

**Some thoughts on
writing *Modern China*
and Rockefeller
*Foundation (1913-1966)***

by Hu Cheng

Nanjing University



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Abstract

With generous financial support provided by the Rockefeller Archive Center, I was able to pay a research visit to Rockefeller Archive Center from July 20 to September 7, 2018. This was my second visit to the Center, following one in 2008, when the Center granted and financially supported my one-month-long access to its archival resources. This second visit proved to be an important one. This time I took advantage of the fact that the Center now allows archive users to take photographs. As a result, I was able to proceed with my work efficiently and made extensive use of archival material which I missed in my previous visit. This report presents a description of the important historical materials I have viewed and collected during this visit. It includes seven subjects in general, described as follows, that together constitute my research project, *Modern China and Rockefeller Foundation (1913-1966)*.

I. The 1908 -1909 Oriental Education Commission

In 1908, five years before the establishment of the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), Rockefeller agreed to send a commission to the Far East to inspect education, headed by Edward D. Burton, Professor of Theology from the University of Chicago. Burton and other educators in the delegation hoped to find opportunities for philanthropic activities in the realm of education. In the archives, I have found several letters between Burton and Rockefeller family advisor Frederick Gates, providing information on their thoughts about and plans for future philanthropic educational enterprises in China.¹ Before arriving in China, Burton had visited Turkey, Egypt, Japan and Korea. In China, Burton and his group surveyed medical education and social developments in Shanghai, Beijing, Changsha, Wuhan and Nanjing. Their visits were welcomed by many Chinese officials, elites and local communities. Upon returning to the United States in 1910, the commissioners submitted a report on their trip, which specifically mentioned the “need and opportunity” of China for Rockefeller philanthropic attention in education.²

What did Burton and the other commissioners understand to be “China’s needs” at that time? And from their perspective, what actually belonged as part of Rockefeller philanthropic opportunities? In order to address these two questions, I believe that we should think about social structures and development in both China and the United States, or think even more broadly, by adopting a global perspective. China at the beginning of the twentieth century, was undergoing an “educational awakening”—a modernizing process that was contemporary with and related to those in other non-Western countries, such as Egypt, India, Turkey, and especially Japan. Not only were the Chinese government and the elites highly enthusiastic about modernizing education, but also Western medicine had already been introduced to China through missionary medicine since 1850s. These factors provided favorable conditions for the RF to realize its ideal of promoting “the well-being of mankind.”³

II. The Chinese Faculty of PUMC

The China Medical Board and Peking Union Medicine College (hereinafter referred to as CMB and PUMC) were two of the largest philanthropic endeavors by the RF for overseas medical education. Upon the initiation of the project, the RF made clear that its purpose was not to create a permanent foreign institution in China, but to transform the college gradually into a Chinese medical center, staffed by Chinese professionals and completely controlled by a Chinese board of trustees.⁴

The results of this policy did not take long to emerge. In 1920, nine members of a teaching staff of thirty-one, 29 percent of the total, were Chinese, and this percentage rose significantly to 53 percent in October 1925. Perhaps even more significant was the fact that Chinese doctors directed two departments. One of the most important posts in the entire institution, that of medical superintendent of the hospital, was efficiently filled by a capable Chinese doctor. The caliber of the Chinese faculty was deemed equal to that of its Western counterparts. A young Chinese doctor, Robert Kho-Seng Lim (Lin Kesheng, 1897 – 1969), who was offered the top post of a department,

declared, "If this offer is made because of my ability as a scientist, I accept, but if promotion is proposed because I am a Chinese, I must decline."⁵

More significant developments followed: the ratio of Chinese staff to foreign staff in 1936 was 102/22, with a ratio 5/8 for professorship and a ratio of 10/3 for associate professorship, compared to the ratios of 6/22, 0/8 and 0/3 respectively in 1920; At the time of the resumption of the PUMC after the end of the Pacific War, Chinese professors formed a dominant percentage in all professors while foreign professors only accounted for 7.5 percent. ⁶

In order to depict a process of increasing “Chinese-ness” of the PUMC and to shed light on the implications of these developments for the modernization of Chinese medical education, I paid special attention to the archival materials on Chinese faculty. At the RAC, I found abundant archival materials: besides some on Robert Kho-Seng Lim, there was documentation concerning Wu Hsien (Wu Xian, 1893 – 1959), Ko-Kuei Chen (Chen Kehui, 1898- 1988), and a group of medical professionals who played important roles in the nationalization of PUMC in the 1950s, including Liu Shih-hao (Liu Shihao, 1900-1974), Chang Hsiao-ch'ien (Zhang Xiaoqian, 1897 – 1987), Feng Lan-Chou (Feng Lanzhou) , 1903-1972) , and Kha-Ti Lim (Lin Qiaozhi, 1901 – 1983).⁷ I plan to look at the medical trainings these Chinese professionals received at the PUMC, their education abroad, as well as the roles they played at the PUMC.

III. The Hookworm Campaign in China

From 1910, the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission launched campaigns to eradicate hookworm in the southern United States. The Director for the East, Dr. Heiser, traveled to China in the spring of 1907 to carry out investigations, and he found that the infection rate of hookworm in central China was very high. An extreme case, in the Ping Hsiang region of Jiangxi Province, nearly 80 percent of tens of thousands of coal miners in the largest coal mine in China, suffered from hookworm.⁸

One year before Dr. Heiser's project, Dr. Fu Ching Yen (Yan Fuqing, 1882-1970, who graduated in June 1909 as a Doctor of Medicine of Yale University's medical school and subsequently worked at Hunan-Yale Medical School) had conducted an epidemic survey of this area in 1906. He made efforts to prevent and treat infectious diseases, and had even applied to the International Health Commission (IHC) for aid. With funds received from the IHC in 1918, Yen summoned a medical team to Ping Hsiang and launched a four-year investigation and prevention campaign that involved more than 120,000 local people.

In *To Cast Out Disease: A History of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation (1913-1951)*, John Farley describes the hookworm campaigns launched by the International Health Board in many countries including Puerto Rico, British Guiana, India, and Ceylon (Chapter "Retreat from Hookworm (1920-1930)" pp.75-88). It is regrettable that his excellent work makes little mention of the project in China in the same period as an essential part of the worldwide program. Therefore, my work will discuss the developments IHB/D made in China during that period, and compare them with those in other regions (Puerto Rico, British Guiana, India, and Ceylon, etc.).

IV. "PUMC Standards" and CMB

From 1917 to 1949, the CMB had built and managed the PUMC, modeled on the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHUSOM). By 1950, when the Chinese Communist Party decided to nationalize PUMC, (except for four years of forced closure by the Japanese due to the outbreak of the Pacific War), PUMC only provided 300 graduates, 200 nurses, and more than 1,000 visiting doctors for the Chinese society. According to the communist government, the elite medical education of the Republican era was too inefficient to fulfill needs. There was only one trained professional doctor per 100,000 of the population, with almost no decent hospitals in rural and inland provinces, and the number of medical doctors and nurses trained by PUMC was the equivalent of a drop in the bucket in a desert. It simply could not provide the minimum medical services for ordinary Chinese.

After 1949, the communist government stressed that medicine must serve the poor people. It proclaimed that medical colleges must lower their professional standards in order to train more doctors and nurses who were able and also willing to be relocated to rural areas to serve the people. It politically labeled the old system as "PUMC standards," based on the JHUSOM's model as US imperialism's "cultural aggression." The government denounced and purged the "old PUMC" professors who had been adhering to these standards.

Some "old PUMC" professors, who lost their work in Beijing, were expelled to the inland and poorest provinces for "discipline and punishment". For a more detailed description, please see my paper "The Persistent 'Old Peking Union Medical College 'in the Mao Era", *Journal of American-East Relations*, 25, 2018, pp. 235-262.

Although the RAC's archival holdings do not include any significant material from the post-1949 PUMC, I found some documents touching on "PUMC standards" before 1949. With this documentation, I found out that, as early as 1915, when an RF commission, which included William Henry Welch, visited Peking, Chinese officials advised that the RF's money should be invested more in supporting medical colleges in Changsha and Jinan, rather than in building a top medical college in Peking. The officials maintained that their recommendation were related to strategies for promotion of democracy in China — a Peking-based medical college must wait until the basic living standards of the people had been improved and the education had been improved; in any case, the best-trained professional doctors would give little relief to a disease-ridden, poor and backward China.⁹

However, Roger S. Greene, Acting Director (1927-1935) of PUMC, aired a different opinion. Insisting on adhering to the standards in running the college, he said:

We believe that highly trained Chinese could do much more for their country than any foreigners, and furthermore it has been demonstrated that it is difficult for Chinese who have remained

abroad for a long time to exert a powerful influence in their own county. If we kept Chinese doctors in foreign countries long enough after graduation to fit them for real leadership, they would be denationalized when they returned. For these reasons a high grade school in China seemed to us necessary and all our experience of the last few years tends to make us believe that this decision was right, especially when we consider the service which the college is rendering in carrying further the training of both foreign and Chinese medical graduates from abroad.”¹⁰

I am interested in describing such a historical trajectory of professional education, from the beginning of PUMC's founding to the 1950s, after the Communist Party's nationalization, and disclosing the link between "PUMC standards," the structure of the Chinese society, and nation-state politics.

V. The “China Program” (1930s)

Selskar Gunn, who worked for International Health Division, traveled to China in 1931 to assess the RF's work there. While in China, he met Jimmy Yen (Yangchu Yan, 1890-1990), a pioneer in mass education and leader of the Rural Reconstruction Movement, which was also the work That the RF's John Black Grant has already done. After making several trips to China, Gunn wrote a report that proposed a coordinated program of basic education, health, and economic development. He believed that the RF should allocate financial resources to fund the training of personnel in sectors crucial to China's modern development such as agriculture, education and health care. He persistently lobbied the foundation to achieve this goal. As a result, the IHD eventually launched the “China Program,” starting in 1935.¹¹

Since there has been some scholarly attention to the Rural Reconstruction Movement, I will focus instead on how the IHD supported the applied sciences of some universities. A few Chinese universities received IHD financial support, providing funding to one or several of their departments. Among these universities were Nanking University (Agronomy), Nankai University (Economics), Yenching University (Sociology and Biology), and Tsinghua University (Physics, Chemistry and Biology).¹² By looking at this historical process, I plan on exploring further how these universities strived

for and utilized the grants from “the China Program”, and how this affected their development.

VI. The “China Program” after the Outbreak of Second Sino-Japanese War

In 1938, the Japanese army occupied Nanjing, Zhejiang, Shandong and Peiping and the Chinese national universities located in these areas, which had previously received grants from the CMB and the IHD, moved to Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan Provinces in Southwestern China—a large frontier region that had not previously been covered by the RF’s programs. In this region temporarily free of wars, these universities carried on their teaching and learning as usual. Until the end of the war in 1945, the “China Program” of the IHD and the CMB had been continuously providing grants for these universities as they did during the prewar period, and provided funding for some local universities in Southwest China, such as Yunnan University and Guiyang Medical College.¹³

At the RAC, I discovered several pieces of correspondence between Fei Hsiao-Tung (Fei Xiaotong, 1910 – 2005) and the RF’s New York office, which disclose how the RF allocated funds to Chinese universities, the departments that had received grants, and the universities that they considered should be allocated a larger share. From 1936 to 1938, Fei studied at the London School of Economics under the pioneer anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. After receiving his Ph.D., Fei taught at the Sociology Department of Yunnan University and advocated an anthropological (or sociological) investigation of China’s ethnic groups in frontier regions.¹⁴ Because of the war, Japan also tactically used the theory of ethnic self-determination to provoke the resistance for independence among the ethnic groups in these frontier regions. Out of hatred of the Japanese, Chinese mainstream academics and officials criticized Fei’s studies as constituting acts of imperialism and colonialism that jeopardized the national identity and allegiance of China as a unified nation. Fei’s theory continued to remain unacceptable in China until the 1980s when China opened itself to Western scholarship. After 1980, Fei

was officially recognized and credited for his expertise about China's ethnic groups, and he was promoted by the CCP to be one of the top leaders and representatives of the intellectual community which cooperated with the government. Of course, he also consciously practiced self-censorship and brought his own research into line with the CCP's ideology.

During the time when Fei's research was marginalized in Chinese academic circles and he suffered political pressure, funding from the RF was invaluable to him in 1943-1944. This correspondence I found at RAC provide example of the significance of the RF funding for the diversified development of Chinese academics.

VII. The “Cox Committee Investigation”

During my first visit to the RAC in December 2008, I did not see materials related to the “Cox Committee Investigation.” However, I did mention in my previous paper about the situation after the Chinese Communist Party nationalized PUMC in 1950, and I discussed about the “Old PUMC”, CMB, and RF which were all accused by the CCP of American imperialist “Cultural Aggression Fortress.”

In this paper, I elaborate on the Chinese faculties working at Old PUMC and the situation in which they were forced to confess their relationships with American colleagues. These relationships, whether it was work-related communications or personal friendship, were subjected to political inspection by the CCP. Some non-complying faculties were labeled “worshipping America, pro America and fearing American” and were removed from their positions.

During this visit at the RAC, I have viewed some materials of the anti-Communists and conservatives' activities during the McCarthy era in the United States around 1952. They censured the RF's international philanthropic education. Coincidentally similar accusations occurred in Communist China and McCarthy era's American political scene.¹⁵ I am interested in exploring how the ideal of universal knowledge or “science

without frontiers” encountered narrowmindedness of nationalism and political antagonism.

Epilogue

The findings presented in this paper are only preliminary, because a thorough analysis of the materials collected from the RAC is not finished yet. Among literature on PUMC, CMB and the RF in China, the most important ones include the books of Mary Brown Bullock, of Mary E. Ferguson, of John Z. Bowers, and of Qiussha Ma, (She has a U.S., Ph.D. and now teaches in the East Asian Studies Program at Oberlin College. Her book *The Change of Chin: 100 Years History of Rockefeller Foundation in China* is published in Chinese.)¹⁶ They mainly constitute the Westerners’ knowledge of the history and their works have all been translated into Chinese.

However, to date, there has not been a book on RF and modern China written by a Chinese indigenous scholar in the field. If we look at it from the perspective of indigenous scholarship, the focus will not be just from the perspective of the English world. Instead, I will focus on how the PUMC, CMB, and RF transplanted and fully developed in China, and how they integrated with the Chinese social and cultural environment at the time. By making use of the abundant historical materials at the RAC, as well as many others collected from other archives and old newspapers in China, I plan to write a book entitled *Modern China and Rockefeller Foundation and (1914-1966)* in Chinese.

I hope to take a more balanced approach by adding a local or indigenous perspective to the dominant historical narratives in English literature, and will pay attention not only to the foreigners at the CMB and PUMC, but also to the Chinese who actively participated in and shaped the programs. As the Ancient Greek historian Herodotus said, the responsibility of history is to “prevent the traces of human events from being erased by time, and to preserve the fame of the important and remarkable by both Greeks and non-Greeks; Among the matters covered is, in particular, the cause of the

hostilities between Greeks and non-Greeks.” A similar dynamic can be applied here.

The RF's medical education enterprise in China was a multinational collaboration, launching and organizing the largest and longest-lasting philanthropic medical education effort of the 20th century. It constituted the RF's largest single education grant outside the US. This endeavor needs to be kept in mind, when contemplating the conflicts and tensions in today's Sino-US relations. We see that there are some close-minded and intolerant people in both countries who advocate narrow nationalism and xenophobia. According to Herodotus's statement, I believe even more that the purpose of studying this history is to be able to preserve the expectations and efforts of all those who participated in the RF medical education program in China at the time. The initial goal of the enterprise was to transcend different cultures, different ethnicities, and different countries- “promote the welfare of mankind throughout the world” (1915).

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the RAC for providing me with the research grant and opportunity to study the archival records held there.

¹ “Ernest Burton, Harry Pratt Judson, Eri Hulbert, Alonzo Parker, and Albion Small to Frederick T. Gates, December 31, 1906”, Box 657, Folder 6836, 6838, 6839, 6840, RAC: *Proposed Foreign Mission Fund, 1906-1909*, RAC; Richard J. Storr, *Harper's University: The Beginnings: A History of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1966); Catherine Lewerth, *Rockefeller Foundation History*, vol. 3, pt. VII, “Creation of the China Medical Board (1914-1921),” (Unpublished, Rockefeller Foundation institutional history, 1949)..

² Ernest Dewitt Burton, Thomas Chowder Chamberlin, “Report of the Oriental Educational Commission of the University of Chicago, December 1909,” Box 113, Folder 831, CMB, Inc., RAC.

³ John S. Baick, “Cracks in the Foundation: Frederick T. Gates, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the China Medical Board,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan. 2004), pp.59-89.

⁴ “Roger Greene to Jerome Greene, March 1, 1914, August 4, 1914”; RG 1.1, Series 601, Box 26, Folder 239, RF, RAC; Addresses & papers, dedication ceremonies and medical conference, Peking Union Medical College, September 15-

22, 1921. Dedication, Peking Union Medical College, 1921, pp.54-120; Peking Union Medical College, *Annual Announcement, 1921*, pp.1-15.

⁵ *The Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report, 1925*, p.39; "Robert Kho-Seng Lim (Lin Kesheng) Box 5, Folder 186, CMB, RAC.

⁶ Mary Brown Bullock, *An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Union Medical College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) pp.79-83.

⁷ "Wu, Hsien" Box16. Card 2, Box39, Folder 10, CMB, Inc., RAC; "Ko-Kuei Chen" Box 120, Folder 873; "Liu Shih-hao" Box 19, Folder 24, CMB, RAC;" Chang Hsiao-ch'ien" Box 16, CMB, RAC," National Hsiang Ya Medical College 1943-1948" Box 96, Folder 683, CMB, Inc.,RAC;" Feng Lan-Chou" Box 113, Folder 821, CMB, RAC; "Kha-Ti Lim" Box 64, Folder 451, CMB, Inc., RAC.

⁸ E. C. Meyer. "Distribution and Control of Hookworm Disease in the Mines of China", Dr. F. C. Yen. "Report No. 7336, Hookworm Infection Survey at the Pinghsiang Colliery, China from Dec 20-31, 1917" (1917), Box 55, Folder 352, CMB, Inc. RAC.

⁹ "China Medical Board-Diary-Goodrich, 1922", Box 24, Folder 167, CMB, Inc., RAC.

¹⁰ Diary for the period Feb 14-March 14, "R. S. Greene to, L. C. Goodrich," April 26, 1923, Box 63, Folder 440, CMB, Inc. RAC.

¹¹ Selskar, M. Gunn, "Report on Visit to China," Record Group 1.1, series 601, Box 12, Folder 129, RF, RAC,

¹² "General China Program, 1937-1940", RF, Record Group 1.1, series 601D, Box 40, Folder 493, RAC.

¹³ "China Program: General: Reports, 1931-1952," Cox and Reece Investigations, Box 22, Folder 468, RF, RAC.

¹⁴ Robert Winter, "Fei Hsaio Tun and Yunnan University, February 28, 1944." RG 1.1, Series 601, Box 23, Folder 216, RF, RAC.

¹⁵ Cox Resolution-Reece Investigation, 1951-October 1952, RG III, Series 2, Box 40, Folder 401-405, RF, RAC.

¹⁶ Mary E. Ferguson, *China Medical Board and Peking Union Medical College: A Chronicle of Fruitful Collaboration, 1914-1951* (New York: China Medical Board of New York, 1970); John Z. Bowers, *Western Medicine in a Chinese Palace: Peking Union Medical College, 1917-1951* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1972). Mary Brown Bullock, *The Oil Prince's Legacy: Rockefeller Philanthropy in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011). Mary Brown Bullock, *An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Union Medical College*

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), Qiusha Ma (馬秋莎), 《改變中國：洛克菲勒基金會在華百年》(*The Change of Chin: 100 Years History of Rockefeller Foundation in China*) 桂林：廣西師範大學出版社, (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2013).