete Geography contains the following description illustrating the hostility, distrust and hatred felt towards the Hui (it is often impossible to tell whether the term signifies Turkic peoples or Muslims at large):

632 Ibid. (故西藏族可謂為蒙古族中特別之種族。) Here the “Mongolian race” (Mengguliyzhong) of China is sub-divided into the Hanzu (Han race/people), the Mengguzu (Mongol race/people), Tonggusizu (Tungus race/people) Tuerqizu (Turkish race/people), Tubozu (Tibetan race/people) and Miaozu (Miao race/people). The Tibetans are nevertheless at the same time apparently recognized as something of a sub-branch to the Mengguzu in that they are said to be the descendants of the Xianbei (which the Tungus are also claimed to be). The textbook even gives a thorough description of the alleged physical attributes of the Tibetans: “They have small and black eyes, scanty growth of beard, protruding cheekbones, and flat noses and big mouth with thin lips”. Ibid., 29-30. (其人眼小而黑。鬚疏。顴骨突出。鼻平。口廣。唇薄。).
The inhabitants are mostly Turbaned Hui [i.e. Uygurs] who put their faith in Islam. They are suspicious and deceitful by nature, but are thrifty and frugal and fear the law. If one treats them with care, it is not necessarily difficult to bring them under control. [...] Moreover, they all fool around in laziness and do not engage in the planting and harvesting of grains. When the land is frozen and turned into a sea of snow, it becomes difficult to carry on trade. [Peddling] Han people [who are stranded in Xinjiang] without a permanent home are frequently in dispute with the Hui people and rifts often occur [between the two peoples]. The pooling and training of manpower [to prepare for a common crusade against the Hui people] cannot be delayed even by a single day. 

Textbooks for the lower grades also accentuate the hostilities between Han and Hui in the region. These accounts, however, are shorter and only the most important messages are communicated. *Lessons in Elementary Geography* simply observes that the Hui people “by nature are deceitful and fond of fighting” and that there have been many hostilities between Han and Hui in the region. In *Lessons in Primary Geography* the schoolchild is only told that the Han people, the majority of whom are garrisoned soldiers or traders, are not on good terms with the Hui people. The passage on Gansu in *Complete Geography* similarly describes the Hui people as violent troublemakers, hostile to the Han Chinese:

The peoples [of Gansu] reside close together, and Tibetans, Manchus, Mongols and Turks, as well as people from all the provinces of China Proper, all live here. The folk mentality is that of simplicity and plainness, and they do not care much for gods and demons [i.e. they are not very superstitious]. The inhabitants build fortified settlements for self-protection and the villages do not exchange greetings. Eighty men out of one hundred have the weakness of smoking opium, and among the women sixty out of one hundred [smoke opium]. In the Hui communities everyone does. Time and again they have revolted, and the Han people have often been victims of wholesale slaughter.

In *Lessons in Elementary Geography* there is a description which runs in the same fashion:

The mentality of people [in Gansu] is that of toughness and bravery. They have built fortified settlements where people [from the same ethnicity] live together. They smoke much opium. In the Hui communities everyone does.

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635 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 100. (居民多纏回、奉回教、性多詐詐、然勸約畏法、茍善撫之、未必難治、[...] 又皆於遊惰、不務稼穡、冰天雪海、商販難通、漢人之流寓者、又多與回民有隙、往往生釁、蓋生聚教訓、未可以一日緩、)


638 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 95. (民多雜居、西藏滿州蒙古土耳其各族及本部個省人、皆有之、民情平淡、不甚神鬼、居民多築堡自守、鄰村不相通候、吸吸鴉片、男子百人中得八十、婦女百人中得六十、回人所在皆是、屢經叛亂、漢人多遭屠戮)
Again and again they have been looking for excuses to start hostilities with the Han people in order to fight and murder them. Lessons in Primary Geography repeats the same message: “Both men and women often have the weakness of smoking opium. There are very many Hui people. They are not on friendly terms with the Han people, and time to time one hears about fighting and murdering.” The province capital of Lanzhou, however, is described in a rather positive light, and the city is claimed to be richer and more populous than any other city in the western part of the Empire. The inhabitants are said to be frugal and thrifty because of the high latitude and cold climate, besides being diligent in cultivating the land. Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu, also a textbook for the lower primary school, gives an almost identical description of the inhabitants of Lanzhou. This textbook also comments on the hostilities between Hui and Han in the city and remarks that the authorities have had difficulties in controlling the situation with all the murdering and plundering. The accompanying teaching manual Zhongguo dili xin jiaokeshu jiaoshoufa also emphasizes the mutual hatred and tension between the Han Chinese and the Hui in Lanzhou, and explains that the most trivial matters can lead to massacres. It is also noted that people in the province smoke a great deal of opium and that the local products are therefore cheap. The simplified textbook Jianyi dili kebenshu, on the other hand, only notes that Lanzhou is of mixed residency but does not comment on the ethnic conflicts between Hui and Han which have plagued the city in recent times. The inhabitants of Lanzhou are nevertheless claimed to be strong and brave.

In the revised version of Lessons in Elementary Geography the remarks on the excessive opium-smoking in Hui communities and the massacring of Han Chinese have been removed. The textbook originally also implied that the Mongols were on bad terms with the Han Chinese, claiming that the Mongols, as already pointed out in the preceding chapter, “always search for excuses to start hostilities”. This particular notion has also been removed in the later version of the textbook. It might be guessed that this revision was an attempt by the Manchu authorities to tone down the ethnic conflicts within the Empire, because they

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639 Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 1, 23. (民情剛勇。築堡聚居。多吸鴉片。回民所在皆是。屢與漢尋仇鬭殺。)

640 Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 2, 11. (男多嗜吸鴉片。回民甚衆。與漢民不睦。鬭殺之事。時有所聞。)


643 Tong Zhenzao, Jianyi dili kebenshu, 9.

were concerned that negative sentiments directed towards Hui and Mongols might spill over on the Manchu court. Too much focus on hostilities between the Han Chinese majority and peoples from the vast steppes behind the Great Wall threatened to undermine Qing authority and shatter the attempts to hold together the ethnically diverse Empire. Reports on open ethnic hostilities, revolts and other uprisings signalled a loss of control, which might incite anti-Qing elements to rebel.
8 Neighbours in the East

8.1 Korea

The image of Korea and the Koreans, as will be revealed below, is extremely negative. This was indisputably the result of the product of influences from Japan. However, although apparently based on Japanese publications, practically all the Chinese textbooks examined have excluded all references to Japanese claims on the Korean peninsula, which are standard procedure in Japanese Meiji textbooks. Apparently, the Japanese claims on Korea were not generally accepted by Chinese educators, who otherwise willingly embraced many Meiji Japanese perceptions of the peninsula and its people.

In Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian published in 1902, Korea is described as an absolute monarchy in which the common man has no rights. The educated and privileged few are corrupt and ignorant of practical fields of studies, while the common people are suppressed, poor and fooled by superstition:

The government form is absolute monarchism. The ministers have also grasped authority, but common people are not allowed to play a part [in decision making]. Previously [Korea] was subordinated to China but is nowadays an independent state, although laws and institutions are largely patterned on Chinese standards. The officials maltreat the people to a great extent. Thus the people have become dis spirited and weakened and do not dare to claim their civil rights and freedom by resisting them. As for religious matters, the literati greatly embrace the Confucian way, while the common people usually put their faith in Buddhism. But there is also sorcery, practised by women who are in charge of funerals and divination. Stupid commoners have the deepest faith in it. Education and the civil service examinations are generally based on Chinese prose and poetry.

646 This is true for but one exception. Shijie dili is the only textbook examined which takes a clear pro-Japanese stance in this question, the chapter on Korea being full of what appears to be Japanese propaganda. Absolutely nothing is said about Korea’s historical ties with China, and the reader only gets to know that “this country has since ancient time had contacts with Japan” (此國自古與日本交通). The textbook also discusses matters such as Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s warfare on the Korean peninsula, the Japanese triumph in the Sino-Japanese War, and the extent to which communications in Korea are in Japanese ownership, topics which are common in Meiji Japanese geography textbooks, but not in Chinese counterparts. Shijie dili, 206-210.
647 Chen Qiansheng, Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian. Vol. 1, 11. (政體、君主專制。大臣亦攬政。惟人民不能參預。前屬中國，近為獨立自主之邦。而法制猶多仿中國。官吏多虐待人民。而人民委弱。無敢主張民權自由。與之相抗。故國力益衰弱焉。宗教。士人多奉儒道。平民多信佛教。另有巫女教。掌喪葬。卜吉凶。愚民崇信最篤。教育考試。概用中國詩文。)
It is evident that the textbook compiler sees absolute monarchism as one of the main reasons for the “terrible” state of affairs in Korea, and regards civil rights and freedom as universal preconditions for development towards modern civilization. The mentioning of civil rights and freedom (mingquan ziyou 民權自由) may also indicate that the compiler, directly or indirectly, had been exposed to the ideas of the People’s Rights Movement (Jiyū minken undō 自由民權運動) in Japan, which advocated popular participation in government. Considering the fact that Qing was an absolute monarchy, which is also noted in the chapter on China, the criticism of the Sino-style political system of Korea may certainly be understood as an extended critique of their own system. Korean society is further described as a horrible class society, and the situation for poor people in the countryside as especially difficult. The northerners are pointed out as particularly simple and uncultivated, while the Koreans in general are described as weak and lazy. It is admitted that the Koreans are intelligent but nonetheless have problems in moving ahead. The Koreans are said to still wear the same kinds of clothes as those used in ancient China, and it is also noted that they wear shoes made of hemp, and sit on the floor. By stressing the heavy influence of ancient Chinese practices and Chinese classical culture on Korea in the past (regardless of whether this was considered to have caused stagnation in more modern times or not), the compiler possibly wants to imply that Korea still has stronger bonds with China than with Japan, although Korea is now to be considered an independent state. It is in any case made clear that the heavy Japanese

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648 In the chapter on China one finds the following corresponding notion on the Chinese form of government, religious practices and education: “The government form has since ancient times always been absolutism. Political [matters], regardless of the importance [of the issues], are submitted to the will of the imperial court. Common people are not allowed to play a part [in decision making]. The power of life and death are solely in the hands of the monarch. As for religion, people usually revere the two teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism. Education is chiefly concerned with ethics, and the civil examinations exclusively put premium on Confucianism. In recent time schools which teach Western learning have been established.” Ibid., 7. (自古政體。皆主專制。政無大小。聽命於朝。人民不能參預。生殺與奪。皆君子一人專之。宗教素重儒佛二教。教育以倫理為主。考試專重儒學。近有設立學堂。習泰西之學者。)

649 Ibid., 11.

650 The account on Korean independence is to be understood from Japan’s new role on the Korean peninsula. With the victory in the Sino-Japanese War and the following “independence” of Korea, Japan once and for all put an end to what remained of the Chinese tributary system. The Japanese claims of Korean independence were nothing but a rhetorical tool for challenging the old Chinese world-order and traditional Chinese influence on the peninsula. This becomes apparent when considering accounts on Korea in Japanese textbooks published before, respectively after the war. A Japanese geography textbook from 1893, i.e. one year before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, notes that the Chinese consider Korea to be a vassal state, but argues, on the other hand, that Korea “in reality is an independent country and only sends tribute envoys to China once a year” (實ハ獨立國ニシテ只年年朝貢使ヲ支那ニ遣スノミ、). In another textbook, put together by the same compiler, but published one year after the war, all references to former Korean vassalage to China, along with the remark on factual Korean independence, have been removed from the passage on Korea, which otherwise is identical to that in the pre-war textbook. Nakamura Goroku, Chūtō chiri bankokushi. Vol. 4, 22-23, Nakamura Goroku, Chūtō chūchiri 中等中地理 [Secondary school intermediate geography], rev. ed. (Tokyo: Bungakusha, 1896): Bankokushi 萬國誌 [A description of all nations], 15. Having outmanoeuvred China in the rivalship over Korea
presence in Korea is unwelcome. The Japanese monopoly on fishing rights in Korean waters, for example, is described as something regrettable. Although it is admitted that the Koreans are backward, the compiler does not accept Japanese claims that this somehow justifies Japanese positioning on the peninsula. It is nevertheless understood that the Japanese dominance is an inevitable consequence of the logic of Realpolitik, in which the strong prevails by occupying the sources of wealth, regardless of ideology or ethics.

Possibly the intention behind discussing the repressive political system and the lack of civil rights and freedom as causes of the deplorable situation in Korea is, as suggested above, to imply that it was of crucial importance to reform China’s own political system in order to strengthen and enrich China. It is likely that this discussion on the importance of democratic reforms is placed in the chapter on Korea (and not in the chapter on China) since an all too blatant and direct criticism of the lack of civil rights and freedom in China might provoke the authorities. The concepts of civil rights and freedom were indeed highly sensitive issues for the Qing authorities, who feared that an all too biased focus on people’s rights and freedom might incite students to riot against the government. Thus the government’s directives for the new educational system strongly emphasized that people’s rights and freedom could only be enjoyed within the frame of their obligations as subjects and their submission to Chinese law. None of the other textbooks examined refer to any alleged lack of civil rights and freedom in Korea (or in China for that matter), possibly due to the sensitive nature of the issue.

In the somewhat later primary geography textbook Lessons in Primary Geography published in 1906, the picture of Korea resembles that encountered in the textbook discussed after the war, Japan no longer had to emphasize Korean independence from China, and instead tried to justify Japanese dominance over Korea by alluding to alleged Korean backwardness as a natural cause to why the Koreans were bound to lose what was left of their self-rule. In an elementary geography textbook, published five years after the war, one finds the following statement, which indeed reveals this tendency: “In ancient time Korea used to be a highly civilized country, but nowadays [Korea], in the progressing world [of today], lags behind in everything, and can barely defend its own independence.”

In Meiji Japanese textbooks there is on the other hand a tendency to justify the Japanese takeover of the fishing industry by alluding to Korean backwardness and Korean preference of food, the Koreans allegedly not appreciating the same kind of fish as the Japanese. Chūchi chirigaku, a Japanese intermediate textbook published in 1899, explains that the rich fishing grounds in the Korean waters are controlled by the Japanese since the Koreans only have few fishing boats and use clumsy fishing methods, and besides only catch fuka (shark), mentai (walleye pollack), saba (mackerel) and iwashi (sardine). Yazu Masanaga, Chūchirigaku, 23–24. A somewhat later intermediate textbook published in 1905 emphasizes the big profits of the more than 10 000 Japanese fishermen gain by fishing in the rich fishing grounds along the southern and eastern coasts of Korea, catching tai (sea bream), sawara (a kind of mackerel), iwashi (sardine), namako (sea cucumber) and awabi (abalone). In this textbook, however, the only fish mentioned as the fish of choice amongst Koreans is mentai, found along the north east coast of Korea. Chūtō shinchiri kyōkasha: Gaikoku no bu. Vol. 1, 18.

above. The political message, however, is toned down. That is, although it is made clear that Korea is an absolute monarchy, there are no suggestions that common people ought to have any rights to freedom or should resist the government. However, Korean society is still described as deeply unequal and restrained by class-distinctions, which the Koreans “do not understand to rid themselves of”. The streets of Seoul are described as narrow and filthy, and everything in the country is on the decline, although once upon a time it had a flourishing literature. The textbook also mentions the strong cultural bonds with China by remarking that educated people can read Chinese, that the government organs have been modelled on Chinese standards and that the customs are similar to Chinese customs. However, the textbook makes it absolutely clear which country now holds sway over China’s former tributary: “Although [Korea] claims itself to have the institutions of an empire and to hold the real power over its domestic affairs, everything is in secrecy masterminded by Japan. Since Japan recently again took up arms and defeated Russia, it simply sees [Korea] as its protectorate.”

Lessons in Elementary Geography, published in the same year and used in the higher primary school, contains very similar accounts of the customs and characteristics of the Koreans. Although there are no political implications like those found in Commercial Press’s textbook from 1902 (i.e. critique of the Korean government’s suppression of its freedom-thirsting citizens), Korea is still criticised for its corrupt and cruel officials, its strict class-society and its superstitious practices. Furthermore, the Koreans are pointed out as weak, lazy and lacking the spirit of progress. Although it is admitted that there have been reforms recently, and that many young scholars have gone abroad to study, the textbook maintains that this has not changed the country significantly since the corrupt practices and customs are far too deep-rooted. It is pointed out that Korea, a former vassal state of China, is nowadays referred to as an empire, and that, although an absolute monarchy, it has accepted a government organisation resembling that of Japan in which different kinds of departments within the ministries share the control of the affairs of the state. As for the real master of the Korean peninsula, the textbook is nevertheless very specific: “After the Japanese-Russian War, Japan installed a Resident General in Seoul in accordance with the peace treaty. This is

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653 Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 4, 3. (不知振拔。)
654 Ibid.
655 Ibid. (近雖帝制自為。而國內實權。隐操日本。頃日本復戰勝俄。直視為彼之保護國已。)
in the name of maintaining diplomatic relations, but in fact he supervises the internal affairs. Actually [the country] has already been turned into a Japanese protectorate!"

*Complete Geography* gives the most detailed description of the Koreans and their characters and customs. This account follows the same pattern as in the textbooks for the younger school children but is more specific in its critique of the inhabitants in the former tributary of China:

Race: The Koreans belong to a branch of the Mongolian race between [the race of] our country and [that of] Japan. They are of a very big physical constitution and are gentle by nature. Since ancient times the different social classes have been strictly separated and divided into four, namely the liangban class [Kor. yangban], the middle-people, the common people and the slaves. The liangban are the aristocrats, usually assigned posts as civil or military officials. Middle-people are just petty officials and common people cannot enter government service. The slaves are people who have committed serious crimes and whose families have been forced to follow them into thraldom. However, this custom has already slightly begun to be abandoned in recent years. […]

Characteristics and customs: The people are gentle and clever but invariably lazy, and all undertakings are dealt with in an air of listlessness. They do not work in order to save money but leave their lives to fate. The northerners are robust and unrefined, and the people along the east coast are simple, frank and gentle and to some extent understand to be industrious. The people on the west coast are cunning, capricious and lack perseverance, all through the ages there have been many revolts in this area. Their clothes and hats are uniformed in the same manner as under our previous Ming dynasty. Their long gowns are made of white cotton cloth and their hats are high and black. The women wear a short top garment and a long dress and live in seclusion. Talking to men is looked upon as a great shame by them. They do not pay any attention to cleanliness in their households or to the hygienic standard of their food. During the winter they keep warm by lighting a fire indoors under the kang, more or less in the same way as we do in our northern provinces. Rice, followed by meat, is the staple food. Poor people eat a lot of wheat and darnel. Their form of matrimony is the same as in our country. Unmarried men, even those who have reached a respectable age, are looked upon as children. They sit on the floor and take off their shoes at the doorstep, as we have had the custom of doing in our country.

From the passage above it is understood that the Koreans are poor at running businesses, not only because of their laziness but also because of their disinterest in moneymaking. The

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657 Ibid., 14. (日俄戰罷・和約既成。日本乃設統監於漢城。名為主持外交。實則監督內政。蓋已為日本之護國矣。)

658 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 150-151. (種族 高麗人為蒙古利亞之一支、介於我國日本之間、龐幹頗偉、性質柔和、自古階級之制極嚴、分四大部、即兩班、中人、常人、奴隸是也、兩班為貴族、常任文武職官、中人祇為末秩、常人並不得入仕、奴隸則犯重罪者沒入家屬也、近來此國已稍稍改除矣、 [...] 性情習俗 人情溫柔敏巧、而不免怠惰、一切事業、無不有委靡氣象、不事積蓄、優遊度日、北部之民、生壯性粗、東岸之民、樸直騷良、稍知勤勉、西岸之民、狡詐無恆、心多反覆、歷來亂事、多在其地、衣冠如我國前明之制、以白布為長服、冠高色黑、女子短褐長裳、深居簡出、與男子接談、以爲大恥、居處飲食、不求潔淨、冬冷、則燃火室內炕下取暖、與我國北省略同、食物、米為恆粮、肉腥副之、貧家多食麥稗、婚姻之制、與我國等、未娶者雖年老亦視為兒童、席地而坐、脫鞋履戶外、亦我國俗也。)
Koreans are furthermore dirty and tyrannical and restrict the lives of their women. Certain originally Chinese traditional customs, adopted by the Koreans in ancient times, are not seen as signs of cultural attainments but rather as a marker of backwardness, since they are no longer practiced in China, and hence are outdated. Considering the extent the Chinese educators of that time honoured militarism as a means of strengthening the country, the alleged gentleness of the Koreans should probably not be understood as something positive.

*Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu*, a higher elementary textbook in geography, published by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 1910, explains that Japan has announced that it will annex Korea and notes that the old fief of Qizi has been lost. Qizi was the righteous courtier who, according to the Classics, had once upon a time been installed as a feudal lord by King Wu (the first ruler of the ancient Zhou dynasty), over what later was to become Korea. The end of traditional Chinese influence on the Korean peninsula is illustrated by a picture of a Korean man dressed in traditional clothes, paying his homage in front of Qizi’s tombstone.

The chapter on Korea is otherwise full of statements so similar to what is found in Commercial Press’s *Lessons in Elementary Geography* that the only conclusion that can be reached is that its inspiration has mainly been drawn from this textbook. However, *Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu* adds the following idea, after having first repeated the usual comments upon the alleged backwardness, laziness and weakness of the Korean people: “They do not esteem practical knowledge in order to make progress. Besides, the government officials are

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659 In Yazu Masanaga’s intermediate textbook published in 1899, one can read the following statement about the Koreans: “The upper-class has a tendency to suppressing people of low origin, which greatly prevents the society from progressing. [The Koreans] are of a gentle and amenable nature, but are obsequious and lack the thought of a nation. Furthermore, laziness has become a common evil, and [they] lack the desire of working hard in order to be able to put aside money, some spending the whole day with nothing but chatting and smoking their long pipes.” (上流者ハ下民ヲ壓スルノ風アリテ社會ノ進歩ヲ妨ゲシコト尠カラズ、性質ハ溫柔ナレトモ卑屈ニシテ國家思想ニ乏シ、又懶惰ハ一般ノ弊風トナリ、勤勉貯蓄ノ念ナク、終日長管ノ煙ヲ吹イテ雑談ニ生送ル者アリ。) Yazu Masanaga, *Chūchirigaku*, 25-26. Meiji Japanese textbooks often remark on the poor situation for women in Korea. A Japanese elementary geography textbook published in 1879, for example, remarks that the social lives of women are even harsher restricted than in Japan and China. Yamada Yukimoto, *Shinsen chiri shōshi*. Vol. 3, 12. In Meiji textbooks the Japanese usually pose as the civilized people who with their better understanding have the right to “help” the Koreans. In an elementary geography textbook published in 1895 (the same year the Sino-Japanese War ended) it is stated that Japan “through protection and encouragement” (保護、勧誘によりて) plans to assist the Koreans in ridding them from their “evil practices” (弊害). As examples of such backwardness, which the Koreans allegedly needed Japanese help to free themselves from, the textbook mentions the tyrannical treatment of the lower classes and the low position of women in the society. The women in Korea are likened with lowly maid-servants who “usually spend their whole lives [hidden away] in small rooms since it is regarded a big shame if a woman falls under the eyes of a stranger” (女ハ他人の目に觸るを大恥辱となし、多くは終生を隘室に送るという。). K. Matsushima, *Kinsei shōchirigaku*: Gaikoku no bu, 18.


661 Ibid.
corrupt and insincere and lack patriotism. Therefore the spirit of the people is low.” With these words the government doubtlessly wanted to remind Chinese schoolchildren of the importance of practical knowledge and loyalty to the dynasty. Korea is presented here as the warning example of what might happen if the Chinese did not turn nationalistic and refused to take up knowhow within the fields of modern technology and science. The message becomes even more apparent when considering how the Japanese are described: “[The Japanese] value chivalry and militarism and are rich in patriotic sentiments. Therefore the spirit of the people is of use.” If the Chinese also became fervently patriotic (i.e. absolutely loyal to their dynasty) and militaristic, just like the Japanese, the Qing Empire would not end up in the same hopeless situation as its former vassal state Korea. Although the textbook expresses frustration over Japan’s recent expansion in East Asia, it is understood that the main reason why Korea was lost to Japan was the poor state of affairs in the country, which has generated backward and weak inhabitants reluctant to accept change and unable to withstand the stronger Japanese.

As already noted above, the Chinese textbook compilers, although clearly influenced by Japanese images of Korea, exclude all Japanese historical claims for suzerainty and supremacy over Korea, besides other Japanese constructions designed to insinuate that Japan was destined to play a role on the Korean peninsula. If the Japanese judgmental and

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662 Ibid., 12. (不尚實際。求進取。官吏又貪滑無愛國心。故民氣不振。)
663 Ibid., 16. (尚俠重武。富愛國心。故民氣可用。)
664 With Japan’s tightening grasp of Korea, Meiji Japanese textbooks came to increasingly stress the “Japaneseness” of Korea. This, in combination with an emphasis on the high Japanese presence in the country and focus on alleged Korean backwardness, implied that Japan as a civilizer, protector and dominant power, was in her rights to take over Korean interests. In a Japanese middle school geography textbook from 1905, for example, the Koreans are said to belong to the yellow race and resemble the Japanese. No attempts are made to estimate the number of Korean inhabitants in Korea, although the textbook does not fail in informing about the number of Japanese living in the country (about 20,000 residents). As for the information on the Korean capital, about everything the reader gets to know is that Seoul is surrounded by a city wall with eight gates, and that the Japanese settlement, the national Japanese legation and the Japanese consulate are located near the southern gate. The Japanese settlement is the only location in the central part of the city which is marked out in the illustrating map over Seoul and its vicinity. Japanese interests, along famous battlefields in Korea on which Japanese troops have fought, are carefully noted. The textbook emphasizes that all modern forms of communications (the railway system and the steamboat traffic), along with postal and telegraph services, are in the hands of the Japanese. Communications in the country are otherwise described as very primitive, with roads often unfit for use after it has rained. As for the Korean population, the textbook notes that the Koreans speak a language similar to Japanese, although the upper class uses classical Chinese and common people use Onmun letters. It is further on noted that Korea is an extremely segregated class society with institutionalized slavery, and while the upper-class are Confucians, most of the people are superstitious and put their faith to female shamans. It is admitted that there are some schools which teach Japanese, English or Russian, and that the number of people who study “civilized sciences” (文明の學術) has somewhat increased. However, it is nevertheless made clear that little has been done within the field of modern education, although the country once upon a time had a highly developed culture. Adhering to the standardized pattern of describing Koreans during the Meiji period, the textbook claims the Koreans to “live in idleness and lack an enterprising spirit” (安逸を貪り、進取の氣象なし). Kamei Chūichi, Gaikoku shinchiri. Vol. 1, 17-24.
derogatory descriptions of the Koreans are used as a means of legitimizing Japan’s colonial ambitions in Korea, images of backward Koreans are employed in China to change the attitudes of the young generation by calling attention to the danger of rejecting change. That is to say, the same kind of disparaging notions of Korean backwardness, due to Chinese fear of meeting with the same destiny as Korea, are employed in order to spur young people to leave their backward customs behind, to progress and to become more aggressive and enterprising.

Geography textbooks from the early 20th century must be understood in the light of Social Darwinian ideas which greatly poisoned the minds of modern intellectuals and scholars of that time, both in states which justified territorial and/or economic expansion at the expense of others and, in states which suffered from colonization or other exploitation. That countries which did not keep up with modern times were doomed to be dominated by others was simply seen as a consequence of the natural order of things. The only way to survive in the competition amongst nations on the international arena was to modernize, unite and show strength. Since the Koreans had failed to do so, they could only blame themselves for the outcome. Modern education was seen as crucial for the survival of a nation, and traditional educational, along with extreme social inequalities and superstition, was frequently mentioned in terms of halting progress and development. The following account of Korea is presented in a Chinese geography textbook for women’s normal schools, published in Tokyo in 1908 by a Chinese students’ association:

The social hierarchy among the classes is severely observed, and there still exists a slave system. Their educational system only follows the pattern of ancient time, still with the reciting of stale expressions and the study of poetry and composition, a narrow path which brings nothing to their profit and has only the purpose of producing officials through students participating in examinations. The upper class’s correspondence and old official documents are written in Chinese, and witchcraft is largely practised within the common society.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Sun Qingru 孫清如, Waiguo dili 外國地理 [Geography of foreign countries] (Tokyo: Liuxuesheng tongxuehui, 1908), 33. (支門閥綦嚴奴隸之制尚存。教育一循舊時之狀態。仍以誦陳言習詩文為無益於身世之小道。以應試出仕為目的。上流社會通信及舊時之公文。則用漢文。而一般社會妖教大行。) As for the chapters on Japan and Korea in Waiguo dili and Shijie dili, they are in parts so similar that one only can come to the conclusion that they are based on the same (Japanese) sources. Shijie dili is however more judgemental in its comments on the Koreans. Apart from the comments on the poor traditional educational system and other backwardness in Korea, which are more or less identical to what one finds in Waiguo dili, Shijie dili maintains that the Koreans “[...] by nature are muddle-headed and lazy, their stupidity written in their faces. They most hate to take baths, are fond of sleeping in the morning, take noontime naps and devote themselves to smoking” (人情昏惰。愚暗之象。現於顏面。最惡澡浴。貪朝寢午睡。以喫烟為事。). The unequal society has allegedly prevented the Koreans from uniting into a strong nation, which is given as the reason to why Korea “since ancient times always has been the servant of its stronger neighbour” (自古以來。常為強鄰之役。). Shijie dili, 205.

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The description of the Korean educational system was probably understood by the Chinese reader as an indirect criticism of the recently abandoned Chinese traditional examination system and impractical bookish knowledge in general. This criticism of the Korean educational system resembles earlier Meiji Japanese criticism of the traditional educational system in China. China’s precarious situation during the latter half of the 19th century was seen by early Japanese supporters of reforms as proof of how poorly traditional knowledge and conventional approaches could match Western education, weaponry and imperialism, and traditional schooling was considered to be one of the main factors behind the alleged stagnation in the country. In order to avoid sharing the same destiny as that of China the Meiji leaders argued for broad adoption of Western ways and the abandoning of “evil practices”. With Japan’s appearance on the international scene as a new imperialistic power, Japan in turn became the model for Chinese intellectuals and the political elite in their attempts to reform and renew China. Korea, in contrast, came to represent backwardness, stagnation and defeat. While China was employed as the warning example by early Meiji Japanese educators to demonstrate the dangers of relying on the study of the Chinese classics and clinging to antiquated tyrannical patterns of governing, Korea apparently filled a similar function for the new generation of Chinese educators during the early 20th century.

Traditionally, Chinese intellectuals had felt affinity with their eastern neighbours in Korea. Xu Jiyu (1795-1873), once the Governor of Fujian and the author of the early geographical work Yinghuan zhilüe (A brief description of the ocean circuit, 1848), even omitted Korea in his presentation of the countries of the world on account of it being “like China”. Considering the degree to which the former tributary Korea had been associated with the classical culture of the Middle Kingdom, the harsh judgements passed on Korea and its population were likely to be interpreted as a general condemnation of the reluctance amongst ultra-conservative elements in China to accept new foreign knowledge and methods. The powerful nations’ hunger for new territories is clearly understood from the “scientific” perspectives of Social Darwinian and geopolitical reasoning in which strong peoples prevail and weak ones succumb, and the strong nations are bound to expand at the expense of weaker nations.

666 The famous Japanese educator Fukuzawa Yukichi argued in his geographical textbook Sekai kunizukushi of 1869 that the development in China had taken an unfortunate twist, and instead of proceeding towards bunmeikaika (i.e. enlightenment/civilization) the country degenerated and the customs had turned to the worst. Allegedly, the Chinese had become ignorant and arrogant, and no longer sought moral perfection or tried to develop their fields of knowledge. Fukuzawa also blames China’s exposure to foreign humiliation and the loss in the Opium Wars on the despotism which had corrupted the Chinese society. Fukuzawa, Sekai kunizukushi, reprinted in Fukuzawa Yukichi senshū. Vol. 2, 113.
ones. Nevertheless, Japan’s infringement on the Asian continent is described as something deeply regrettable. The general picture of Koreans is hence that of a people who unfortunately refuse to go with the new tide of progress and development and therefore have ended up as a victim of imperialistic greed. Waiguo dili gives the following observation describing Japan’s actions as unfair:

This country [Korea] has since ancient times been our vassal state. Since the Japanese defeated us in the Sino-Japanese War, [Korea] got the nominal status of an independent state. In reality Japan runs it. Russia wanted to get a foothold [in Korea], which resulted in the Russo-Japanese War. Japan defeated Russia, whereupon the Japanese government openly acknowledged that [Korea] was its protectorate. The internal affairs [of Korea] are run by the Office of the Resident General, and international politics [between Korea and other nations] have been assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. The national flag with its insignias of the eight diagrams and the Supreme Ultimate no longer flutters in the wind together with [the flags] of all nations in the world. Moreover, [Japan] has reduced [Korea’s] armaments, taken control over its finances, and severed its ability to resist [to such an extent that] it can no longer be called a [real] country.

The portrayal of Japan’s increased domination over Korea might be read as a warning. Japan has defeated both China and Russia, is now virtually turning Korea into a part of the Japanese empire. Japanese activities on the threshold of China might in the near future directly harm Chinese interests (or perhaps even Chinese sovereignty). In 1914, a couple of years after Korea had been annexed by Japan, Kang Youwei wrote a preface to the work The Tragic History of Korea (Hanguk tongsa), written by his Korean friend Pak Un-sik, in which he urged all Chinese to read Pak’s work as a forewarning of what might happen to China. Kang obviously continued the practice of drawing parallels between Korea and China.

668 Sun Qingru, Waiguo dili, 34. (自古為我藩屬。甲午之役。因日人敗我。而得獨立之名。其實為日政府為之。露國欲補足。遂有日露之役。日既敗露。日政府遂公然認為己保護國。內政歸統監府。外交移於東京外務部。八卦太極之國族 [sic.]。遂無復以與各國互為驕揚於世界。又使縮小兵備。總攬其財政。絕其反抗之能力。國不國矣。)

669 Jung-pang Lo, “Sequel to the chronological autobiography”, in K’ang Yu-wei; A Biography and a Symposium, 227.
8.2 Japan

Although described as something of an ideal nation which China ought to learn from in order to gain strength and wealth, Japan is also implicitly or more directly pointed out as a potential threat because of its developed economy and military power. In the state-compiled textbook *Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu* of 1910, the following observation is found in the chapter on Japan which stresses earlier Chinese loss of territories to an ever-increasingly strong Japan, still hungry for new markets and new land, implying that the Chinese mainland might soon be Japan’s next target:

There are networks of railroads and electric wires crisscrossing the country [Japan]. [Japanese] industry and business make rapid progress, and at galloping speed are taking control over trade in the Orient. Recently, after the newly concluded agreement between Japan and Russia, [Japan] is now annexing Korea. [Japan’s] greedy ambitions are only getting more and more difficult to measure! […] If one heads south one reaches the Ryukyu Islands. In old times [the Ryukyus] paid tribute to our country. Further south is the island of Taiwan. This was originally our territory, [but due to Japanese] aggression and [the following] cession of land, first [the Ryukyus] and then [Taiwan] were subordinated [to Japanese] authority. Now [the Japanese] are also extensively marking out land in Korea and plan to leave their island country for the mainland! This piece of land [lit. rivers and mountains — the territory of a country] of the present and of the past, how could our citizens not be upset?670

The Commercial Press’s higher elementary geography textbook, the very source from which the Ministry of Education appears to have borrowed most of the material for its description of Korea and Japan, also pays attention to the increased Japanese domination of the Korean peninsula. The criticism of Japan in this textbook is, however, not as high-pitched and forthright as that of the Chinese Ministry of Education. As for the passage cited above, the corresponding account in Commercial Press’s higher elementary textbook has a rather different flavour to it:

There are networks of railroads and electric wires crisscrossing the country. Communications are convenient, and there has been a sudden rise in the power of [Japanese] industry and business, which at galloping speed are taking control over the foreign trade in the Orient. […] Ryukyu is located south of Japan. In the past, it was a vassal state of our country. Taiwan is located further south of it. Formerly, it was a province of our country. First

670 *Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu*. Vol. 3, 17-18. (國中鐵路電線。縱橫聯絡。工商日進。駸駸乎有左右東洋之勢。近日俄日新協約成立。即並吞朝鮮。野心益不可測矣。[…] 若其南之琉球島。舊時入貢我國。再南之臺灣。本我屬土。一侵一割。先後改隸。今又益以朝鮮。其區畫遂島國而登大陸矣。河山今昔。吾國民能無動心乎。)
Although Japanese colonial ambitions on the Korean peninsula are unwelcome, the general picture of Japan is nevertheless predominantly positive in all the textbooks examined. The “progressive” Japanese are commonly described as something of the antithesis to the backward Koreans: in other words, while the Koreans are tyrannical, the Japanese have a constitutional government; while the Koreans are superstitious and preoccupied with ancient thinking, the Japanese promote modern education and technology, and while the Koreans are lazy, weak and unpatriotic, the Japanese are forward, militaristic and nationalistic and so on.

The Chinese educators even follow the Japanese example of describing the so-called Yamato race as a master race which, due to their alleged superior qualities, had also managed to drive away the native inhabitants of Japan (the Ainu people). Complete Geography, which also gives the most detailed description of the Japanese of all the textbooks examined, states:

Race: [The inhabitants of Japan] also belong to branches of the Mongolian race with the distinction between the Yamato race and the Wo [Jap. Wa] race. The Yamato race is of medium size and of diligent and courageous nature, and inhabits the islands of Hondo, Shikoku and Kyushu etc. The Wo race, that is to say the natives of Hokkaido, also known as the Ezo [an old Japanese name for the Ainu], but also referred to as the Hairy People, are sturdily built with protruding noses, flowing beards and lots of body hair. They are stupid and ignorant, and get closer to extinction with each passing day. Before the arrival of the Yamato race the Wo race lived all across the land, but by the time their struggle [for survival] had gradually been lost, they retreated to remote areas, and today there only remain some ten thousand individuals.

Similar accounts, although in somewhat abbreviated forms, are also found in the chapters on Japan in the geography textbooks for the lower grades. It might be surmised that Chinese

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671 Xie Honglai, Advanced Geographical Readers. Vol. 3, 15-16. (國中鐵路電線，縱橫聯絡，交通便利。工商勃興，駸駸乎有操縱東洋貿易之勢。[...] 琉球在日本之南。舊為我國藩屬。臺灣。又在其南。舊為我國一省。先後改隸彼國。設官分治。而政俗亦漸多改革矣。) This description of Japan’s expansion in East Asia is more or less identical with what one finds in the 7th ed. version of the textbook from 1906. However, in the earlier version of the textbook, Taiwan is said to have formerly been a part of the Fujian province (故與福建同省). Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 3, 19.

672 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 164-165. (種族 亦蒙古利亞族之分支，有大和種倭種之別，大和種身材中等，性敏力悍，散居本道四國九州等處，倭種即北海道土人，一名蝦夷，亦曰毛人，身偉鼻聳，美髯多毛，智慮茫晦，日就澌滅，大和種未來之先，倭種居全地，迨後互競澌敗，退居僻處，今所在者、不過萬餘人而已)

673 In textbooks for the youngest children, the Social Darwinian reasoning is usually somewhat toned down. Nevertheless, in the Commercial Press’s textbook for the lower primary school, for example, one finds the
schoolchildren could not avoid drawing parallels between their alleged racial superiority over the Miao people and that of the Yamato people over the so-called Wo “race” (i.e. the Ainu). Both the Chinese and the Japanese, the textbooks imply, belonged to East Asian *Herrenvölker* who had managed to expand their *Lebensraum* as a natural consequence of their superiority over less developed people. Interestingly enough, the derogatory term Wo, implying “dwarf”, was until the Tang dynasty applied to the Japanese in the Chinese Dynastic Histories under the section “Eastern Barbarians”. Later, during the Ming dynasty, the term was applied to the Japanese pirates who raided the Chinese coastlines. Traditional negative images of the Japanese as “barbarians” were effectively projected on the Ainu people in Chinese geography textbooks by discussing them in terms of belonging to the Wo race. Thereby the textbook compilers were able to disassociate Japan from old, predominantly negative images of that country, thus preventing schoolchildren from associating the modern Japanese with peripheral uncivilized people of ancient times. The Chinese textbook compilers stress instead the similar cultural background of the Chinese and the Japanese and apparently want to strengthen a sense of affinity with the Japanese among schoolchildren. The picture given of the Japanese is that of a people that not only resemble the Chinese physically, but until fairly recently were in the same precarious situation as the Chinese, although the Japanese have now managed to vitalize their country through reforms and changed attitudes.

*Complete Geography* argues that the Japanese, “in olden days could only pattern their technical arts on old models and were unable to come up with anything new, but after starting [international] trading relations and clearly having changed their way of looking at things, their porcelain and lacquer works have become so exquisite and excellent that Westerners

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following notion on the native inhabitants of Japan: “On our way north we pass through the city of Sendai, arrive in Aomori, and pass the Tsugaru Straits to Hokkaido. The natives belong to the Wo race, which is steadily declining in numbers with each passing day.” (北經仙台市。至青森。渡津輕海峽。至北海道。其土人故為倭種。日漸式微。) The text is illustrated with a picture, subtitled “the Ezo”, which depicts an Ainu family in front of a straw hut. The man is heavily bearded and holds a bow in his hand, and the woman has traditional tattoos around her mouth and carries a small child on her back. The picture contrasts with the illustration of Nijū-bashi in Tokyo on the preceding page. While the Tokyo motif represents progress and civilization (modernness in the form of utility poles and gas lamps are seen in the illustration), the picture of the Ainu family represents its opposite. *Lessons in Primary Geography*. Vol. 4, 6-7. In the geography textbook for the higher elementary school, published by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Yamato race is also said to have taken the place of the Wo race. *Gaodeng xiaoxue dili jiaokeshu*. Vol. 3, 16.

674 Ryusaku Tsunoda, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories: Later Han Through Ming Dynasties* (South Pasadena: P.D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), 4 note 2.
676 Commercial Press’s primary geography textbook from 1902, for example, states that the only things which make the Japanese look different from the Chinese, is that the men do not arrange their hair in queues and the women do not have their feet bound. Chen Qiansheng, *Xiaoxue wanguo dili xinbian*. Vol. 1, 10.
fight over them‖. It is also highlighted that Japan, after its industrial revolution, has also started to manufacture products other than the traditional handicrafts of Japan, and that much of this export goes to China. The descriptions of the new and reformed Japan in the Chinese geography textbooks were probably inspiring reading for the Chinese students. The general view in China was that a revitalized and modernized China, rich in human and natural resources, was bound to surpass small Japan, and since Japan’s development was seen as analogous to that of China, Japan’s story of success also foretold the promises of a brighter Chinese future. The Japanese, who formerly only held on to traditional ideas and methods and thus until fairly recently had had the same alleged shortcoming as the Chinese, had managed to alter their ineffective ways in favour of new, practical ones and now progressing along the lines of a modern society. If the Japanese could make it, the Chinese could succeed as well, and perhaps even outshine Japan. The political and social changes in Japan are described as manifestations of the process of civilization, and it is thereby also understood that the Japanese, by accepting new effective approaches, are developing in the right direction. In *Waiguo dili* we read as follows:

The Japanese people is of a simple and honest [alt. unsophisticated] character. Nowadays, however, they are gradually approaching civilization. They are courageous with an extreme ability to present a united front, and rich in loyalty to the throne and patriotic sentiments. They have started to use Western clothes, but during their leisure time [people who wear Western clothes when on duty], as well as the common people, still use the ancient clothes of our country, which they call *hefu* [Jap. *wafuku,* literally Japanese clothes]. They wear wooden clogs and sit on mats on the floor, and during summer and winter [alike] they gather around the fireplace. Their living quarters are all wooden houses, but in the big cities there are brick buildings in Japanese style, Western style and mixed Japanese and Western style. [The Japanese] are rich in refined interests and enjoy amusing themselves. Every spring when the cherry blossoms the whole nation seems to go crazy.

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677 Xie Honglai, *Complete Geography*, 164. (古來工藝、祗能仿舊、不能出新、互市而後、煥然改觀、磁器漆器、咸精巧絕倫、泰西士、爭先購買)
678 Ibid.
679 Harrell, 212.
680 Sun Qingru, *Waiguo dili*, 22-23. (日本民情質朴。今則漸近於文。有勇敢。團結力甚強。富於忠君愛國之志。衣服雖改用西裝。然燕居時及尋常人民。仍用我國之古裝。謂之和服。足著木屐。席地而坐。冬夏圍爐以常。家居皆係木造。都會中有以煉瓦造者。有和式西洋式。及和洋折衷式之別。特富於風雅之致。好遊玩。每春櫻花開時。舉國若狂。) Very similar notions are also made in *Shijie dili*. However, in this textbook, published a couple of years earlier, traditional Japanese clothes are not likened with ancient Chinese ones, but are instead said to be made of cotton. The textbook also notes that “the Japanese have very elegant ways and are of an alert and clever disposition, although they have the shortcoming of getting bored rather quickly” (日本人頗有優美之風。備機敏之性。惟稍倦於事。為其缺點。). *Shijie dili*, 143.
The Japanese, although described as an essentially rather simple and warrior-like people, are also ascribed some very appealing sides. That is, the image of the Japanese is not singularly that of a stern and patriotic people but also that of a socializing, harmonious and playful people, dressed in ancient Chinese clothes, which might have romantically reminded the Chinese reader of the good old days in their own past (in the case of Korea, however, traditional clothes are always mentioned in association with utter backwardness). From the context, it is understood that modernization does not equal the total abandoning of all ancient practices or customs (as long as they are not a hindrance to development), and that modernity can be combined with traditional indigenous customs. What the textbook refers to as “gradually approaching civilization” largely points at the recent achievements made in the field of modern Western-styled education since the Meiji Restoration:

Education has made swift progress since the Meiji Restoration and has been made universal [to an extent that] nowadays only two out of ten have not received schooling. There are the two imperial universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, but moreover also private universities [alt. colleges], eight of which are renowned. Military education is particularly stressed, and there are Military Staff Colleges, Navy Staff Colleges and Artillery and Engineering Colleges etc. 681

An efficient (preferably militaristic) educational system was considered to be one of the fundamental preconditions for modernization (or civilization), and it is easily understood that if China followed the Japanese example, it would flourish. If instead China continued to educate its citizens along traditional lines, like Korea, the reverse was to be expected. In order to convince the Chinese youth that modernization à la Meiji Japan was the preferable alternative, Japan could be described not only as a powerful (and potentially dangerous) nation. Therefore, as we already have seen above, the textbooks also stress all kinds of pleasant, appealing, inviting and harmless aspects of the nation, and they tend to combine accounts of the strength and modernity of Japan with descriptions of the Japanese not only as tough, unyielding and united warriors but also as pleasant and neat citizens. Complete Geography’s extensive description of the Japanese, gives the following account of the characteristics and customs of the Japanese, which also runs in this fashion. It presents the image of Japan as a picturesque country, inhabited by a valiant but also rather violent people

681 Sun Qingru, Waiguo dili, 23. (教育自明治維新以後。進歩頗速。亦能普及。現今百人中不就學者。不過是十分之二。大學有东京京都。两帝国大学。其餘私立大学。著名者有八。军事教育尤重。有陆军大学校。海军大学校。礮工學校。機關學校等。) A somewhat lengthier but otherwise almost identical description of the Japanese educational system is found in Shijie dili. Shijie dili, 145.
who nevertheless are fun-loving and tidy, and who have managed to produce a new culture which is a quaint and attractive mixture of old and new, east and west:

Generally the prevailing spirit amongst the inhabitants of the south-west is liveliness, while the north-easterners by custom are rather sincere and kind, and the people in the central parts strong, vigorous and brisk. Since ancient times they have had the practice of honouring chivalry and military values. Men used to carry swords at their waist when they went out, and if they encountered a traitor of the nation or a robber of the people, they would happily thrust the sword blade into his chest. Although the customs nowadays have changed, there still exist survivals [relics] of past traditions. [The Japanese] are usually fond of cleanliness, and the streets and houses are regularly swept and washed shinningly clean. There are many bath-houses, which allow people to bathe [on a regular basis]. [They] are hospitable towards guests and have a liking for amusements, which is why their magicians and entertainers possess the most excellent skills, and music and dance are not seen as anything extraordinary. Their houses are modest and low with walls of plaited bamboo. Paper screens can at any time be used to divide the interior into several rooms. At the back of their houses there is always some space left where flowers and bamboo are grown. [The Japanese] wear spacious clothes and wooden clogs, sit on mats on the floor, have ancient customs and greet guests with bows. Opium smokers are sentenced to severe imprisonment [with hard labour] and [opium] traders or producers are sentenced to imprisonment for a definite term, which is why nobody breaks [the ban on opium]. During the last thirty years, high and low have been working together with sustained diligence to study sciences with practical applications. New administrative reforms have been announced and carried out. The calendar has been altered and the style of dress has been changed. Everything has been patterned after Western first-class institutions [alt. systems], and [Japan] is day by day at galloping speed now approaching civilization.

Certainly the images of Meiji Japan in the Chinese geography textbooks were meant to instill hope for the future amongst Chinese youth, Japan representing what China might look like if

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682 (大抵居西南者、氣象活潑、居東北者、風俗較厚、中央之人則矯健輕快、自古習俗、尚俠重武、男子出必佩刀、遇國賊民蠹、輒剚刃胸以為快、今雖易俗、而其遺風猶有存者、平居好潔、街衢屋宇、時時洗刷、光可鑑物、多浴室、居民故勤浴、好賓客、喜娛樂、故幻人藝士、技皆精、音樂歌舞、視為恆事、居室卑矮、以木為架、編竹為垣、紙為屏、可隨時分一屋為數室、屋後必留隙地、栽花竹、衣服寬大、足履木屐、席地而坐、有上古風、見客鞠躬為禮、津吸鴉片者、處重禁錮刑、販賣或製造者、處有期徒刑、故無犯者、三十年來、上下孳孳、講求實學、布行新政、改正朔、易服式、一切仿泰西上等制度、蓋駸駸然日進文明矣。) Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 165-166. Textbooks for the lower grades are not as informative on the subject, but nevertheless follow the same pattern. In Commercial Press’s geography textbook for the lower primary school, for example, the Japanese are given the following description: “The whole people belongs to the yellow race and numbers about 50 million. They are short and small, but strong and unyielding. They value bravery, chivalry and straightforwardness, and like music and cleanliness.” (民皆黃種。數約五千萬。短小精悍。以勇猛俠烈相高。喜音樂。好清潔。) Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 4, 7-8. In Lessons in Elementary Geography one finds a similar notion: “They have the custom of honouring militarism and have a liking for cleanliness. There are many chivalrous Shi who anger at injustice [the character Shi is here probably to be understood as Samurai, which is one of the Japanese readings of the character]. They are often of a short and small bodily constitution, but are strong and unyielding, and have a physical appearance which reveals strong resemblance with people in our country.” (其俗尚武好潔。多慷慨俠烈之士。體格多短小精悍。容貌酷似我國人。) Xie Honglai, Lessons in Elementary Geography. Vol. 3, 17.
only it was re-energized by means of modern education, militarism, nationalism, constitutionalism and industrialization. However, at the same time the descriptions of daily life in Japan might have reminded the Chinese reader of life in ancient China, long before “backwardness” had weakened the Middle Kingdom. For many Chinese advocators of reforms Japan indeed appeared to mirror images of a distant Chinese past. The diplomat Huang Zunxian, who lived in Japan during the late 1870s and early 1880s, and whose positive descriptions of Japan were later to influence the reform movement in China, found pleasure in discovering Chinese legacies in everything from Japanese architecture, religion, music, various customs (such as squatting on the floor), footgear, clothing and so on, which he related to what he had read in Chinese historical chronicles.683 The scholar Zhou Zuoren, who studied in Japan during the first decade of the 20th century, was drawn to Japanese culture since Japan lacked such evils as opium-smoking and foot-binding, practices once upon a time also unknown in China. Recalling his first impression of Japan, Zhou writes: “For me, Japan was half foreign country and half ancient China. It seemed to me that ancient China continued to live on in that foreign land.”684 Although it seems unlikely that any Chinese patriot would mistake Japan for “the real” China, even the very name of the new era in Japan (Meiji 明治 “Enlightened Rule”) might have recalled the memory of old China before the Manchu rule.685 Considering how deeply Japan was associated with Chinese antiquity, Japan appears as something of a conserved microcosm of ancient traditions, or as an ancient China in miniature, which has nevertheless managed to adopt new Western ways. In this respect, Meiji Japan was reminiscent of the glorious days of antiquity and a reflection of Han-Chinese splendour, elegance and refinement.

The descriptions of Japan in the Chinese textbooks were surely influenced by Meiji images of the Japanese nation as the single oasis in a desert of backwardness, populated by the unique master race/Herrenvolk of Asia — the Yamato people. But while Meiji Japanese

683 Kamachi, 56-58.
684 Cited Kamachi, 59. Even students who did not share this passion for Japanese culture could not avoid associating Japan with ancient China. Consider the ironical remark by the anarchist Jing Mei Ju, remembering his first night in Japan in 1903: “There was a special quality about Japan. To begin with, the inns were built of wood and you had to take your shoes off before coming into the room. Here we had crossed the seas and gone abroad to study in order to prepare for future restoration, yet once in Japan the first thing we had to do was go back to antiquity.” Cited in Marius Jansen, “Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911”, in Cambridge History of China. Vol. 11, 353.
685 “Like the names of previous eras this too was picked from the Chinese, rather than the Japanese, classics. The name Meiji was adopted from a passage in the Yijing, which stated that the Sages in ruling (ji) turned out to what was bright (mei). Yet Meiji can also mean Ming rule, a phrase which would fit the idea of inheriting China. There is no evidence that Meiji leaders ever discussed such a meaning, but the character mei might have had an additional appeal to them by also signifying the Ming”. Ben-Ami Shillony, “The Meiji Restoration: Japan’s attempt to inherit China”, in War Revolution & Japan, ed. Ian Neary (Folkestone: Japan Library, 1993), 26-27.
textbooks not only underline Japanese pre-eminence over its neighbours in terms of modern
development and often claim racial and moral superiority to other Asians as well,\textsuperscript{686} none of
the Chinese textbooks examined suggest that the Japanese were equipped with innate racial or
spiritual qualities superior to the Han Chinese. While the Japanese self-images in Meiji
Japanese textbooks tend to be accompanied by rhetoric in favour of Japanese expansionism,\textsuperscript{687}
the Chinese textbooks reveal concern about developments on the Korean peninsula and
Japan’s extended dominant position there, as noted above. The Chinese did not see
themselves as racially inferior to the Japanese. They did, however, admit that Japan had
started its journey towards wealth and strength somewhat earlier, which is why Japan had
gained a stronger position than China. To achieve the same triumph as Japan, China ought to
follow the Japanese example, that is, the successful combination of ancient China and the
modern West.

\section*{8.3 Taiwan}

China ceded Taiwan to Japan in the peace treaty of 1895 and it is therefore dealt with in the
chapters on Japan in those of Chinese textbooks that discuss the island. Taiwan is described as
having greatly benefited from the reforms which followed Japanese colonization. These
reforms (not Japanese colonization itself) proved that it was possible to improve a Chinese
society, and the rosy accounts of the newly reformed Taiwan are presented as lessons that
China ought to learn from Japan’s strong and effective administration of the island. In \textit{Lessons
in Primary Geography} from 1906 we find the following account of Taiwan:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{686} In a Japanese primary geography textbook from 1893, for example, one finds the following notion: “The
Japanese do, as for their racial distinction, belong to the Mongolian race. However, the people of our country are
superior to other Mongolians, and have the custom of valuing loyalty, filial piety and fidelity.” (日本人は、人
種の別上に於てハ、蒙古人種に属するものとせり、然れども我國の人ハ、他の蒙古人に秀でて、忠

\textsuperscript{687} In the geography textbook quoted in the note above, the notions on the alleged superiority of the Japanese are
Ishikawa’s secondary school geography textbook on the geography of Japan, published in 1902, explains that the
―Yamato race‖ is superior to the other races of Japan, although all the different peoples of the empire are claimed
to be of one mind in that they are the subjects of the Japanese emperor. Alluding to the lack of space for Japan’s
increasing population the textbook concludes that measures must be sought in order to colonize regions overseas.
\end{quote}
We head southwest from the Ryukyus and arrive in Jilong in Taiwan. The city has a big coal mine. We head south to the urban prefecture of Taibei where the Japanese governor-general is stationed. Extremely many schools have been established here. We go south passing the cities of Taizhong, Jiayi and Tainan and Fengshan. The Japanese are in charge here of the civil and financial administration and execute the orders of the government. They have achieved complete success. Their bans on opium-smoking and foot-binding have been especially powerful. The island of Taiwan is isolated in the middle of the ocean. Once upon a time the Dutch and then Zheng Chenggong occupied it. Finally, it was handed over to our country. After the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War the Court Council offered it to Japan. The climate is hot and epidemics pester people. However, the earth is fertile and the production of cane sugar, camphor and rattan is very rich. The sources of profit are being more and more exploited with each passing day, and administration and customs have also gradually become different from before. On the east coast, there are wild barbarians. They wholeheartedly focus their efforts on plundering and murdering.

The successful Japanese colonial project in Taiwan, as referred to above, is probably not to be interpreted as justifying the Japanese takeover. Rather, it aims at exemplifying the concrete result of modern reforms, which were thought to ultimately prevent China from being further taken advantage of by the great powers (including Japan). However, although the account is probably written to encourage Chinese youth to have faith in the promises of Meiji-styled modernization, it can also perhaps be interpreted as indirect critique of Qing inefficiency and the government’s sluggish response to earlier demands for reform. On the other hand, the dynasty had by now become sensitive to public opinion and had started to pay attention to cries for change, including the growing demand for putting an end to opium-smoking. In 1906 (the same year as the textbook cited above was published), when enthusiasm for Meiji-style reforms was perhaps as strongest in Beijing, edicts were issued which not only promised constitutionalism and official reform but also the elimination of the use of opium within ten years. In fact, the Chinese authorities’ scheme to quell opium-smoking to a great extent drew inspiration from Japan’s system on Taiwan to regulate the use of opium in order to ultimately put an end to it. The mention of Japan’s success in restricting the use of opium on Taiwan might be understood as justifying the government’s newly adopted campaign against opium-smoking on the mainland. Be that as it may, the example of Taiwan nevertheless proved to the Chinese reader that it was possible, within a short period of time, to set up institutions for

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688 Lessons in Primary Geography. Vol. 4, 8-9. (自琉球西南行。至臺灣之雞籠。有大煤礦。南至臺北府。日本總督駐之。置學校甚多。南過臺中。嘉義。臺南。鳳山。日本人於此布政施令。俱有成效。其禁吸鴉片與纏足尤力。臺灣一島。孤懸海外。昔荷蘭人及鄭成功。先後踞之。卒歸我國。甲午之敗。朝議以畀日本。其地氣候溫熱。蠻僞侵人。然土質肥腴。產蔗糖。樟腦。藤。甚富。利源日辟。政俗亦漸異以前。島東岸有生番。專以劫殺為事。)

689 Cameron, 140-142.
mass-education and to rid people of backward practices. Soon, the textbook seems to imply, the Chinese on the mainland would also abandon their evil customs, start making progress and head towards modern civilization. By firm administration, modern education and exploitation of natural resources, it would be possible to modernize and enrich China, thereby turning the ancient empire into a powerful nation.

Complete Geography, which gives the most extensive description of Taiwan of all the textbooks examined, depicts the island as rich in natural resources but on the other hand as a rather forbidding place, and it is pointed out that many Japanese who visit the island die from tropical diseases. It is noted that there are three kinds of people on the island apart from the newly arrived Japanese, namely the Chinese population (who allegedly stem for the most part from Xiamen and Shantou), the shengfan and the shufan.\(^{690}\) The textbook’s definition of shufan accords with the traditional understanding of that term, that is to say, as signifying barbarians who have assimilated Han-Chinese ways: “[…] the shufan imitate the Chinese in food and clothing”.\(^{691}\) The definition of the shengfan, in contrast, is somewhat ambiguous; “[…] the shengfan are those [of the barbarians] who have not yet guihua [lit. submitted and changed], they often go on plundering expeditions”.\(^{692}\) Traditionally, shengfan defines savages who have not yet understood the blessing of submitting to superior Chinese ways and

\(^{690}\) In Shijie dili, the Chinese population is said to be of Fujianese and Cantonese origin and to have the same customs as people on the mainland. The shufan are said to be easy to control since they live side by side with the Chinese, while shengfan, who live in the mountains, are very difficult to master. The textbook explains that there are still few reliable accounts on the geography of the eastern part of Taiwan since it is inhabited by the shengfan. The state of affairs in the eastern “barbarian” part of the island is however contrasted with the modernized city of Taibei, the very heart of Japanese colonial power; the city has clean streets and two-storey buildings and is connected with the port of Jilong with a railroad. Shijie dili, 199-201.

\(^{691}\) Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 181. (熟番衣食仿華人) Meiji Japanese textbooks also follow the traditional Chinese practice of distinguishing between shengfan (Jap. seiban) respectively shufan (Jap. jukuban). In the chapter on Taiwan in a Japanese middle school geography textbook from 1895 (i.e. the same year Taiwan was handed over to Japan) the reader gets to know that the eastern part of the island is populated by ignorant savages of Malayan origin with a vicious temper. The textbook notices that the Chinese have been unable to control those natives, who are even said to be cannibals. The seiban are naked and live in straw huts, use poison arrows and find it honourable to collect human skulls, while the jukuban, who have been in contact with the Chinese, are somewhat less barbarian. Chûgaku Nihon chishi, Vol. 2, 70-71. A somewhat later Japanese geography textbook (first published in 1902) defines the jukuban as the mild-tempered natives who have been influenced by Chinese customs, and before the Japanese takeover paid tax to the Chinese. They live in the same areas as the Chinese and practice agriculture. The term seiban, on the other hand, defines those deer hunting and fishing barbarians who live in the deep mountains and dark valleys of the island, and are hostile towards the Chinese and find pleasure in slaughtering and massacring. As examples of the most savage ones, the textbook mentions the Paiwan tribe, who allegedly take pride in collecting as many heads from their enemies as possible, and the fierce facial tattooed barbarians (it is noticed that both the men and the women of this tribe have their faces tattooed) who live north of Pulishe (located in the central parts of Taiwan). Saishin honnô chiri kyôkasho 最新本邦地理教科書 [The newest textbook on the geography of our country], 2nd rev edn. (Tokyo: Rokumeikan, 1903), 128-129.

\(^{692}\) Ibid. (生番則未歸化者・每出劫掠) The term guihua (Jap. kika) originally signified the meaning of being exposed to the beneficial influences of upright rule and thereby giving allegiance to a sovereign, but came in modern times to be employed to convey the meaning of “naturalization”.

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are therefore rebellious and violent. However, here the term seems to have a slightly different connotation in that it appears to signify not only a refusal to surrender to Han Chinese conventions but also the rejection of citizenship and civilization in a modern sense:

According to the Shimonoseki Peace Treaty after the Sino-Japanese War, [Taiwan] was ceded to Japan. Japan has installed a government-general, divided [the island] into six prefectures and three districts and opened schools and laid railway, and is elaborate about the beneficial undertakings being carried out in every possible way. However, the wild barbarians do not obey the Japanese officials and still rule themselves through chieftains.

Here, the “wild” indigenous population of Taiwan stands for the opposite of modern civilization (the new order of administration, modern education and communications etc), but at the same time it also represents the antithesis of Chinese civilization, the level of progress among “barbarians” also being measured according to Chinese traditional principles in which Han Chinese culture is normative for defining civilized ways. Although the general image of the native inhabitants of Taiwan presented in the textbooks is that of savagery/barbarity, primitiveness and ugliness, there is one aspect of their customs which perhaps was seen as progressive and open-minded, the equality between men and women:

Examining their physical appearance [one finds that] they resemble the Malayans. They are split into sub-branches with different languages. They are of medium-size, have clumsy hands and feet and are of a strong and robust physique. They adorn themselves with tattoos, and in the boys’ sleeping rooms human skulls are placed everywhere in order to strengthen their courage. Those who live close to the Chinese know how to build brick houses and their women know how to weave hempen fabrics with elements of coloured weft to form patterns. Amongst the chieftains there are also female ones. The mutual affection between man and wife is so strong that they always accompany each other. Not even men of wealth take concubines. They live from slash-and-burn agriculture and hunting and fishing. New fields are cultivated every year, which is why the harvests are abundant. They do not use sickles but reap by hand. The grain is threshed in wooden mortars, cooked and eaten.

As we have already seen in previous chapters, Chinese educators of the early 20th century saw extreme inequality and the suppression of women as signs of backwardness. The comments

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693 Xie Honglai, Complete Geography, 182. (甲午馬關之約、割歸日本、日本置總督府、分六縣三廳、開學校、設鐵路、講求興利之法甚備、惟生番不服日官、仍由酋長自治)
694 Ibid, 181-182. (考其壯貌、似為瑪雷族、又分支族、語言不同、身材中等、手足粗大、強壯有力、文身為飾、少年臥室、遍置髑髏、以為可以壯胆近、華人居者、亦能磚石造物屋、婦人織麻為布、間以色綫、宛然成文、酋長亦有婦人為之者、夫婦相昵、出入必俱、雖富無婢妾、以樵耕漁獵為業、耕田歲一易地、故收成豐富、無所鐮刀、以手摘穗、舂以木臼、脫粟即煮食之) The text is illustrated with a picture portraying “Chiefs of wild barbarians” (臺灣生番酋長).
on monogamy and equality between the sexes in the Taiwanese aboriginals’ communities might hence be understood as an indirect criticism of the inequality between the sexes in the traditional Chinese society in general, and the practice among wealthy men in China of taking concubines in particular. The message then is that the Chinese, although far superior to “barbarians”, still have the corrupt practice of polygamy, which is not to be found even amongst the primitive natives of Taiwan, so it must be brought to an end as soon as possible.
9 Conclusions

Unlike Western geography textbooks of the early 20th century, China’s modern geography textbooks used within the framework of China’s first modern educational system do not reveal any signs of what James Morris Blaut calls “Eurocentric diffusionism” but rather what might perhaps be referred to as “Sinocentric diffusionism”. It is Asia, as something of an extended China, which is pointed out as the cradle of civilization where man took his first steps out of barbarity. Expressed directly or implicitly, it was China which once upon a time was the very breeding ground of cultural development and the heart of human progress. The Asian continent in general and China in particular are associated with the mild climate of the Temperate Zone — the single most important premise for the development of civilization — and with peoples of yellow skin. Western civilization is not presented as originally having sprung from European sources of knowledge but rather as something derived from an offshoot of Eastern wisdom. In this light, Europe, despite its advanced modern civilization, is simply seen as standing on the shoulders of the giant Asia. The textbooks nevertheless strongly emphasize that the nations of the West have nowadays managed to attain a higher level of development than the rest of the world.

The world is largely depicted as being at a stage at which different races or Völker are intertwined in eternal struggles in which the less persistent, less aggressive and less united peoples in the long run are doomed to destruction. The peoples of Europe are perceived as something of a peril, immediately threatening the independence of the nations of Asia. White peoples have managed to gain the upper hand in the struggle with the Yellow peoples, while peoples of all other colours in the world have been forced into submission or are on the verge of extinction. Only Japan has managed to keep up with the Western nations in terms of military strength and social advancement. China must therefore quicken the pace to join the developed world and make swift changes in order to be able to proceed towards a more advanced society and not end up on the losing side in the constant struggle for existence.

Change and reform do not, however, necessarily imply wholesale “Westernization”. Japan, it is understood, has successfully integrated “Western knowledge” into a native setting and has thereby managed to acquire the strengths of the Western powers without losing its “national essence”. It is Japan, rather than the Western world, that China ought to imitate to get on the right track and proceed towards higher stages of social evolution. Japan, as the
inheritor of a culture reminiscent of that of ancient China, seems to prove that it is possible to combine ancient (Chinese) traditions with new approaches. To achieve the same success as Japan, China has to become more progressive, vigorous and united, and thereby make up for its lack of national consciousness. Allegedly stuck in a phase of stagnation, China has to be revitalized through the promotion of the forceful spirit of patriotism, Militarismus and Gemeinschaft. Following the Japanese example of fostering the virtues of loyalty and martial bravery, the Chinese are to restore the strength and glory of ancient times, thereby rising from national humiliation.

Militarism, as idealised in the textbooks, does not, however, imply totalitarianism. That is to say, although a well-functioning state demands obedient subjects, despotic governing alienates the ruler from the people, so it is impossible for absolute states (such as China) to have a chance against nations in which the educated citizens have a say in politics and hence actively involve themselves in the welfare of the nation. In the “civilized nation”, the patriotic, well-informed, engaged and militarily alert citizens identify themselves with the head of the state, the citizens and the authorities thus forming one united body. As something of an organic entity, or social organism, the “civilized nation” proceeds and expands with formidable strength at the expense of unenlightened, weak and scattered peoples. Mass education and political reform towards a more advanced society are thus of absolute necessity for the independence of China, if not for her very survival.

By means of a Prussian-style constitution à la Meiji Japan the Chinese masses are to identify themselves with their nation, while the promotion of Confucian state-loyalism is to knit citizens and authorities closer together, under inspiration clearly drawn from Japan. If widely accepted by the Chinese masses, Confucian state-loyalism will unite the people and generate order and stability.

Confucianism, it is understood, provides a moral set of guidelines for proper behaviour but stands above all other doctrines in that it is not a religion. Daoism and Buddhism, on the other hand, taught by ignorant clerics who bewilder the already ill-informed masses, only generate superstition and stupidity, if not even chaos and national disorder, and are, as degenerate dogmas, not compatible with an enlightened society. In its “purest”, non-degenerate form, however, Buddhism is not a superstitious religion, but an advanced philosophy which emphasizes equality; thus it manifests a quality which plays a role in advanced societies based on unity and common interest (and not on despotism and selfishness). Unlike primitive superstitions such as shamanism and animism, more highly
developed religions are not necessarily harmful to social development as long as people are educated and civilized.

The degeneration in China is described as having reached extreme proportions due to evil practices, such as foot-binding and opium-smoking. These customs, which have too long deprived the Chinese of their strength and initiative, are, together with an unwillingness to embrace new ideas, lack of patriotism, the low esteem of the military, superstition, disunity and despotism, seen as the main causes of China’s backwardness. The textbooks nevertheless offer the readers some comfort and encouragement. It is usually noted that things are heading in the right direction since more and more people have come to realize that change is inevitable and have therefore begun to rid themselves of harmful practices and customs. The Chinese are, moreover, described as being equipped with certain advantageous qualities such as frugality, perseverance and thrift, and as naturally talented for making money.

The image of the Chinese as profit-loving businessmen or entrepreneurs is particularly strong when it comes to the Cantonese and Fujianese, who are said to be of a progressive and adventurous nature, unlike their inland compatriots. However, the Cantonese and Fujianese are also described as somewhat unrefined, and perhaps even rather unreliable. It is nevertheless understood that the good communications that the open sea provides have allowed people in the coastal areas to get in touch with the outer world, so they have picked up new impulses from abroad. The element of the sea is seen as giving rise to the daring spirit, full of vitality and initiative, that has encouraged the Chinese in the south-east to head for new lands abroad.

The port of Shanghai (where most of the textbooks also were published) emerges as the most vibrant, modern and progressive city, and the lower reaches of the Yangzi River as the most sophisticated region in China. Reading between the lines, it is understood that it is this area that has also become the true heart of China. The farther away from this heart of progress and refinement, the more backward and unrefined it gets — in one way or the other. In the Chinese inland, natural barriers and poor communications hamper the spread of new ideas, so people are generally more reluctant to accept change and are less progressive. Areas with a large proportion of tribal populations are pointed out as especially backward, if not barbarian or savage. Non-Han ethnicities are always seen as less “civilized” than the Han people, whether they are measured by modern “scientific” principles which doom them to extinction as having stagnated at a primitive level of social development, or by conventional Han ethnocentric standards in which tribes uninfluenced by Chinese ways are seen as wild savages,
not very different from wild animals, or, if exposed to Chinese culture, as somewhat more human.

Descriptions of the “savage” or “barbarian” tribal populations of China Proper are often combined with accounts of an alleged ancient Han-Völkerwanderung which pushed the native tribes aside, forcing them to withdraw from the heartland of China to mountainous areas in the periphery. Allegedly, the Han people ascended from the Kunlun Mountains, located at the very heart of the Asian continent, on a triumphant and victorious long march towards the Central Plains, led by the ancient Landesvater of the Chinese people, the Yellow Emperor. The forceful Han people expanded their territory beyond the Central Plains by colonizing new territories, cleansing them from primitive elements. From the context, it is understood that the Chinese, as the descendents of the Yellow Emperor, have to reinvoke their latent aggressiveness and will to seize a position for themselves in order to withstand the challenges of today, when China is threatened by powers which are steadily expanding at her expense.

Non-Han peoples near or in the Inner Asian Zone are depicted as being more developed than the tribal populations of China Proper but less civilized than the Han people. The Turkic and/or Muslim peoples are described as opium-addicted troublemakers, hostile and aggressive towards the Han people, and the Tibetans as an extremely superstitious people with wicked and bizarre customs. The image of the Mongols is more complex. On the one hand, they are alien and primitive nomads beyond the Great Wall, stuck at a lower stage of social development; on the other hand, they are the descendants of a people once extremely forceful and vigorous who even managed to subjugate white people. Ancient Mongols, not their modern counterparts, are clearly raised up as a good example of the strength of the “Yellow race”. Lamaism is pointed out as unfortunately having eroded the Mongols’ natural fighting spirit, thereby largely depriving them of their initiative and vigour. Nevertheless, the Mongols exemplify the unbeatable concept of martial spirit and physical strength. That is, the Spartan and warlike lifestyle of both men and women has fostered a people who are essentially more robust and fierce than the Europeans. The message beyond the descriptions of the Mongols is that peoples who do not uphold their valour and warlike qualities are destined to lose their strength, while those who nourish their martial spirit are better off in the constant struggle for survival.

The rulers of the Qing dynasty, the Manchu minority, also a people with roots in the Inner Asian Zone, are not given as vivid or detailed descriptions as the other peoples beyond the Great Wall. The heartland of Manchuria is depicted as rather backward, but the few descriptions of the Manchus that are given nonetheless imply that they have accepted Han
ways to such an extent that they are more or less as good as Chinese. The mention of the Yellow Emperor as the ancient founder of the Chinese nation might indeed be interpreted as an expression of Han-nationalism, but on the other hand, the textbooks are never openly anti-Manchu or revolutionary. They nevertheless communicate the message that the Chinese should restore their former strength and glory by evoking the spirit of their ancestors during the reign of the Yellow Emperor, when the Chinese stood out as an Asian master race/Herrenvolk. Moreover, as members of the Mongolian race, the Chinese should recall the memory of the Mongols, who once upon a time dominated the world, and draw moral strength from their example of fostering a bold spirit in a strong body. The Japanese, an Asiatic people who basically share the same culture as the Chinese, have emerged as the new power in the East, not merely because of their acceptance of “Western knowledge” but also due to their force of character, which has grown up along with their fostering of martial values. What is as important as establishing modern institutions and learning how to master new skills and techniques is to embrace a vigorous, forceful and brisk go-ahead spirit — the kind of energy which martial alertness generates.

While the Japanese nation is the very manifestation of a militant and progressive attitude, the Koreans are the opposite. That is, the Koreans are uninterested (if not even hostile) to change towards more advanced forms of civilization; they are so fettered by apathy and listlessness that they are unable to move forward, hopelessly clinging to all sorts of backward practices. It is also implied that the deeply unequal Korean society divides the people, making them less fit for survival than nations with advanced forms of government that unite the citizens. Korea has consequently become an easy prey for Japan. While the descriptions of Japan’s road to success since the opening of the Meiji period give a hint of what China might experience, provided that the Chinese enthusiastically join hands in an attempt to reform and revitalize their fatherland, the passages on Korean backwardness and national decline, which has left Korea on the verge of destruction, present a scenario of what China might experience if it neglects reform.

The textbooks make it clear that the Chinese, blessed with a beneficial climate, rich natural resources and access to convenient water transportation in the southeast, indeed have some advantages in the process of developing China into a modern nation. Nevertheless, perhaps even more important than the physical geography of a given area is the mindset, or attitude, of the population. That is, the landscape might influence the temperament of the inhabitants to a certain extent, but above nature thrones the human will, and if the Chinese would only set their minds on developing a more aggressive, progressive, cooperative and
self-confident attitude, committing themselves to the destiny of their nation, they might also be able to enjoy the same success as Japan, or at least be able to defend their own independence while attempting to reform and strengthen China.

The images of East Asia presented in Chinese geography textbooks are chiefly to be understood from a Meiji Japanese context, and as basically mirroring ideas rooted in Japanese understanding of the world at the time. That is, during the process of introducing modern geography to Chinese schoolchildren, Chinese educators relied heavily on Japanese sources on geography, thereby largely facing a Japanese, nationalistic and colonial discourse, which implied that Japan, as the most civilized nation in Asia, was also in her right to dominate the Asian continent. Although Chinese educators did not accept Japan’s self-proclaimed position as the rightful leader of East Asia, they nevertheless had to deal with “knowledge” produced to underline the greatness of the Japanese nation, in comparison with the “backward” peoples on the Asian continent.

The Japanese, the discourse implied, are loyal to their Emperor, upright, courageous, patriotic, vigorous and united, ready to unselfishly sacrifice themselves for the sake of Japan — a progressive and modern nation whose citizens enjoy freedom and rights thanks to the outstanding constitution which their benevolent Emperor and father has bestowed upon them. In the Japanese discourse, other East Asians emerge as the antithesis to Japanese citizens and as such are depicted as basically lacking the allegedly unique qualities of the Japanese. Thus Chinese educators had to emphasize that Japan, though now on equal footing with the West, had until fairly recently been seen to be as backward as China. The Chinese were basically as good as the Japanese, and if they would only learn from their example and did not remain passive and disunited, China would in the long run inevitably triumph, however dark things might look for China at present. The Chinese simply had to set their mind right by building up an attitude similar to that the Japanese had developed.

What the Chinese textbooks actually requested was Chinese nationalism, but employing the Japanese model to unite the Chinese masses would prove impossible. The Chinese nation (or perhaps rather the nation-to-be) was a “family” without a patriarch, so the Chinese people simply had to turn their sense of loyalty and piety towards the nation itself. After the revolution in 1911, the Japanese model for reform became obsolete, incompatible with republicanism which relied on other values than authoritarian constitutional monarchism. Moreover, with Japan’s ever-increasing imperial expansion and escalating aggressive foreign policy towards China, interest in Japan as a model cooled off. Throughout the Republic, China was riven by internal turmoil and the nationalist government did not manage to get
absolute control over the entire nation. China had nevertheless entered a new era with new influences and ideals, so it might be suspected that the worldview and the images of the peoples of East Asia were re-evaluated in the geography textbooks published after the fall of the Qing dynasty. The question of the degree to which the textbook compilers of the Republican era challenged or developed the patterns of describing China and the rest of East Asia is beyond the scope of this thesis; it is a topic for further research which might deepen our understanding of how the Chinese people have come to look upon themselves and their environment.
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