

**The Coral Tree:
Chinese Students at Colorado College and Their
Racial-National Identities in the Early 20th Century**

A THESIS

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In the summer of 2022, I had to stay in Colorado Springs for the summer break because tickets to home, China, were too expensive thanks to the pandemic. As I was browsing through the internet in my sublet apartment on Wahsatch Street, two blocks away from campus, I came across a letter written by a Chinese student to his family when he was studying in the U.S in the 1920s, with the address of his new residence: 720 N. Wahsatch, Colorado Springs, right next to my apartment. His name is Wen Yiduo, today remembered as a “poet”, a “political activist”, a “warrior for democracy”, and a revolutionary martyr in modern China. As a Chinese student, I’ve always heard about the myths of two of the most influential Chinese literary giants’ attendance at Colorado College ever since I received my admission letter in 2020. My knowledge of and relation with that part of the history was completely changed in that summer.

What ensued was almost two years of archival research conducted at Colorado College from 2022 to 2024 in the attempt to reconstruct the everyday lived experience of Chinese students in the early 1920s. For me, a Chinese student at Colorado College in the early 2020s, an uncanny blend of both the sense of place and space and the sentimental resonance with my predecessors, transcending temporal gap, became the fuel for this research. Their stories, their voices, and their exclamations charged with all sorts of emotions live in the CC newspaper, *The Tiger*, the college yearbook, *The Pikes Peak Nuggets*; they live in memoirs, journals, alumni books, correspondence, their own writings, and writings about themselves. But what's even more uncanny is the way they live in a novice historian’s night dreams and daily imaginations; they haunt me in the language I speak, in characters I write, in faces I've become familiar with in the past two years, in existing or razed buildings on campus that I frequent on a daily basis. Given the ways in which these untold stories and unheard voices haunt me personally, I figured that I should also share the haunting with a broader audience.

I want to specifically thank Professor John Williams for his encouragement, review suggestions, and all the other support throughout the whole process of this project ever since the summer 2022. And beyond that, all our time spent together both inside and outside the Palmer Hall has become one of the most memorable parts of my career at Colorado College in the past three years. Professors Jane Murphy, Carol Neel, Purvi Mehta, and Jake Smith have provided feedback and support at different stages of this project. Librarians and my colleagues at Tutt Library Jessy Randall, Amy Brooks, Steve Lawson, Corie Cole, Caitlin Perkins, Calida Barboza, Carlos Duarte, LeDreka Davis, and Ben Harrison have provided generous support and assistance which are all altogether vital to the completion of this project.

Last but not least, the existence of the Press at Colorado College, still the MOST underrated department and resource on campus, has offered me tremendous emotional support and a rare opportunity of artistic expression through printing and book arts. I can't possibly imagine my life at CC without its idea, its physical space, and all the fascinating people involved in its operation including former Printer Aaron Cohick and his successor Jillian Sico and all my colleagues.

Enjoy reading.

A Note on Convention

I used Pinyin romanization for most Chinese names and places mentioned in this essay. Exceptions include “Sun Yat-sen” and people whose original Chinese names are not identifiable. Non-Pinyin spellings included in direct quotes remain the same. For all the people who had used different names throughout their lives (Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, for instance, was named Liang Chih-Hua 梁治華 in his early life), names commonly known to the today’s public are generally preferred unless otherwise noted. Traditional Chinese writing is used for terms, names, and published works during the Republic of China era (1912-1949) and post-1949 in Taiwan. For contemporary published works and scholars’ name published in in Mainland China, simplified Chinese writing is used.

Introduction

A Car Accident in Denver, 1924

One afternoon in the Spring of 1924, three Chinese students, Mr. T, Mr. H, and Luhe, decided to drive to Denver to have some “Chop Suey”.¹ Already acquainted with the gorgeous natural landscape of Colorado Springs, they were impressed by the urban glamor of the “biggest inland city in the American west”, Denver: “the soaring splendid mansions were decorated with bright and luxuriant electric lights, just like dense ‘fiery trees’ looking from afar; ant-like pedestrians jostled each other in the crowds. An endless stream of cars flew through the streets.” They couldn’t help exclaiming over the “world of prosperity” and “cities of civilization”.

Bamboo chopsticks, flower-decorated bowls, mushrooms... A long-craved Chinese feast at “Nanking House” on Curtis Road brought them home that night in Denver’s Lower Downtown. On their way back to the inn, a car crashed into them as they were turning at a crossroads. A policeman of imposing stature with a club in hand soon arrived and took the students and the other driver, Mr. Levan, to the police station. Awaiting these three young foreigners was nothing but a strongly felt “injustice”.

The policeman in charge of the case reported to the Chief once both parties were brought in:

“These boys are driving a “Nash” down South the Fifth Ave, while Mr. Levan’s driving westward. They clash at the crossroad. I didn’t see how they clashed. But these boys can’t drive well; and the damage is on the rear of Mr. Levan’s car”²

After asking Mr. Levan to be seated, the Chief then turned to the three Chinese to start his inquiry:

“Where do you come from?”

“We come from Colorado Springs.” One of the three answered.

The Chief continued to ask: “Who’s the driver?”

¹ “Luhe” [鲁和] is homonymous with “flare of fury” [怒火] in spoken Chinese. According to the text, “Luhe” alludes to the author Liang Shiqiu himself. “Chop Suey” was written in English in the original text.

² It was published in the original text as “But these boys can’t drive wess” and the author’s own Chinese translation reads “These three don’t know how to drive very well. [但是這三個人不很會駕車。]” I made the correction according to the context.

The policeman pointed at Mr. T. The Chief suddenly jumped up and pounded on the desk:

“If you can’t drive, why should you?”

After rounds of attempted self-defense by the three, the Chief was fiercely irritated, scowling at and scolding them who were asking for “justice”:

“What! I am the authority, mind you! Put the driver in jail!”

The charge given for the Chief’s decision was “reckless driving”. When Mr. H and Luhe tried to further argue for chance to speak, the Chief told them to get out and that it was none of their business now. The two left the police station in despair. Standing in frigid winds at midnight of deadly silence with only a few wandering pedestrian and hawking paperboys in the street, they looked paler than they’d ever been. Without any connections or acquaintances and yet unwilling to let their companion sit in jail overnight, Luhe eventually accepted the reality: “We the people of a weak country are meant to be bullied when we are abroad. Suffering loss of money is nevertheless better than having T endure all the pains in the jail!”

They walked back to the police station and settled the case by paying 170 dollars, 120 demanded by Mr. Levan for the car damage, and 50 charged by the police as a fine.³ Mr. T was released, frightened and upset. His lips trembled as he tried to hold back his tears. Amidst the darkness in their room later that night, Mr. T suddenly screamed in his dream: “Fight! Fight! Who says I’m the national of a weak country? ...Forward! Fellow compatriots! They are bullying your brothers! ...Why don’t you rise up? They are treating your brothers as slaves! ...”

They returned to Colorado Springs the next morning.

The setting sun shed its light into Luhe’s room in Hagerman Hall, decorating it with bloody scarlet. Yet it could not shine into his mind that was surrounded by the gloomy haze. Holding a

³ Accommodation and food for one student at Colorado College was roughly 55 dollars per month at the time. The settlement was over three months of living expense for these students. See Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, 《談聞一多》 [*About Wen Yiduo*], (Taiwan: 傳記文學出版社 [Biographical Literature Publishing House], 1967): 29. It is unclear whether they completed the transaction in cash or check.

newspaper mailed from home in his rocking chair, Luhe tried to read the blurry paragraphs but could only discern some fragments of words: “news of triumph... purchase of machinery... loans... opium plantation... investigation... dredging...” A sense of bitterness flowed into his mind. Luhe put down the newspaper and soon felt asleep.

The sun slowly set atop the summit of Pikes Peak. Sitting in his room, Luhe was still staring at the five-color flag hung on the wall, thinking about his homeland and the so-called “justice” that the Americans always liked to talk about.⁴



Street scene in Denver, circa 1930s.

⁴ Liang Shiqiu, “公理 [Justice]”, 大江季刊 [*Great River Quarterly*] Vol.1, Issue.1(July 1925): 125-133. I have made some adjustment and selection from the original text. The five colors of the flag are red, yellow, blue, white, and black, which refer to the five major ethnic groups in China: Han, Manchu, Mongols, Hui, and the Tibetans respectively. It was the national flag of China used successively by the Provisional Government of the Republic of China and the Beiyang Government from 1912 to 1928. Earlier in that article, the author mentioned an episode where an American friend of Luhe visited his room and asked what the five-color flag was. Feeling hurt and upset by the friend’s ignorance about his home country, he asked back: “Do you know what ‘Stars and Stripes’ is?”. See Liang Shiqiu, “Justice”. The discourse on race and nation in modern China will be discussed in the following section.

“Justice”, written by Liang Shiqiu [梁實秋], was first published in July 1925 by the Great River Society [大江會], a Nationalist-Statist society founded by Chinese students studying in U.S. in the summer of 1924 in Chicago, a few months after the incident took place.⁵ The story itself was originally published in Chinese with English texts embedded in places of direct quotes such as “Chop Suey” and dialogues at the police station. It tells a distressing encounter of three Chinese students mistreated by the police force in Denver presumably because of their race as they were attending Colorado College (CC) in Colorado Springs in the 1920s. Produced in the aftermath of the event, the article is particularly valuable not only for its vivid depiction of the urban landscape of Denver in the 1920s and lively recordings of study-abroad Chinese students’ lives in early 20th century U.S, but also its essential editorial role in delivering further ideological and political agendas of the society, of which the author Liang was one of the founding members, by narrating an emotionally charged episode of mistreatment these students had experienced. Despite the unverified authenticity of the author’s narration, its readers perceive a strong emotional complex ranging from shock, indignation, frustration to self-reflection. For the story’s main character Luhe, Liang himself, the appalling experience he and his peers had gone through ironically conflicted with the idea of “justice”, a value central to the American culture and society in his understanding, and was further intertwined with his national identity manifested by the ending scene of story where he stared at the five-color Chinese national flag hanging in his room.

In the academic year 1923-1924, ten Chinese students enrolled in Colorado College, making “the largest oriental club the city ever had”.⁶ Their names were Chen Zhaozhang [陳肇彰], Wang Guohua [王國華], Zhao Minheng [趙敏恆], Sheng Simin [盛斯民], Liang Shiqiu [梁實秋], Xie

⁵ A more detailed survey of the history and ideological-political formation of Great River Society will be discussed later in this essay.

⁶ “Seven Chinese Students at Colorado College Make Largest Oriental Club City Ever Had” *The Colorado College Tiger* (Colorado Spring), October 2, 1923: 4.

Fencheng [謝奮程], Mai Jianzeng [麥健增], Wen Yiduo [聞一多], Philip H. Howh, and Cao Yuping [曹與平]. Six new students enrolled the following academic year 1924-1925: Zhang Mingxin [張明昕], Chen Shufei [陳叔靡], Xia Pingfang [夏屏方], Gao Han [高瀚], Yang Zhaotao [楊兆燾], and Li Shuqiao [李樹翹]. Eight other Chinese students attended Colorado College from 1919 to 1922: Chen Changtong [陳長桐] (1919-21), Lu Meison [陸梅僧] (1920-21), Yang Guangsheng [楊光沆] (1920-21), Lin Jiuming [林久明] (1921-22), Chen Yuqi [陳裕祺] (1921-22), Ting Hung-Yu, Huang Xiaozhen [黃孝貞] (1921-22), and Lin Tongyao [林同曜] (1921-22). From them emerged some of the most influential and renowned figures in a variety of fields in 20th century China, including educator, writer, translator, and literary theorist, Liang Shiqiu; poet and scholar, Wen Yiduo; “journalism genius” and the “greatest Chinese journalist” Zhao Minheng⁷; ambassador of Republic of China to the Philippines and one of the “Nine Resisting-Japanese-Aggression Diplomat Martyrs”, Yang Guangsheng⁸... Their collective presence, distinguished by “yellow skin” and “black hair”, drew attention from the community in forms of not only curiosity and hospitality but also prejudice, discrimination, and mistreatment. Such strongly felt and lived experiences were internalized and actively reflected upon by themselves and were more broadly shared by their fellow peers across the place and time in early 20th century U.S.

This essay, based on archival research, attempts to piece together the picture of Chinese students at Colorado College as a racial minority in the early 1920s by studying their everyday lives including club activities, academic performance, organizational lives, and outdoor experiences in Colorado Springs. Besides a study of everyday-life history, this project’s further goal is to engage with a broader discourse of the construction of racial-national identities of overseas Chinese in the

⁷ Chen Yushen 陈玉申, [赵敏恒——“最了不起的华人记者”](#) [Zhao Minhen---The Greatest Chinese Journalist], Tsinghua Alumni Association, published January 11, 2013, reposted from 青年记者 [Youth Journalist], Issue 18, 2007.

⁸ Wikipedia, [抗日外交九烈士](#) [Nine Resisting-Japanese-Aggression Diplomat Martyrs], last edited on January 1, 2024.

early 20th century.⁹ The aforementioned article in this sense provides an example of Chinese student's deployment of emotionally explicit descriptions of experiences as racial minorities to convey underlying ideological messages; it thus suggests more complicated processes of transformation from their overseas experiences as racialized subjects to their later undertakings of ideological initiatives and political activism both abroad and in China.

Part One of the essay first engages in the historical discourse on racial-national identities since late 19th century China, followed by a brief review of history of racism against Chinese/Asian population in the U.S since 19th century. It then introduces Tsinghua College [清華學堂], the preparatory school for study-abroad Chinese students to the U.S as recipients of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship in the early 20th century; the following section reviews Tsinghua students' involvement in the 1919 May Fourth Movement, which significantly impacted Chinese students' early intellectual development of national identities with their broad activism throughout the movement. Part Two, the centerpiece of this essay, starts with their journey from China to Colorado Springs. By scrutinizing primary sources ranging from personal reminiscences and correspondences to college and students' publications, with particular attention given to two figures, Liang Shiqiu and Wen Yiduo, it then investigates their everyday lived experience at a liberal arts college located at an urban community in the American southwest to demonstrate ways in which such experiences, in turn, interacted with the processes of construction of their racial-national identities. Finally, Part Three analyzes the ideological formation of the Great River Society founded partially by two of the Colorado College graduates in 1924. This section locates the Great River Society within a broader discourse of "Nationalism"- "Statism" in modern China by briefly reviewing their intellectual and linguistic lineage historically; the analysis of the content their publication, The Great River Quarterly [大江季

⁹ I particularly avoided the term "diasporic Chinese" by using "overseas Chinese" to highlight the distinction between earlier immigrant Chinese, the majority of whom occupied in working class profession and had settled in the country, and study-abroad Chinese students, who mostly returned to China after finishing their education in the United States.

刊], then illustrates how study-abroad Chinese students' experiences as racial minorities interacted with the transformation of their racial-national identities and ideological conviction.

On the Historiography of Study-Abroad in modern China

For today's China, the study-abroad issue seems to be the root of any issues of education and politics... The fact that returned study-abroad students have indirectly or directly directed and influenced the affairs of domestic politics, education, and industry has shown the paramount importance of study-abroad issues. At this moment, the study of the history of study-abroad cannot be entirely "making what's not needed an urgency" or waste of time!¹⁰

—*The History of Study-Abroad in Modern China* (1928), Shu Xincheng

The passage above written by the prominent early 20th century Chinese education theorist and practitioner Shu Xincheng [舒新城] as the opening of his book *The History of Study-Abroad in Modern China* [中國近代留學史] indicates his position in defending the ongoing study-abroad program in the 1920s amongst various criticism at the time. It further exemplifies an "urgency" felt by the Chinese intellectuals to produce the knowledge of Chinese study-abroad history in the early 20th century as a way of understanding their historical positionality and the future of the cause of Chinese education.

From the first ever study-abroad Chinese student Yung Wing [容闈] (1828-1912), who traveled to the United States to attend Yale University at the age of twenty-six, to the inauguration of the Boxer Indemnity scholarship program 1911, the Chinese quest for modernity over the course of late 19th and the first half of the 20th century was intrinsically bound to a series of study-abroad programs under various historical moments. Following a series of events in the 1910s including New Culture Movement [新文化運動]'s intellectual upheaval, May Fourth Movement [五四運動]'s unprecedented height of political activism, and the arrival of the renowned American education

¹⁰ Shu Xincheng 舒新城, 《近代中国留学史》 [*The History of Study-Abroad in Modern China*], (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2004): 3.

reformer John Dewey in China in 1919, the Chinese intellectuals became increasingly invested in educational theories, reforms, and reflection on the ongoing study-abroad mission and its history. It was in this context that Shu's *The History of Study-Abroad in Modern China* marks the starting point of a historiographical discourse on this field.

As a general survey of the historical development of Chinese study-abroad, the book is organized in a chronological order with most chapters dedicated to specific study-abroad programs and time periods. Such narrative organization provides a linear narration that is helpful for his readership to understand the multi-faceted and fragmented nature of the history of Chinese study-abroad in late 19th and early 20th century. This source is particularly valuable for its comprehensive and exhaustive account of the major events and development of study-abroad history by his time. As both a primary source produced at a time in which my study is situated and a secondary source that consciously produced its own historical knowledge with articulated agendas, Shu's thoroughly built work provides contemporary readers with an invaluable perspective to understand Republic-era intellectual's interpretation of and attitudes towards the history of Chinese study-abroad. Shu's peculiar role as both historians actively constructing historical narrative as well as practitioner of educational experimentation and reform further adds to the significance of this book. A major limitation of Shu's work, however, is the absence of Chinese students' individualized voices regarding their experiences both abroad and after they returned. This is explained partially by its sole focus on the general history as a practical approach to the issues faced by the author at his time; the limited access to sources also made studying students' personal experiences unfeasible.

As a representative of contemporary scholarship on the subject, Weili Ye's *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927* published in 2001 adopts completely different approaches, methodologies, and theoretical framework.¹¹ As the title

¹¹ Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927* (United States: Stanford University Press, 2001).

indicates, Ye's book, compared to Shu's, has a finite range of time and place. The major distinction between the two is Ye's critical treatment of Chinese students, not as analytic objects, but historical subjects. As she revisits a historically significant cohort of Chinese intellectuals and contextualizes their study-abroad journeys within its time, Ye not only insightfully analyzes them but, more importantly, engagingly brings them to life for the readers.¹² A study of "daily life history", Ye's work expands on the intellectual activities, academic performance, interpersonal exchange, and other previously under-studied aspects of these students. By touching upon themes such as professional development, organizational life, nationalism, race, gender, and transcultural development, Ye further weaves the lives of this cohort of students into the discourse on Chinese modernity and Sino-American transnational exchange in the twentieth century.

Ye's more humanistic approach to the study-abroad Chinese students is representative of a wider range of contemporary scholarship on the subject. Li Yong and Zhou Hongyu's "A Study on the Daily Life of Chinese Students at the Teachers College of Columbia University in the 1910s" investigates study-life experiences of a cohort of Chinese students at the Teachers College of Columbia University including their classroom experiences, reflection of practicing-learning, dissertation writing, and extracurricular lives such as club activities, public speeches, and protests in New York.¹³ Guo Jingping and Yang Liu's work focuses on the development and organization of "Chinese Students' Alliance", a study-abroad Chinese students organization in the United States, and its implication for Chinese students' transcultural engagement and development of national identities abroad.¹⁴

¹² Paul Bailey. "Review of *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in US, 1900-1927* by Weili Ye". *History*, Vol. 87, No. 287 (July, 2002): 402–403. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24425857>.

¹³ Li Yong 李永 and Zhou Hongyu 周洪宇, "20 世纪 10 年代哥伦比亚大学教师学院中国学生的日常生活及其影响" [A Study on the Daily Life of Chinese Students at the Teachers College of Columbia in the 1910s], *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 42, No. 5 (May 2021): 93-102.

¹⁴ Guo Jingping 郭晶平 and Yang Liu 杨柳, "20 世纪初留美中国学生会研究 (1901-1935)" [On the Chinese Students' Alliance in U.S.A in the early 20th century(1901-1935)], *Journal of Henan Polytechnic University (Social Sciences)*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (March 2020): 68-75.

This essay primarily engages with Ye's *Seeking Modernity in China's Name* with a shared focus of time period, subject, and methodologies. Largely in agreement with Ye's argument in Chapter 3 "The Question of Race" on the historical significance of "May Fourth Generation" and Chinese students' intellectual conceptualization of race, this essay alternatively juxtaposes Chinese students' development of racial and national identities as an intertwined and simultaneous process. Whereas Ye approaches the general picture of study-abroad Chinese in the early 20th century in a thematic fashion, this essay's particular attention given to the confined time and place of Colorado College in the 1920s offers a more detailed examination of the everyday life and group dynamics of overseas Chinese in a transnational lens. It is in this approach that this research also hopes to contribute to an understudied chapter of the history of Chinese diaspora in the American southwest.

Part One

Discourse on Racial-National Identities in Modern China

Although a temporal boundary for the Chinese modernity is constantly contested, the First Opium War (1839-1842) between the British Empire and Qing dynasty is often invoked to mark the beginning of chapter on foreign intrusions in the Chinese society and the decline and renewal of late-imperial China in the second half of the twentieth century. Following the Treaty of Nanking as a direct product of the First Opium War, the next five decades saw a series of attempts by the world imperialist powers to realize their economic and geo-political interests in China that accumulated in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Besides the territorial loss of Taiwan and Liaodong Peninsula and the defeat of the Beiyang Fleet that symbolized the failure of Qing state's modernizing effort in the late 19th century, the war's more profound impact lies its shocking herald of an existential crisis for the Chinese racial lineage. Starting with a military officer Yan Fu [嚴復]'s publication of a series of short essays in 1895, intellectuals and reformers such as Zhang Binglin [章炳麟], Ma Junwu [馬君武], Huang Zunxian [黃遵憲], and Liang Qichao [梁啟超] became actively engaged in the discourse of race in the last decade of the 19th century. By translating texts on evolutionary theories by western philosophers and anthropologists such as Herbert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley, these reformers integrated western texts with traditional Chinese notions of groups [群], lineage [族], types [類], and seed/race [種] that were both intuitive to the Chinese masses and relevant to the current political situation. As Frank Dikötter points out in *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, Spencer's idea of "inter-group competition" and Huxley's concept of "intra-group cooperation" were particularly appealing and "adequately fitted the needs of the time."¹⁵

¹⁵ Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race on Modern China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 106-107. Dikötter also highlights that the early translated texts on evolutionary theories in late 19th century China were essentially non-Darwinian; the use of "Darwinianism" to summarize the late 19th-century discourse on race risks the danger of reducing the complexity and diversity of Chinese intellectual activity to a passive regurgitation of Western thought. See *The Discourse of Race on Modern China*, Chapter 4 "Race as Nation".

The failure of the “Hundred-Day Reform” of 1898, an attempt to preserve and renew the imperial rule following the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895, disillusioned many pro-Manchu reformists, who thus resorted to revolutionary thinking. Once a supporter of Manchu rule and the reformist leader Kang Youwei, Zhang Binglin (1869-1936) shifted to create a new corporate identity for the Chinese nation, *Hanzu*, meaning “Han Lineage-Race” [漢族].¹⁶ The invention of the Han race conceptualized the distinction between the “Han people” [漢人] and “Manchu people” [滿人] and laid the theoretical ground for the revolutionary cause to overthrow the Qing rule, the racially others. At the same time, diasporic Chinese students and intellectuals in Japan in this period took on their path in developing the idea of “race as nation”. Sharing the same Chinese character (Kanji) spelling, the Japanese word “minzokushugi”, a product of its own modernizing process, was borrowed and reframed in the Chinese context as “minzu zhuyi” [民族主義], nationalism. The word “minzu” can refer to multiple notions such as “nation”, “people”, “tribe”, and “race”. The linguistic and conceptual overlap between race and nation that the term “minzu zhuyi” encompasses in the face of abroad Chinese students’ fundamental concern with the survival of race contributed to the incorporation of construction of race into nationalist vision.¹⁷

With the increasing political radicalism in the 1900s, revolutionaries’ conceptualization of race gradually replaced that of the reformists in the popular realm.¹⁸ The revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen inherited some of the previous reformist conceptualization of race and further developed the principle of “Racial Nationalism” [民族主義] that emphasized national salvation through the

¹⁶ Kai-wing Chow, “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 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997): 35-52.

¹⁷ Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 108-109.

¹⁸ As scholar Shen Songqiao points out, both Chinese intellectuals’ transnational experience in Japan and the emergence of print capitalism with the mushrooming of hundreds of journals and periodicals at the turn of the century contributed to the conception and popularization of revolutionary thinking. See Shen Songqiao 沈松侨, “近代中国民族主义的发展: 兼论民族主义的两个问题 [The Development of Nationalism in Modern China: Also on Two Issues of Nationalism]”, *A Journal for Philosophical Study of Public Affairs* (Taiwan), Issue 3, December 2002. http://www.shehui.pku.edu.cn/upload/editor/file/20180626/20180626192922_0797.pdf.

construct of the Chinese nation [中華民族] consisting primarily of the Han race, along with four other racial-ethnic minorities, Tibet, Hui, Manchu, and Mongols [藏, 回, 滿, 蒙]. After years of struggle led by Sun's Revolutionary Alliance [同盟會], the 1911 Revolution eventually ended the dynastic cycle that had lasted for thousands of years and gave birth to a new Chinese republic on the first day of 1912. Now, under the notion of "Five Races Under One Union" [五族共和], different racial or ethnic minorities with a predominant Han race residing over the shared territory for the first time in history were integrated into one single ethnonym, the "Chinese". Less than a decade later, the discourse on race and nation would reach another climax in the May Fourth Movement in 1919, which greatly impacted the subjects of this research, the study-abroad Chinese students in the 1920s. The five-color national flag that Luhe was staring at in his room at Colorado College in 1924 had already been infused with renewed political and emotional meanings by then. But before that, we return again to the 19th century to the other side of the Pacific, where notions of race and racism had taken drastically different forms.

Anti-Chinese Racism in the United States since 19th Century

Although the usage of the term "race" in Western Europe dates to the pre-medieval era in differentiating groups and lineages, the substantial significance of the word only started to transform into a framework in the nineteenth century to explain the physical differences of the human species. Conditioned by the Industrial Revolution, capitalist trade, and expanding global colonialism, Europeans entered ever-intensifying contact with Asians and Africans.¹⁹ Scholars such as theologians, anatomists, physiologists, and ethnologists started to engage in the debate on the idea of race. Despite this disciplinary diversity, many "notable" scholars reached a consensus on a determinist view of physical characteristics over culture and mental quality and the dominance of a

¹⁹ Michael Banton, *The Idea of Race* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978): 17-19.

racial hierarchy. Typical of this kind of thinking were statements such as George Cuvier's "The Chinese were less advanced for their skulls shaped more like those of animals" and Charles Hamilton Smith's "The Caucasians were Nature's highest achievement".²⁰

In the context of American society, this hierarchically structured racial thinking was reinforced by Americans' growing resentment against the Chinese starting in the 1850s. The large influx of Chinese immigrants into the United States seeking work opportunities amidst the Gold Rush and Western Expansion made them a source of cheap labor that spurred the agitation of the working class in the American west. In an article titled "Our Misery and Despair", the Chinese were regarded by Californian labor leaders as "cheap working slaves", who accused them of "stealing public lands" and "undercutting American living standards".²¹ With its historical reference to the heathen Mongolian invasion of Christian Europe in medieval period along with the contemporary competition posed by Chinese migrant-workers along with the rise of imperial Japan, the psycho-cultural complex of "Yellow Peril" was gradually developed in 19th century Europe and North America that encompassed "racist terror of alien cultures, sexual anxieties" and an imagined existential threat where the West would be overpowered by the East.²² Proliferated by popular culture, the image of Chinese became increasingly associated with negative traits such as dishonesty, vices, and uncleanness.²³ A representative of the cultural phenomenon of this period is Bret Harte's infamously popular poem "Plain Language from Truthful James", more commonly known as "The Heathen Chinee", published in San Francisco's *Overland Monthly* in September 1870. Its widespread and lasting popularity is captured by one commentary in 1902: "It was read by everybody and quoted by everybody until it became as trite as the most familiar quotation from

²⁰ Banton, *Race*: 33-35.

²¹ Dennis Kearney and H. L. Knight, "'Our Misery and Despair': Kearney Blasts Chinese Immigration", "Appeal from California. The Chinese Invasion. Workingmen's Address," *Indianapolis Times*, February 28, 1878. Accessed at <https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5046/> on February 28, 2024.

²² John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, eds., *Yellow Peril: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London & New York: Verso, 2014), pp.12-14. Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (United States: University of California Press, 1997): 2.

²³ Ye, *Seeking Modernity*: 86-7.

Shakespeare.”²⁴ Despite the fact that the author originally intended the poem to satirize the anti-Chinese prejudices prevalent among Irish day-laborers in northern California, Harte’s ambiguous words were distorted and conveniently borrowed by many of its xenophobic readers to further proliferate racial prejudices.²⁵ As will be discussed later in this essay with detailed analysis, the misconstrued message of this poem embodied in its distinct literary style would reach as far as our Chinese students in the 1920s, where they were put into a peculiar interaction with their American classmate.

Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, anti-Chinese sentiments in the United States eventually mounted into an uproar among American whites in forms of open violence against the Chinese population in cities of the west, including Los Angeles (1871), San Francisco (1877), Tacoma (1885), and Seattle (1886). Erupting on October 31 1880, Denver’s anti-Chinese riot left a looted and burned Chinatown, beaten Chinese residents, and the death of a Chinese laundry worker “hung from a lamppost.”²⁶ The signing of the Chinese Exclusion Act on May 6 1882 marked the historical height and institutionalization of this xenophobic sentiment in the U.S, which announced an “absolute ten-year ban on Chinese laborers immigrating to the United States” along with new requirements for both non-laborer Chinese seeking entry and Chinese immigrant that had entered the country before then.²⁷ In the following decades into early 20th century, the act both reinforced and was continuously renewed by popular racial prejudice as well as institutional hostilities against Chinese and broader Asian population.

²⁴ “Bret Harte”, *Baltimore Sun*, 7 May 1902, 4:4, quoted in Gary Scharnhorst, “‘Ways That Are Dark’: Appropriations of Bret Harte’s ‘Plain Language from Truthful James.’” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51, no. 3 (1996): 377–99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2934016>.

²⁵ Gary, “‘Ways That Are Dark’”: 377-99.

²⁶ “Race riot tore apart Denver's Chinatown”, *The Register-Guard* (Eugene, Oregon), October 30, 1996. [Race riot apart Denver's Chinatown](#),

²⁷ “Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)”, *National Archives*, last reviewed on January 17, 2023, [Chinese Exclusion Act \(1882\)](#).

Part Two

Boxer Indemnity Scholarship and Tsinghua College

In September 1901, the Qing government and the alliance of eight imperial powers including the United States signed the Boxer Protocol, following the Boxer Incident, an anti-foreign peasant uprising in China from 1899 to 1901. The protocol comprised multiple clauses, including the Boxer Indemnity of 450 million taels of fine silver, equivalent to \$790 million at the current exchange rate, paid to eight nations over the course of thirty-nine-years.²⁸ In 1908, The United States Congress passed the bill to reduce the amount of the Boxer Indemnity from “approximately twenty-four and a half million dollar to about thirteen and one-half million”, returning the balance to China in the form of scholarship.²⁹ The decision by the U.S government on the remission of the Boxer Indemnity, unlike many of the popular characterizations at the time on Americans’ either “benevolence and generosity” or “cynical scheme”, however, entailed a much more complicated process of negotiation that was spontaneously influenced by factors such as both countries’ popular sentiment towards the other, transnational trade, American missionaries’ voice, politicians’ private interests and personal attitudes, and opposite opinions within the U.S legislative and administrative bodies.³⁰ The persistent effort of Chinese delegation headed by Liang Cheng, Chinese ambassador to the United States and a former study-abroad student in the U.S. himself, coincided with the Americans’ belief in education as a “necessary first step toward repealing the old order and introducing all the elements of civilization American style” with the future promotion of America-directed modernizing reform in China.³¹ As a result, a settlement was reached in 1908 that the remission of U.S’ excessive

²⁸ Jonathan D Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (United Kingdom: Norton, 1990): 235. Spence calculated the worth of the indemnity as \$333 million according to approximately 1990’s exchange rate. I recalculated Spence’s calculation according to today’s exchange rate.

²⁹ Ye, *Seeking Modernity*: 10-11. “Dr. Mierow Gives Address Before Chinese Club”, *The Tiger*, October 10, 1924: 4.

³⁰ Michael H. Hunt elaborates on the process of this negotiation. By drawing on personal correspondences, official documents, speeches and news report, Hunt demonstrates many of the nuanced details of this history. See Michael Hunt, “The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity: A Reappraisal”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (May 1972): 539-559.

³¹ Hunt, *Remission of the Boxer Indemnity*: 550. Hunt also quotes journalist and writer Frank G. Carpenter: “They will be studying American institutions, making American friends, and coming to back here to favor America for China in its foreign relations. Talk about a Chinese alliance! The return of that indemnity was the most profitable work Uncle Sam ever did... They will form a force in our favor so strong that no other government or trade element of Europe can compete with it.”, “The Awakening of China”, *Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, Nov.15, 1909.

claim on Boxer Indemnity would be used to fund Chinese students to study in the U.S, later known as the “Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program”. On January 1 of 1909, remission of indemnity officially began.

In April 1911, Tsinghua College [清華學堂] was founded by the Qing government on the outskirts of Peking, the imperial capital, to select and prepare students for the program to study in the United States. Following the 1911 Revolution and the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, the school was renamed into “Qinghua Xuexiao” [清華學校]. Tsinghua’s original eight-year curriculum since 1911 consisted of a four-year middle school and a four-year high school. The curricular reform in 1924 added an undergraduate department while maintaining the previous high school system. With the establishment of the Nationalist government in Nanjing in 1928, it was again renamed “National Tsinghua University” [國立清華大學].³² The introduction to the history of Tsinghua College in its 1923-1924 yearbook, *Tsinghuapper*, clearly stated the nature of Tsinghua College:

Those who are concerned about the national humiliation must study the Boxer Indemnity; those who study the Boxer Indemnity must understand the history of the founding of Tsinghua (College).....Tsinghua is the factory of producing study-abroad students to the U.S; in other words, Tsinghua College is closely associated with the fate of China.....³³

As this statement indicated, Tsinghua was a pioneering education institute in modern China with its “competitive selection procedure” and “high academic standard” that produced students who would later become significant forces in China’s quest for modernity in the 20th century.³⁴ During the period 1909-1929, approximately thirteen hundred Tsinghua graduates studied at some of the most prestigious U.S institutes. From them emerged some of the most renowned modern Chinese

³² Its original full Chinese name in 1911 was “帝國清華學堂” (Tsinghua Imperial College). For detailed history of Tsinghua College (University), see Su Yunfeng 苏云峰, 从清华学堂到清华大学: 1911-1929 [From Tsinghua College to Tsinghua University: 1911-1929], (Beijing, China: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2001).

³³ Liang Chaowei and Yu Shaoguang, *The Tsinghuapper* (Peking, China: The Tsinghua Alumni Association, 1924): 217. Both authors were the class of 1924 of Tsinghua School. Liang later received PhD degree at Johns Hopkins University in Political Science. Yu received Mater degree in International Trade at Harvard University.

³⁴ Ye, *Seeking Modernity*: 10.

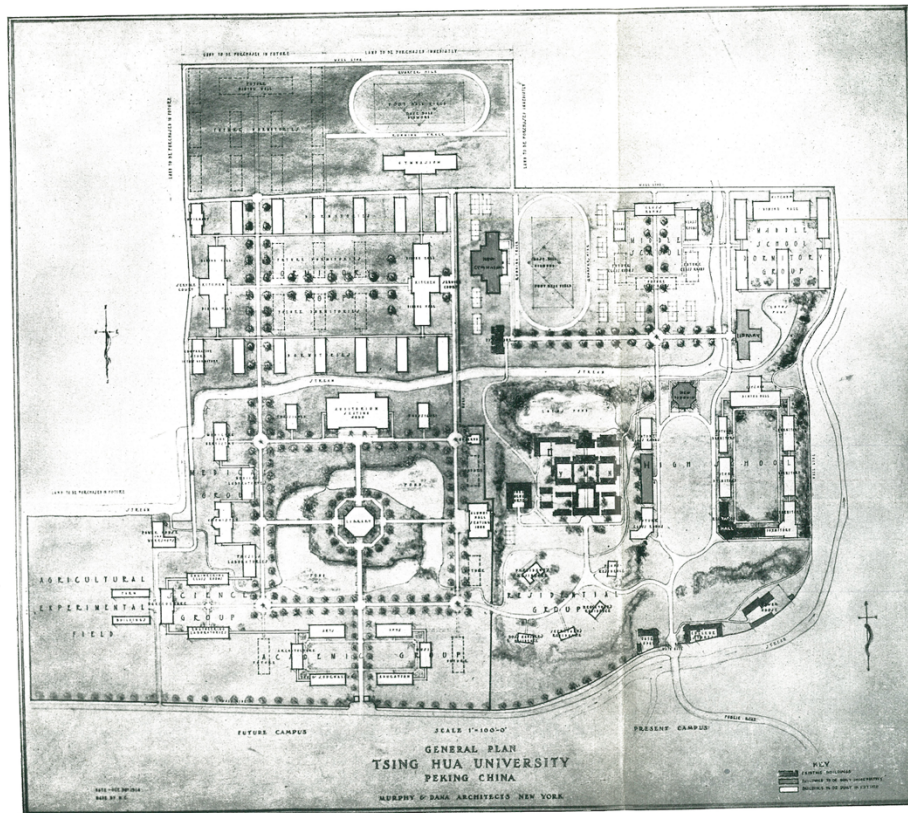
educators, literary theorists, philosophers, social and natural scientists, as well as many “prominent leaders in other walks of life”³⁵.



“Uncle Sam – ‘Make good use of it, my friend’”, a cartoon depicting the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program, *Chinese Students Monthly*, January 1910.³⁶

³⁵ Ye, *Seeking Modernity*: 10. For experiences at Tsinghua College, see Liang Shiqiu’s memoir 《清华八年》 [*Eight Years at Tsinghua*], (Jiangsu, China: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House, 2011).

³⁶ *The Chinese Students’ Monthly*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (U.S: Chinese Students Alliance in the United States of America, January 1910) The cartoon was done presumably a study-abroad Chinese students in the United States. The illustration of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship depicts the popular belief at the time of Americans’ remission of indemnity as a gesture of generosity and justice and Chinese’s gratitude as beneficiary of the remission.



GENERAL PLAN TSING HUA UNIVERSITY, PEKING, CHINA.

General Plan of Tsinghua College, *Tsinghuapper*, 1924.
 Photo Courtesy of Colorado College Tutt Library Special Collection.



HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING
 高等科

High School Building of Tsinghua College, *Tsinghuapper*, 1924

The May Fourth Generation of the Tsinghua Students

To many Chinese revolutionaries' and progressive intellectuals' dismay, the 1911 Revolution that overthrew the imperial regime did not necessarily guarantee an immediate brighter future for China. The ever-lasting power struggles among various political forces and regional warlords mounted into open armed conflicts; and imperialist expansion continued to aggravate the situation at a time of relative power vacuum. Political and social turbulence along with economic underdevelopment and cultural conservatism haunted China in the first decade of the Republic. For the Chinese intellectuals, a more profound "soul-transformation" was yet to come to bring about broader cultural changes.

This moment arrived on a Sunday in May of 1919. Following the conclusion of the World War I, the news of Paris Peace Conference's agreement to transfer the sovereignty of the Shandong Peninsula to Japan, a former occupied German naval base, shocked many young Chinese defenders of the Allies' cause, for China's participation through its labor force during the war.³⁷ By the early afternoon of May Fourth, over three thousand students representing thirteen colleges and universities in Beijing gathered in Tiananmen Square and then marched towards the Foreign Legation quarter. The purpose of demonstration was clear and straightforward from the beginning of the movement: to protest China's treatment in Paris and demand China's sovereignty over the Shandong Peninsula.³⁸ The students' demonstration in Beijing soon spread to other parts of the country and evolved into a mass movement that involved cross-class collaborations among students, workers, and merchants.³⁹ As members of the generation that formed the backbone of May Fourth activism, our Tsinghua students who had gone to Colorado College later, including Wen Yiduo and Liang Shiqiu, were intellectually and emotionally affected by the movement, if not drastically transformed.

³⁷ Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, (U.S: University of California Press, 1986): 14.

³⁸ Vera, *The Chinese Enlightenment*: 14-15.

³⁹ For the intellectual development and intellectuals during the May Fourth, see Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*.

On the morning of May 5th, 1919, students at Tsinghua College found a big red poster hung on the door of the cafeteria, with “The River All Red [滿江紅]”, a famous poem expressing the fierce patriotism and heroism of the Song-Dynasty General Yuefei, written on it. Behind this very first explicit demonstration on the Tsinghua campus was a second-year student in the high school class, Wen Yiduo.⁴⁰ Following the appearance of Wen’s poster that morning, a meeting of student leaders was held on campus to decide Tsinghua students’ stance and forms of activism during the movement. Among these leaders were later Colorado College students Wang Guohua [王國華] ’24⁴¹, a representative of the junior class, and Lu Meiseng [陸梅僧] ’21, president of the Youth Association [青年会]. Later at 7:30pm, the “Tsinghua All Student Body Meeting” was held in front of the gymnasium; the president of the meeting Chen Changtong [陳長桐] ’21 reported the latest development of the movement to the student body, and an oath was sworn: “We are not going to study abroad until the Shandong Issue is resolved!”⁴² An “earnest and amiable”, “calm and passionate” leader, as Liang Shiqiu later recalled, Chen Changtong’s excellent leadership eventually enabled Tsinghua students to fulfil their responsibilities during the movement.⁴³ College-wide mobilization and organization began that day. On May 9th, Tsinghua students held “Memorial Meeting of the National Humiliation” [國恥紀念會] within the gymnasium where they passed a resolution to send a telegram to Paris Peace Conference demanding the Chinese delegation refuse to sign the Treaty of Versailles. After the oath was sworn, they burned Japanese goods gathered around

⁴⁰ For study of the early history of Tsinghua’s curriculum and academic structure, see Jin Fujun 金富军, Ye miao 叶苗, 清华学校学制沿革述略 [A Brief Summary of the History of Tsinghua College’s Academic Structure], 清华大学教育研究 [Tsinghua Journal of Education], supplementary issue, 2008. Accessed at <https://xsg.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/1003/1253.htm>, on February 28, 2024. Chen Pingyuan 陈平原 and Xia Xiaohong 夏晓虹, 触摸历史：五四人物与现代中国 [Touches of History: May Fourth Figures and Modern China], (China: Beijing University Press, 2009): 188-192

⁴¹ This refers to the class of 1924 at Colorado College. Same as below.

⁴² “山东问题一日不解决，则我们一日不出洋!” See “清华与五四运动” [Tsinghua and the May Fourth Movement], 清华大学校史馆 [The Archive of Tsinghua University], <https://xsg.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/1003/1345.htm>. Accessed on February 28, 2024.

⁴³ Liang, *Eight Years at Tsinghua*: 51.

campus on the sports ground in front of the gymnasium. Tsinghua students' broad activism throughout the movement included giving public speeches, "boycott against Japanese products and promoting Chinese products" [抵制日貨，宣揚國貨], training "Voluntary Troops" [義勇軍] to defend against police harassment, and consistent and collaborative action with other universities in Beijing such as class boycott and public speeches⁴⁴.

As the encompassing theme of the May Fourth, patriotism and affirmation of national identity led to nationwide public demonstrations centered on students. Unlike the previous reformists in 1898 or the revolutionaries of 1911, the May Fourth generation was convinced of a mission to save China from below by awakening the social consciousness of the masses; for the first time, they openly embraced the politics of patriotism and engaged in collective initiatives to bring changes to this frail nation.⁴⁵ Students waged the May Fourth Movement and it in turn forged and reinforced political activism and patriotic sentiments in their minds. As much as the May Fourth Movement was a turning point in modern Chinese history, it was a turning point as well for Tsinghua and its students. The previous cultural conservatism in Tsinghua was replaced by various trends of progressive thought where "researchers and promoters of democratism, Marxism, and Mutual Aid Theory could all be found on campus."⁴⁶ As Ouyang Junxi points out, Tsinghua students in the post-May-Fourth era became "increasingly conscious of self-autonomy" marked by the unprecedented degree of self-governance and students' constructive engagement in school affairs. The May Fourth Movement, he argues, had fundamentally awakened students' "national-salvation" consciousness [救国意识]: "once real politics became unbearable, students would put down their books and walk onto the street again."⁴⁷ Such awakening of broad social and political activism as a result of the movement also marks a departure of Tsinghua's "May Fourth generation" from the previous study-abroad students.

⁴⁴ Ouyang Junxi 欧阳军喜, '论五四运动与清华 [On the May Fourth Movement and Tsinghua College]', *安徽史学* [*Historical Research in Anhui*], No.6, 2012: 5-16.

⁴⁵ Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*: 24.

⁴⁶ Ouyang, "On the May Fourth Movement", 14.

⁴⁷ Ouyang, "On the May Fourth Movement", 16.

As Weili Ye argues, the study-abroad students who were baptized by the May Fourth Movement were “more ready to take issue with racial discrimination than people before them.”⁴⁸

Standing in 1923 when the protagonists of this essay for the first set their foot in the United States, the overwhelming environment of racial prejudices and xenophobia of this foreign country had hardly changed since the late 19th century; but many young Chinese like the protagonists of this essay, individually and collectively, were now more politically awoken and active in reflecting on experiences as racial minorities abroad than ever.



ROOSEVELT MEMORIAM GYMNASIUM
羅斯福紀念體育館

Roosevelt Memorial Gymnasium
Photo Courtesy of Colorado College Tutt Library Special Collection.

⁴⁸ To draw the contrast between earlier study-abroad generations and the May Fourth generation, Ye mentioned the case of Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙, an influential banker and politician in Republic of China who went to study abroad in his early age. After his arrival on the American shore in 1901, Kong was detained at a dockside shed in San Francisco for several weeks under the Chinese Exclusion Act. Kong never in his later life openly discussed this episode of his study-abroad career in America. See Ye, *Seeking Modernity*, chapter 3 (The Question of Race).



On May 9th, Tsinghua students burned Japanese goods on the sports ground.⁴⁹



Students giving speeches at the Tiananmen Square during the May Fourth Movement.⁵⁰
A painting by Wen Yiduo.

⁴⁹ "May Fourth Movement", Wikipedia, last edited on February 1st, 2024. Accessed on February 29, 2024. [May Fourth Movement, Wikipedia](#).

⁵⁰ "清华与五四运动 [Tsinghua and the May Fourth Movement]", 清华大学校史馆 [*The Archive of Tsinghua University*], accessed on March 3, 2024. [清华与五四运动](#)

Part Three

Journey to the West

Eight years of study and life at Tsinghua College concluded in the summer of 1923 for our students; awaiting them was a long journey to the west.

On the afternoon of August 17, approximately sixty Tsinghua students along with three from Yenching University and roughly sixty to seventy self-financed students boarded American liner “S.S President Jackson” in Shanghai.⁵¹ Farewelling families and friends crowded the dock. Mai Jianzeng ’24 recalled the scene later that year:

When the cruise was about to depart, the crew brought piles of colorful ribbons onto the deck. Everyone on the cruise held one end of the ribbon and threw it towards the farewelling crowd on the land. Suddenly, a rain of red, yellow, blue, white, cyan, and purple ribbons fell over the cruise, connecting two sides like a flying rainbow... Melancholy and dismay blended with excitement and exhilaration in the air...⁵²

Chinese students carried on their organizational life and club activities onboard: three parties were held in less than 20 days, where dance, traditional Chinese opera, and self-directed drama were performed.⁵³ Literature lovers gathered to put up hand-written “periodical-posters” titled *Tidal Wave* [海嘯] where they published their own literary works and translation of English poems. In his poem “Seabird” written on August 25, Liang projected his growing nostalgia onto a seabird he saw at sunset:

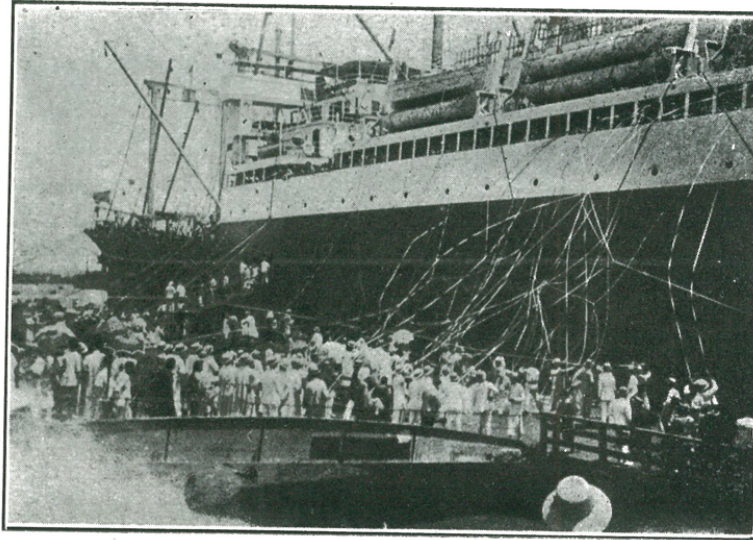
Seabird, where is your home?
Why did you abandon your nest,
Why did you leave your partner behind,
Solely soaring over this boundless ocean?⁵⁴

⁵¹ According to the statistics published by *Tsinghua Weekly* in June 1923, the total number of prospective study-abroad Tsinghua graduates of the class of 1923 was eighty. See 清華週刊 [*Tsinghua Weekly*], the 9th Supplementary Issue, June 1923: 88-92. *Tsinghua Weekly*, a student led publication launched in the early years of Tsinghua, mainly reported on both campus news as well as domestic and international affairs. The correspondence section, where study-abroad alumni shared their experiences in the United States with Tsinghua students at home, is studied particularly in this research.

⁵² Mai Jianzeng 麦健曾, “通訊：國外之部：自上海啟行後直到現時所得之經歷 [Correspondence: Overseas Branch: My experience since departure from Shanghai until now]”, 清華週刊 [*Tsinghua Weekly*], Issue 301 (1924): 19-24.

⁵³ Mai, “My experience”, *Tsinghua Weekly*: 20.

⁵⁴ Liang Shiqiu, “海鸟 [Seabird]”, 《雅舍遺珠》 “*Yashe Yizhu*”, (China, Jinan: 山东画报出版社 [Shandong Pictorial Press], 2009).



When hearts break! ('23)

“為國珍重!”

Scene at the boarding in Shanghai on August 17, 1923⁵⁵

The Chinese caption below “為國珍重!” reads “Take care for the country!”.

Photo courtesy of Colorado College Tutt Library Special Collection.



Chinese students arriving at Seattle on September 1, 1923.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *The Tsinghuapper* (1924): 154.

⁵⁶ “Chinese students arriving on SS President Jackson, September 1, 1923 (MOHAI4972).jpg”. University of Washington, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Posted on November 19, 2020.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_students_arriving_on_SS_President_Jackson,_September_1,_1923_\(MOHAI_4972\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_students_arriving_on_SS_President_Jackson,_September_1,_1923_(MOHAI_4972).jpg)

The students arrived at Seattle, Washington on September 1st, after which their paths diverged. Four students whose destinations were Colorado Springs took the train southward. At a stop to change trains in Cheyenne, they entered a restaurant near the station for dinner. Waiting for the food, they noticed an old man sitting behind the counter with “yellow face and black hair”. He looked either Chinese or Japanese, yet they didn’t say a word to him. When students finished eating, the old man walked toward them, took off a pencil from behind his ear, and wrote a few Chinese characters on a piece of newspaper,

“Where do the Chinese men (Tang Ren) come from?” [唐人自何處來?]

Liang Shiqiu took the pencil and wrote: “From China.” A smile emerged on the old man’s face; he wrote: “What for?” Liang replied: “Study.” The old man gazed at the group, raised his thumb solemnly, and walked back.

When the group went to pay the bill at the counter, the old man shook his head and declined the payment. He then stopped them and gave them each a cigar as they were leaving. Smoking the cigar, Liang was puzzled by the old man’s generosity. Running a small bistro in Cheyenne, Liang thought to himself, maybe the gentleman hadn’t seen any Chinese for a long while, not to mention a group of Chinese youths coming to study from China. Their patronage must have sparked his long-lost sentiment as a member of the Chinese diaspora.⁵⁷

In his article Liang did not elaborate further on his reflection upon this experience but only recalled that after decades he still could not forget that “Tang Ren” who had a brief “brush talk” with them.⁵⁸ Commonly practiced among literates of ancient Sinosphere such as Japan, Korea, and southeast Asia, “brush talk” refers to communication through the Chinese writing system. In this case, the diasporic Chinese old man, presumably a native speaker of Cantonese or Hokkien, found difficulties in comprehending mandarin Chinese spoken by the elite young students, and thus

⁵⁷ Liang, “唐人自何處來 [Where do the Chinese Men Come From]”, *Eight Years at Tsinghua*: 89-90.

⁵⁸ Liang, *Eight Years at Tsinghua*: 89-90.

resorted to an ancient silent communication with their shared knowledge of written Chinese. As one of the earliest recorded episodes where Liang and his classmates interacted with Chinese immigrants in the U.S, the encounter at a restaurant near the Cheyenne train station on their way to Colorado Springs manifests the sense of “indescribable and unsettling alienation” some of them had been feeling since the voyage as well as a momentary serenity. Speaking from hindsight, this emotional encounter also became a prelude to a series of events that had much more profound impact on their racial-national consciousness studying abroad.

Chinese Students at Colorado College as Racial Minority

Despite its nature as a study-abroad mission initiated and overseen by the Chinese state, the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program during the Republic era, unlike its previous counterparts the educational missions under the Qing government, granted its students unprecedented autonomy in terms of choices of schools and majors.⁵⁹ Because of American institutions’ inconsistent recognition of the diploma granted by Tsinghua College at the time, it was most common for Chinese students to first enroll in an undergraduate program as either juniors or seniors and then, with the certified American diploma and recommendations of professors, applied for graduate studies. In terms of the benefit of small liberal arts college as a choice of undergraduate study for Chinese students compared to general universities such as Columbia and Harvard on the east, the president of Colorado College Dr. Duniway (1917-1923) commented in an interview with Chen Changtong ’21:

I believe that it would in most cases be better for the Chinese student to go to a small college for his Bachelor degree, and then go to a university for post-graduate work. By following this plan, the student would have a better opportunity to become closely acquainted with a smaller group of professors and students. Such acquaintance would be of very great value in his interpretation and appreciation of American life. He would receive in the small college more personal attention in classrooms and

⁵⁹ Boxer Indemnity Scholarship during its initial stage under the Qing government still restricted students’ majors to practical subjects. For study-abroad students’ academic and professional choices, see Ye’s *Seeking Modernity in China’s Name*, Chapter 2: The Professionals.

laboratories. He could enter more fully into the general students activities which are so valuable a feature of American colleges.⁶⁰

Although the exact motivations behind every Chinese student's choice of Colorado College in the late 1910s and early 1920s cannot be fully identified, Chen Changtong, one of the first Chinese students in the history of CC, did share his reasonings in *Educational Guide to the United States* (1921) written by the Dean of Tsinghua John Wong-Quincey:

- a. My firm belief in the principle of going to a small college where there is no Chinese student (or very few) for under-graduate work.
- b. Incidentally, my ill-health at the time of sailing necessitated my coming to Colorado Springs, the health resort of the U. S., for recuperation.
- c. Mr. A. H. Rowbotham's recommendation.⁶¹

In this case, Chen's choice of Colorado College, as contingent as that of other Chinese students, was a result of personal conviction, incidental event, and a reference from former CC alumnus who was also an instructor at Tsinghua.

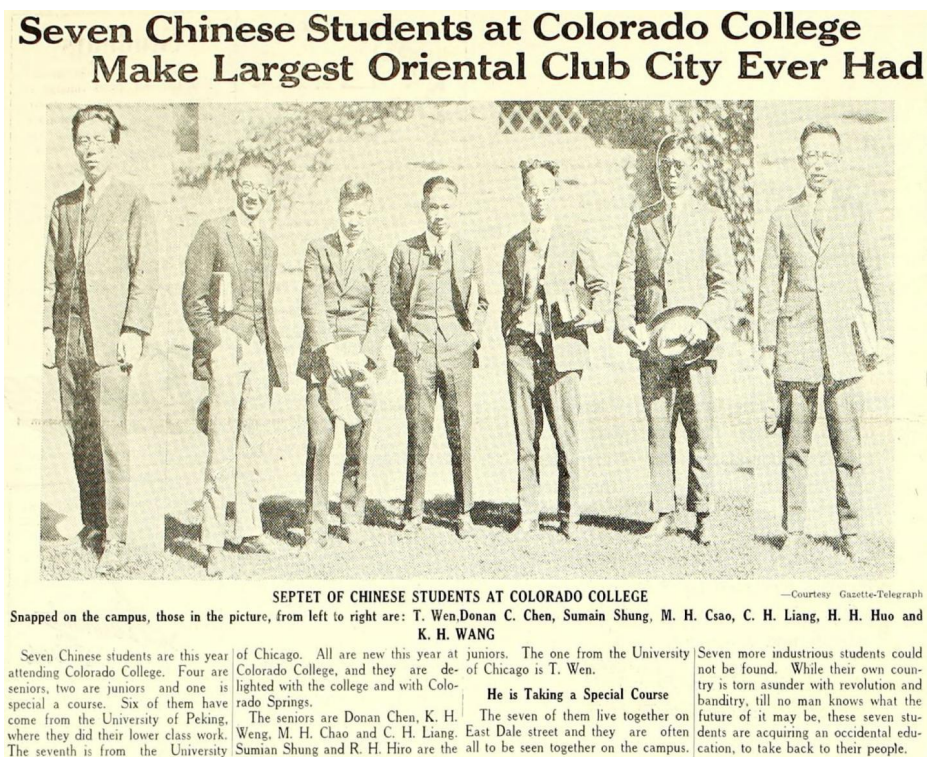
Although a small number of Chinese students had attended Colorado College across years from 1919 to 1922, the novel appearance of a large group of them on campus in the fall of 1923 nevertheless drew attention from the community. An article published by the Colorado College student newspaper *The Tiger* on October 2nd, 1923, reported the arrival of the "largest oriental club city ever had": "...they are all to be seen together on the campus. Seven more industrious students could not be found...these seven students are acquiring an occidental education to take back to their people."⁶²

⁶⁰ John Wong-Quincey 王文顯, *Educational Guide to the United States*, (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1921): 263. *Educational Guide*, written by the Dean and acting President of Tsinghua College in the early 1920s, is a particularly valuable primary source for the study of the history of Chinese study-abroad in early 20th century. The book was built upon elaborate statistics, surveys, first-hand interviews with former study-abroad students, and author's personal visit to the American institutions, including Colorado College. It provided a panoramic guidance to the future study-abroad students including choice of college and major, living expense, American culture and customs, situations of racial prejudice and "Chinese exclusiveness" across different universities and places.

⁶¹ Wong, *Educational Guide*: 260. Arnold H. Rowbotham graduated from Colorado College in 1913, after which he was pointed Head of French Department at Tsinghua College and taught there for ten years.

⁶² "Seven Chinese Students at Colorado College Make Largest Oriental Club Ever Had", *The Tiger*, October 2, 1923: 4. It is worth noting that the photograph was cropped and edited. As referenced by other sources, much information reported by the article such as "they have come from University of Peking" and "The seven of them live together on East Dale Street" was incorrect.

Besides the cohort who voyaged across the Pacific that summer, another Tsinghua graduate Wen Yiduo [聞一多] also arrived after his previous year at Chicago Institute of Art to seek company with his friend Liang Shiqiu. In a letter to his brother on September 24, Wen updated his new residency: “Colorado College has an art academy attached to it, whose size cannot be compared with the one in Chicago...nevertheless, my loss in art education is compensated by the gain of literary production along with Liang Shiqiu as well as the inspiration brought by the excellent natural landscape here.”⁶³



Despite Chinese students’ broad activism at home marked by the May Fourth Movement, it was only when they set foot on foreign land that they started to develop a racial consciousness based on everyday encounters as racial minority. Pushed to confront racism in the form of prejudice and explicit discrimination sometimes, they continuously internalized and reflected on such emotionally sensitive experiences. In his reminiscence *About Wen Yiduo*, Liang Shiqiu wrote: “For a person or a

⁶³ Wen Yiduo 闻一多, “致闻家骅 [To Wen Jiasi]”, 《闻一多全集》 [Complete Works of Wen Yiduo], ed. Sun Dangbo 孙党伯 and Yuan Jianzheng 袁睿正 (China: 河北人民出版社 [Hubei People’s Press], 1993) Vol.12: 187.

nation, only when they lose freedom will they understand how precious it is; only when they are treated unequally will they understand how crucial equality is.”⁶⁴ For Liang, the collective memory of “national humiliation” that China had suffered since the 19th century converged with his personal experience as racial minority living abroad: the nation and its people became an integral entity in the face of loss of freedom and equality. Speaking from his own experience, particularly during the time at Colorado College, he then wrote: “They (the Americans) often held a sense of superiority and prejudices..... it is embodied sometimes in straightforward insults, sometimes in frigidity and deliberate distancing, and sometimes in arrogant pity and condescension.”⁶⁵

During the early 1920s at Colorado College, the most public dialogue between Americans’ popular racial prejudice and Chinese students’ esteemed racial identity took place in the student newspaper, *Colorado College Tiger*. On March 25, 1924, an anonymous American student “M. R.” posted a poem to the “Literary Corner” of the newspaper:

“Chinee”

Behind your mask-like face,
 What thoughts flit across your mind? Do you
 laugh at us,
 Our ways,
 That you are ever grinning?
 That far-off look in your eyes,
 It is of cunning,
 Of vice.
 Or of Wisdom, only?
 Do you know all that we say?
 Or do you puzzle over thoughts
 Which are innate to use?
 I like to watch your expression

When we speak of women’s rights.
 Cynic!
 But I ask you, “Chinee”;
 Do you prefer your characters
 To our modern signs?
 Embroidered satins to our tweeds?
 The smile of Apple Blossom to “Zippers”?
 And tea to wine
 I wonder if yours is the smile of the Ancient
 Watching the Child learn to walk.
 Whatever it is.
 You puzzle me.
 — M. R.⁶⁶

Three days later, Liang Shiqiu, an English Literature major, and Wen Yiduo, already a poet who had published his first famed poetry collection *Red Candle* 《紅燭》 in 1922, replied individually in the newspaper:

⁶⁴ Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, 《談聞一多》 [*About Wen Yiduo*] (Taiwan: 傳記文學出版社 [Biographical Literature Publishing House], 1967): 47.

⁶⁵ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 47.

⁶⁶ M. R., “Chinee”, *The Tiger*, March 25, 1924: 4.

REPLY FROM A “CHINEE”

At the bottom of the far-off Pacific,
There grows the coral tree,
The coral red as
Petrified blood of Christ
And bright as the disk of the sun,
The coral engrailed on the crowns of your
kings,
The coral hung on the necks of your queens,
Dazzling your eyes, And radiating angelic
charms.

Yet you all wondered How it looks in the sea;
—

So you wondered at me.

--- C.H Liang⁶⁷

Another “Chinee” Answering

My face is Sphinx-like,
It puzzles you, you say,
You wish that my lips were articulate,
You demand my answer.

But what if my words are riddles to you?
You who would not sit down
To empty a cup of tea with me,
With slow, graceful, intermittent sips,
Who would not set your thoughts afloat,
On the reeling vapors
Of a brimming tea-cup, placid and clear —
You who are so busy and impatient
Will not discover my meaning.

Even my words might be riddles to you,
So I choose to be silent.
But you hailed to me,
I love your child-like voice,
Innocent and half-bashful.
We shall be friends,
Still I choose to be silent before you.

In silence I shall bear you
The best of presents.
I shall bear you a jade tea-cup,
Translucent and thin,
Green as the dim light in a bamboo grove;
Harlequin in lozenges,
Bats and butterflies.
Golden-bearded, saintly dragons
Braided into iridescent threads of dream;
I shall bear you sprays
Of peach-blossoms, plum-blossoms,
pear-blossoms;
I shall bear you silk-bound books
In square, grotesque characters.
Silently and with awe

I shall bear you the best of presents.
Through the companion with my presents
You will know me —
You will know cunning, Vice.
Or Wisdom only.

But my words might be riddles to you.
So I choose to be silent.

--- T. Wen.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Here Liang Shiqiu signed with the abbreviation of his original name Liang Chih-Hua [梁治華].

⁶⁸ Liang Shiqiu, “Reply from a Chinee” and Wen Yiduo, “Another ‘Chinee’ Answering”, *The Tiger*,

March 28, 1924: 4. I corrected some of the misspellings in the original text and kept punctuation and format unchanged.

❁ *LITERARY CORNER* ❁

REPLY FROM A "CHINEE"

At the bottom of the far off Pacific,
 There grows the coral tree,
 The coral red as
 Petrified blood of Christ,
 And bright as the disk of the sun,
 The coral engrailed on the crowns of
 your kings,
 The coral hung on the necks of your
 queens,
 Dazzling your eyes,
 And radiating angelic charms.

Yet, you all wondered
 How it looks in the sea;—
 So you wondered at me.
 —C. H. Liang.

* * *

Another "Chinee" Answering

My face is Sphinx-like,
 It puzzles you, you say,
 You wish that my lips were articulate,
 You demand my answer.

But what if my words are riddles to
 you?

You who would not sit down
 To empty a cup of tea with me,
 With slow, graceful, intermittent sips,
 Who would not set your thoughts
 afloat

On the reeling vapors
 Of a brimming tea-cup, placid and
 clear—

You who are so busy and impatient
 Will not discover my meaning.

Even my words might be riddles to you,
 So I choose to be silent.

But you hailed to me,
 I love your child-like voice,
 Innocent and half-bashful.
 We shall be friends,
 Still I choose to be silent before you.

In silence I shall bear you
 The best of presents.
 I shall bear you a jade tea-cup,
 Transuscent and thin,
 Green as the dim light in a bamboo
 grove;

I shall bear you an embroidered gown
 Charged with strange, sumptuous de-
 signs—

Harlequin in lozenges,
 Bats and butterflies,
 Golden-bearded, saintly dragons
 Braided into iridescent threads of
 dream;

I shall bear you sprays
 Of peach-blossoms, plum-blossoms,
 pear-blossoms;

I shall bear you silk-bound books
 In square, grotesque characters.

Silently and with awe
 I shall bear you the best of presents.
 Through the companion with my pres-
 ents

You will know me—
 You will know cunning,
 Vice,
 Or Wisdom only.

But my words might be riddles to you,
 So I choose to be silent.
 —T. Wen.

In this anonymous poem, “M. R.” first mocked the physical appearance and intellects of the Chinese by calling their faces “mask-like” and questioning their knowledge of English. Then they moved on to express their disdain for the Chinese cultural traditions, ones that were inferior to modern and civilized “tweeds”, “zippers”, and “wines”. A comparative study of this poem allows us to draw a more conspicuous stylistic and conceptual lineage from the widely popular late 19th century poem “The Heathen Chinee”. As discussed earlier, the author Bret Harte’s original agenda of satirizing popular anti-Chinese sentiments was compromised and misinterpreted by many of its prejudiced readers. The poem narrated a story about a high-stake card game, “euchre”, played between a Chinese immigrant “Ah Sin” and an Irish immigrant “William Nye”, where when Nye’s cheating in the game was surpassed by Ah Sin’s he then attacked the latter. Despite the poem’s supposed sympathy towards Chinese immigrants both in the text and in real life, its ambiguous and subtle words such as “The heathen Chinee is peculiar”, “but his smile it was pensive and childlike”, “With the cards that As Sin had been hiding, In the game ‘he did not understand’” were conveniently borrowed by its xenophobic readership to reproduce an anti-Chinese discourse. The perceived “mysteriousness” of Chinese in “Heathen Chinee” can be found in M. R.’s writing, which started with a question: “Behind your mask-like face, What thoughts flit across you mind?” and ended with a blunt statement: “Whatever it is, you puzzle me.” In the perception of M. R., a mindset typical to the American society at the time, China and the “Orient” as an imagined idea is emblematic of the opposite of what the American nation and civilization stands for: un-modern, conservative, stagnant, and incomprehensible.

Yet quite unexpectedly, M. R.’s two Chinese classmates offered another outlook of the “Chinese mystique”⁶⁹. In response, Liang told a rather oddly ravishing story of the “coral tree”:

⁶⁹ I’m referencing here to Karen J. Leong’s book *The China Mystique: Pearl Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*, (California: University of California Press, 2005).

red as the “petrified blood of the Christ” and bright as “the disk of the sun. Liang employed the metaphor of the “coral tree” as a symbol of not only the abstract Chinese civilization at the “bottom of the far-off pacific” but also the tangible presence of its representation, the Chinese students, with himself included, conversing with the Americans. He further implicitly satirized the monarchical tradition of the west with the image of “kings” and “queens”. With the “oriental treasure” being engraved on the crowns, following a metaphor of the “blood of the Christ”, Liang might have also pointed to the history of western missionaries' presence in China. It has to be pointed out that although neither Liang nor Wen was religious, it's likely that they did receive a certain degree of exposure of Christianity attending American-styled Tsinghua College, where both students' Christian organizations and western missionaries were present. The poem concluded in a pregnant silence which contrasted the bewilderment and ignorance of “yours” with the equanimity and coral tree's “angelic charm” of “mine”.

Wen's poem, on the other hand, responded with dense ornate vocabulary that showcased his gifts and knowledge in poetry. By listing a series of delicacies, from “graceful, intermittent sips” to the “golden-bearded, saintly dragons braided into iridescent threads of dream”, Wen proudly paraded the historical sophistication of traditional Chinese cultural essences. Quoting M. R.'s own words “cunning”, “wisdom”, and “vice” in the end, Wen skillfully counter-mocked M. R.'s racial prejudice as he established himself with incomprehensible wisdom and silence.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ A more elaborate literary analysis of Liang and Wen's poem is beyond the scope of this essay. Scholarship in mainland China in recent years has produced extensive volume of studies on both figures' intellectual development in literature, literary critics, poetry, and translation. See for instance Zhao Liming 赵黎明, “论梁实秋的新诗文体观 [On the Stylistics Concept of Liang Shiqiu's Free Verse]”, *Research of Chinese Literature*, no.1 (2014): 27-58; Wang Jinling 王金玲, “梁实秋与闻一多早期文学交往再认识 [A Revisit of the Literary Intercourse Between Liang Shiqiu and Wen Yiduo]”, *Journal of Ningbo University (Liberal Arts Edition)*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (January 2021): 33-38, etc.

The two poems not only reflected Liang and Wen's literary cultivation in a foreign language but also demonstrated their determination to defend their cultural and racial identities with educated decency. Liang later recalled that he and Wen both felt "obligated to accept such a challenge" and their replies drew the attention of the whole school and won the admiration of those "American lads"⁷¹.

The episode of another Chinese student experiencing racial prejudice in Colorado Springs is also worth our attention. During his study at CC 1919-1921, Chen Changtong [陳長桐] once entered a local barber shop and was denied service for his race or nationality. Chen later sued the barber at the local court and won the case according to Liang Shiqiu's recollection. The barber "apologized" sincerely: "Inform me in advance next time when you want your haircut and I'll bring my barber tools to your apartment. Please do not come here again!"⁷² In section 11 "Prejudice" of the survey conducted by *Educational Guide to the United States* regarding Chinese students' abroad experience, Chen considered there to be "little prejudice against Chinese students in the college as well as neighboring towns" yet he also found some "disappointment" occasionally. If such prejudice was to happen, he continued, it often occurred in places "run by more or less ignorant American people who have not yet overcome racial feeling". Chen then confirmed Liang Shiqiu's later recollection: "One of the forms (of prejudice) known to me is the non-admission to such 'public service shops' as barber-shops. There is, however, only one barber-shop that refuses to render professional service to the Orientals."⁷³

Both the case of the car accident in Denver mentioned earlier and the encounter at the barbershop in Colorado Springs indicate the disappearance of Chinese students' officially

⁷¹ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 40-41.

⁷² Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 46-47.

⁷³ Wong, *Educational Guide to the United States*: 262.

sanctioned social status and respectability on the college campus as they entered the public sphere. At Colorado College, they were treated as international students with a background of elite American education and an acquaintance and intimacy to the American culture; yet in the outside world, their social identity as “modernized” young Chinese elites was replaced with a racialized one, which was also shared by many other working-class Chinese immigrants who were the main targets of American society’s anti-Chinese sentiments in the 19th century. In the case above, Chen, a former May-Fourth student leader at Tsinghua College, successfully utilized legal institutions to defend his lawful rights. In response to the questionnaire presented by *Educational Guide* which asked if Chinese students were overcoming prejudice at American universities, Chen replied affirmatively: “Yes, we are overcoming this prejudice mainly by publicity, and in the specific case just mentioned above, by instituting a law-suit.”⁷⁴ When facing unjust treatment from the state force itself, however, Liang and another student had no other means but to give in to Denver’s police authority in exchange for Mr. T’s freedom.

Everyday Lives at Colorado College and Colorado Springs

These “upsetting” and “infuriating” encounters with American racial prejudice did not entirely overshadow Chinese students’ learning and living experience at Colorado College. Like every other of their American classmate, they fulfilled their academic commitment while actively engaging in routine college activities.

Under the slogan “Fortune-seeking and Self-strengthening” [求富自強] promoted by the Self-Strengthening Movement [洋務運動] launched by the Qing government from 1860s to 1890s, the first wave of study-abroad Chinese students carried the mission of importing western

⁷⁴ Wong, *Educational Guide*: 262.

military and industrial technology into China. This historically rooted tradition of a pragmatic approach to the modernization of China continued to prevail in the Republic era in the early 20th century. Three-fourths of the new arrivals from China said that they “intend to study engineering” in 1914. And throughout the period from 1909 to 1929, a total of nearly one-third of the Tsinghua graduates majored in engineering.⁷⁵ This mainstream practice of closely associating personal academic and professional choices with the fate of the nation, however, was not clearly seen among Chinese students at Colorado College in the 1920s, a time which also saw the diversification of majors among study-abroad Chinese students.

Despite the dominant popularity of practical majors, six out of ten Chinese students enrolled at CC 1923-1924 majored in Economics or Business Management & Banking, two students majored in English, one in Philosophy, and one non-degree-seeking special student in Arts. None of these students’ choices of majors, from Humanities to Social Science, fell into the category of the strictly defined “pragmatic learning”. With the consideration of their post-undergraduate development, it can be said that their choices of majors reflect the already diversifying academic paths of study-abroad students. While many came to the U.S with a vision of applying their pragmatic knowledge to the broader course of national modernization, some also preferred a more professionally or intellectually oriented pursuit that focused on personal development when choosing their majors.⁷⁶

According to the transcripts provided by the Registrar's Office of Colorado College, almost all the Chinese students had maintained an average score of over 80 out of 100 in the

⁷⁵ Ye, *Seeking Modernity*: 55.

⁷⁶ It also has to be noted that before the arrival of the 1923 cohort of Chinese students at Colorado College, Colorado School of Mines had been the most attended institution among Chinese students in the state of Colorado. Their choices of concentration of study, much indicated by their choice of school, included practical majors such as metal mining, geology, chemistry, mechanics, and engineering that were widely popular among study-abroad students in the U.S.

school year 1923-1924.⁷⁷ Such performance during the very first year of their study in the U.S is in part a demonstration of the rigorous and highly selective education that Tsinghua College had previously offered, while also reflecting the academic commitment these students made at CC. Liang Shiqiu, for his outstanding academic performance, was privileged to be recommended by the Dean of Men of the college, Charlie B. Hershey, to continue his academic career at graduate school of Harvard University. In his recommendation letter to Professor George W. Robinson at Harvard University on May 1, 1924, Hershey praised Liang “unusually capable as a student in English” and “altogether manly in all of his relations in the College and has the promise of becoming an outstanding man in his chose field of Literature.”⁷⁸ It is likely for this weighty recommendation from the Dean of Men that Liang successfully entered Harvard University the Fall of 1924 after his graduation from Colorado College.

In the meantime, however, discrepancies in academic performance did exist among Chinese students at the time. In a letter sent to his brother on November 5 of 1923, Wen Yiduo mentioned the current situation of his classmate P. H. Howh who was a self-sponsoring student:

(Howh) came straight to study here without a sufficient English level, and he’s failing all the courses. While other classmates can read at least twenty pages per hour, he can only read two pages. We can’t stand seeing him struggling, so we invited him to our apartment to study ... (while in China) he was upset by the fact that he was not good at English. He thus left his wife behind and went to study abroad. His determination is admirable, but his strategy is unfavorable.⁷⁹

In this case, a stark contrast is made between Boxer-Indemnity scholarship students who were Tsinghua graduates and self-sponsoring students at CC, where the former, out of friendship and sympathy, offered support for the latter to keep up with schoolwork.

⁷⁷ Transcripts from Colorado College’s Registrar Office, 1919-1924, Information File “Students-Chinese”, Colorado College Special Collections.

⁷⁸ Correspondence from Charlie B. Hershey to George W. Robinson, May 1, 1924. Information File “Students-Chinese”, Colorado College Special Collection.

⁷⁹ Wen Yiduo, “致闻家驊 [To Wen Jiasi]”, *Complete Works of Wen Yiduo*: 192.

In terms of academic experience, Chinese students generally regarded Colorado College as an institution that was “beneficial” and “helpful” for their learning. Chen Zhaozhang, commenting on the faculty and studying environment at CC, wrote to *Tsinghua Weekly*:

Professors here are generally sincere, humble, and hardworking; they treat students kindly. Apart from class time, they also have office hours exclusively dedicated to students. They always make themselves available to answer any questions, even those most incoherent ones, without feeling impatient.⁸⁰

Mai Jianzeng similarly gave their learning experience at CC high regards: “professors’ teachings are detailed and clear...it is quite easy to gain academic improvement studying here.”⁸¹ Although not every faculty member at Colorado College was as prestigious and renowned as those of Yale and Harvard University, Sheng Simin wrote, they were nevertheless “deeply specialized in their respective fields of interest”.⁸² Wen Yiduo’s acclaimed literary legacy today notwithstanding, especially his rich volume of poetry and literary criticism, few contemporary scholars have yet managed to highlight the influence of the English and American poetry education he had received at CC over his future development in literary production. According to his close friend and classmate Liang Shiqiu’s recollection, Wen Yiduo “substantially benefitted in arts and literature from his one year at Colorado College”, which “far exceeded his gains at Chicago Institute of Art the previous year or Art Students League of New York the following year.” Besides taking classes from Art department, Wen also spared half of his time taking English classes such as “English Poetry from Dryden to Burns”, “Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelly, Keats”, “Browning”, and “Tennyson and Arnold”.⁸³

⁸⁰ Chen Zhaozhang 陈肇彰, “珂羅拉多大學通訊 [Correspondence from Colorado College]”, *Tsinghua Weekly*, Issue 317, 1924: 38-39.

⁸¹ Mai, “My Experience”: 19-24.

⁸² Sheng Simin 盛斯民, “科羅拉多大學情形 [Conditions at Colorado College]”, *Tsinghua Weekly*, Issue 316, 1924: 40-43.

⁸³ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 29. Liang’s recollection about course titles is cross-referenced with Colorado College’s course catalog. See “Forty-Ninth Annual Catalog of Colorado College”, *Colorado College Publication*, General Series No. 117 (1923): 86.

In their extracurricular time, Chinese students participated in a wide variety of club and athletic activities. Many of their affiliations with student organizations had a clear professional and academic orientation. For instance, in the year 1923-1924, four Chinese students majoring in Economics or Business Management and Banking, Chen Zhaozhang, Xie Fencheng, Mai Jianzeng, and Wang Guohua, were members of the “A and B Club”, a professionally oriented club that aimed at “promoting interest in modern business problems.”⁸⁴ Although according to Chen’s correspondence in the *Educational Guide*, Colorado College’s social and local fraternity groups were not open to Chinese students for membership, several Chinese students were, however, inducted into honorary or professional fraternities.⁸⁵ Chen Changtong (1919-1921), a later accomplished banker and high-ranking official of the Republic of China government, was a member and the treasurer of Alpha Kappa Psi, a business fraternity with a “national standing and purpose of fostering good business” where only juniors “who have passed majors in business, economics or history with an average of 80 percent are eligible for initiation.”⁸⁶ *Chinese Students Monthly*, a self-organized publication by study-abroad Chinese students in the U.S, in its June 1921 issue updated the latest news of three Chinese students’ initiations to fraternity groups : “Y Lewis-Mason (Lu Meiseng) of Colorado College has been initiated to the Alpha Kappa Psi, the American national business fraternity; Reignson C. Chen (Chen Changtong) and Clarence Young (Yang Guangsheng) have been elected to the Tau Kappa Alpha, after their participation in the Inter-collegiate debate of the Rocky Mountain Conference.”⁸⁷ Besides, Chen was also a member of K.U.K and Political Science Club.⁸⁸ Other Chinese students of the class of 1924 including

⁸⁴ *Pikes Peak Nugget* (Colorado Springs: Colorado College, 1924).

⁸⁵ Wong, *Educational Guide*: 261.

⁸⁶ *Nugget*, 1919.

⁸⁷ “Personal News”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume. 16, No. 8 (June 1921): 627.

⁸⁸ The K.U.K Club was founded January 27, 1919, for the purpose of discussing current events and topics such as “the League of Nations”, “effect of War upon price conditions”, “Bolshevism”. *Nugget*, 1919.

Zhao Minghen and Sheng Simin were also members of “The Colorado College Union”, where members discussed “questions of vital interest to the college community” and the “Independent Club”, a non-fraternity men organization on campus.⁸⁹ In the following year, three more newly arrived Chinese students Zhang Mingxin, Li Shuqiao, and Xia Pingfang were selected “among series of elimination” to represent College in two matches with Colorado State Teachers College, where Xia was one of the both single and double winners in the first match.⁹⁰ The wide presence of Chinese students at organizations, sports, and club activities at Colorado College indicates their outstanding academic performance and a general activism in college life as a tradition of Tsinghua students. The participation in occupationally oriented clubs and fraternities of students such as Chen Changtong, Zhao Minghen, and Mai Jianzeng was also consistent with the direction of their future professional development speaking from hindsight.

In the meantime, Chinese students also organized themselves at the college level with the first Chinese Students' Club established at Colorado College in the academic year 1920-1921 consisting of four members: Nikolas H. King, President; Clarence K. Young, Secretary, Reignson C. Chen, Manager; Y. Lewis Mason, Treasurer. As the *Tiger* reported on February 15, 1921, the club was founded to direct a fundraising campaign on campus as part of a larger Chinese Famine Relief Campaign simultaneously organized by study-abroad Chinese students in the U.S. According to Yang Guangsheng's correspondence to *Chinese Students Monthly*, the club managed to raise 4000 dollars through the “generous help of Ministerial Association Y.M.C.A and Y.W.C.A.”⁹¹ Because of the graduation of four students above, the Club was not organized until 1923 with the arrival of a unprecedented sized group of Chinese students. In

⁸⁹ “Miscellaneous Organizations”, *Nugget*, 1924.

⁹⁰ *Nugget*, 1925: 164.

⁹¹ “Club News, Colorado Springs”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume. 16, No. 8 (June 1921): 612.

November 1923, a new Club was formed where Chen Zhaozhang served as the manager and Liang Shiqiu served as the secretary. Meetings were to be held “at least once a month” and “social meetings will be arranged at different intervals.”⁹² Like today’s study-abroad Chinese students, they gathered in the early spring of 1924 to celebrate the Spring Festival and the arrival of Chinese New Year. A Chinese feast was “prepared by the ‘honorary cooks’, C. H. Liang (Liang Shiqiu) and P. H. Howh” with the assistance of the rest.⁹³ With the arrival of a new generation the following year, the Club held an open meeting on October 9th at Perkins Hall to celebrate the “Thirteenth Anniversary of the Chinese Republic”. The President of Colorado College, Dr. Charles Mierow and the Mayor of Colorado Springs Ira B. Harris were invited to give addresses. The president of the Chinese Students Club Chen Zhaozhang also gave a speech on the interpretation of some present conditions in China. A Chinese Art Exhibition, including paintings by the Chinese artist Chao Tze-Lang from the 14th century, was held after the meeting.⁹⁴ Later that year on the eve of Thanksgiving, for the hospitality that Chinese students had received from college people, the Club gave a home party to the “College folks” at the “Weber Headquarters”. The Club decorated the house with “Chinese paintings and sceneries” with “Chinese phonograph records furnishing the music”; “imported tea and Chinese candies” were served.⁹⁵

In terms of housing, all the Chinese students during 1923-1924 lived either off-campus or in Hagerman Hall, the main College residence for male students at the time. When Wen Yiduo first arrived in Colorado Springs from Chicago in September, he and his friend Liang Shiqiu lived together with a host family at 720 N. Wahsatch St. The accommodation and food fee per

⁹² “Colorado College”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume 19, No. 5 (March 1924): 74.

⁹³ “Colorado College”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume 19, No. 5 (March 1924): 74.

⁹⁴ “Dr. Mierow Gives Address Before Chinese Club”, *Tiger*, October 10, 1924: 4.

⁹⁵ “Clubs: Colorado College”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume 20 (February 1925), No.4: 63-64.

person was fifty dollars per month. While Wen could only dine at restaurants back in Chicago, now they'd share the dinner with the host, who was "kind" and "treated them well".⁹⁶ Unable to bare the noise of another tenant living upstairs, however, the two moved back to live in Hagerman Hall in December, where two other Chinese students lived. The on-campus housing only cost seven dollars a month. They also bought an eight-dollar electric cooker and cooked for their everyday meals. Once they were cooking dumplings with an alcohol stove in the residence, which drew the discontent of the residential officer. But after sharing the food with him, the officer became very pleased; not a word was said against their cooking. Compared to the previous housing, Wen found it more economic and satisfying to cook for themselves now living on campus:

It is such a joy to save money while being able to taste Chinese food! Shiqiu knows a little bit about cooking. We start to cook based on experience: fried eggs, stir-fried cabbage, and pork. Although the flavor is not perfect, with the combination of soy sauce and pork lard, it is also not far from the taste of home!⁹⁷

As mentioned above, some of the Chinese students had experienced unpleasant encounters in Colorado Springs and Denver where they were explicitly targeted as racial minorities. As relatively personal and occasional as they might be, however, some students still left positive remarks regarding their experiences living in the community. Two months after his arrival, Liang Shiqiu considered Colorado Springs "a town of simplicity" with "exceptional hospitality towards Chinese students": residents were kind and approachable; even strangers would wave at them across the street.⁹⁸ Sheng Simin went as far to state that the same "hospitality" and "kindness" they received in the local community "would not be found in bigger

⁹⁶ Wen, *Complete Works of Wen Yiduo*, Vol. 12: 188.

⁹⁷ Wen, *Complete Works of Wen Yiduo*, Vol. 12: 198.

⁹⁸ Liang Shiqiu, "珂樂拉度大學情形 [Conditions at Colorado College]", *Tsinghua Weekly*, Issue 299, 1923: 11-12.

cities such as New York and Chicago, not even Denver”.⁹⁹ Located at the foothill of Rocky Mountains’ Pikes Peak, Colorado Springs as a young city in the American southwest in the 1920s had little contact with China and Chinese people compared to the metropolitan areas on the west and east coast. Clubs, business associations, churches, and individuals in the town often invited Chinese students at Colorado College to give speeches, usually accompanied with a dinner. There was even a week where they were too busy to attend every invitation across town.¹⁰⁰ On October 7, 1923, Zhao Minheng spoke to the Sunday School of the First Methodist Church about “some of the unusual customs in his native country.”¹⁰¹ Two weeks later on October 24, at the meeting of the Y. W. Wednesday evening on the subject of Worlds Fellowship, Wang Guohua gave a talk on Chinese music and played “a selection from Chinese folk songs and pieces such as are played for stage dancing” with the flute he brought from home. Zhao also reflected on some similarities between Chinese students and American students. On January 31, 1924, Chinese students’ appearance was again reported at Rotary Club luncheon in the Odd Fellow Building by the Prospect Lake, with Chen addressing club on the “Present Political Situation in China.”¹⁰² As Chen Zhaozhang remarked in his correspondence with *Tsinghua Weekly*, such events and meetings were “significantly beneficial for establishing emotional connections, promoting mutual understanding, improving oral English, and discerning American cultures and social conditions.”¹⁰³

Besides social life, Chinese students also took advantage of the historically renowned natural retreats of Colorado Springs. After school, Mai Jianzeng would drive his car, ride horses,

⁹⁹ Sheng, “Conditions at Colorado College”: 40-43.

¹⁰⁰ Chen, “Correspondence from Colorado College”: 38-39.

¹⁰¹ “College Gossip”, *The Tiger*, October 9, 1923: 3.

¹⁰² “Chinese Students Speak”, *The Tiger*, February 1, 1924: 6.

¹⁰³ Chen, “Correspondence from Colorado College”: 38-39.

or row boat. Wen Yiduo, tired of the depressive urban atmosphere in Chicago the summer of 1923, was immediately drawn by a postcard featuring the natural scenery of Colorado Springs sent by his friend Liang and “quietly” arrived in Colorado Springs soon. In a letter to his brother a week after his arrival, Wen wrote: “This city is famous in this country for its exceptional natural landscape, with Mountain Manitou, Pikes Peak, Garden of Gods, and so on. Lands high, air refreshing, it is thus a great place for summer retreat and recuperation.” Once, a group of Chinese students rented a car to visit the Garden of Gods, with Liang Shiqiu driving only three days after he learned how to drive. As an artist, Wen brought his painting tools planning to capture the natural sceneries. On their way back, the car accidentally slid down the hill and was stuck between two “giant” pine trees; below them was a formidable abyss. They climbed out of the car and saw a distant house with smoke arising from the chimney. After a few knocks, the owner of the house, who could only speak Spanish, opened the door. They communicated with body language and the car was eventually rescued with his help.

One year at Colorado College passed swiftly. On June 11 of 1924, the commencement ceremony took place at Perkins Hall with six Chinese students graduating. Conventionally, a pair of graduating male and female students would walk together to receive their diplomas. Marching in the front of the line on that day, however, were three pairs of male Chinese. As no American female students were willing to pair with these “black hair, black eyes, and yellow face” classmates, the College authority had to come up with this awkward arrangement considered by Wen Yiduo as “humiliating, embarrassing, upsetting, and infuriating.”¹⁰⁴ With a disappointing scene concluding their study at Colorado College, Chinese students were now heading to the next

¹⁰⁴ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 47-48.

stop of their journey in the U.S, mostly towards the east coast. Before leaving, Wen gave Liang three copies of poetry collections by his favorite poets A. E. Housman and W. B. Yeats. In return, Liang gave him an exquisite porcelain-enamel incense burner that he brought from home. Together, they took the train to Chicago for a long-anticipated reunion.¹⁰⁵

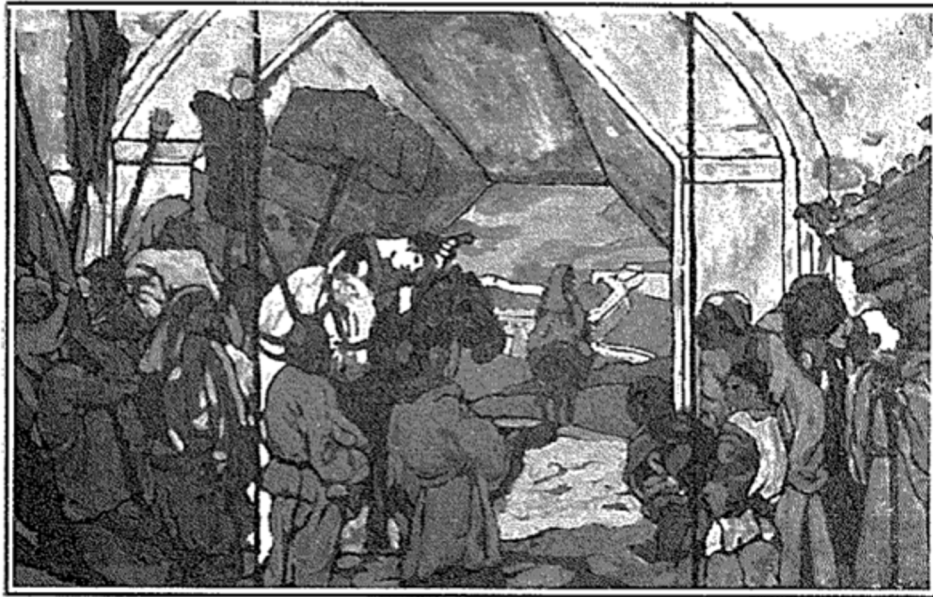
¹⁰⁵ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 47-48.

Colorado Springs Academy of Fine Arts

AFFILIATED WITH

Colorado College

Perkins Hall



CHINESE LEGEND - - - - - TO WEN

Established 1911



Program brochure of Colorado Springs Academy of Fine Arts,
with its cover page featuring Wen Yiduo's painting.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶“Colorado Springs Academy of Fine Arts, Affiliated with Colorado College”, 1923. ND212. A23, Colorado College Special Collections.



Colorado College Men's Christian League

ESTABLISHED IN THE FALL OF 1920

“Colorado College Men's Christian League”
Lu Meiseng'22 at front row second to the left.¹⁰⁷



Hagerman Hall Association

“Hagerman Hall Association”
Lu Meiseng'21 at front row first to the right;
Yang Guangsheng'21 at third row second to the left.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Nugget*, 1921.

¹⁰⁸ *Nugget*, 1921.

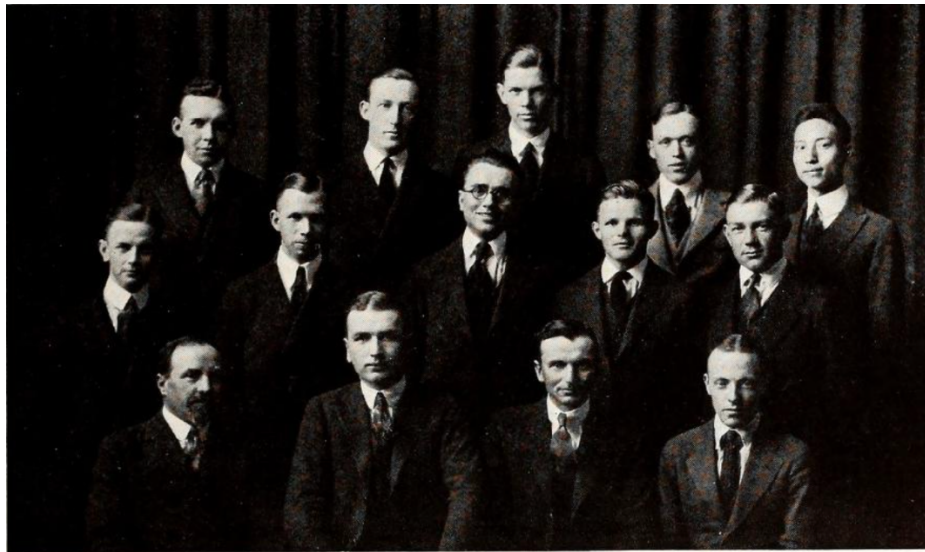


Phi Beta Kappa

FOUNDED AT WILLIAM AND MARY IN 1776

CHAPTER GRANTED AT COLORADO COLLEGE IN 1904

“Phi Beta Kappa”
Chen Changtong’21 at third row second to the right.¹⁰⁹



Alpha Kappa Psi

ESTABLISHED AT COLORADO COLLEGE IN 1919

“Alpha Kappa Psi”
Chen Changtong’21 at third row first to the right.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *Nugget*, 1921.

¹¹⁰ *Nugget*, 1921.



The A and B Club

The A and B Club was organized in 1921 for students taking economics or business courses whose grades in these courses are A or B. The club endeavors to promote interest in modern business problems.

The "A and B" Club

Four Chinese students at Second row from left to right: Xie Fengcheng'24, Wang Guohua'24, Chen Zhaozhang'24, Mai Jianzen'24.¹¹¹



The Independent Club

The Independent Club is an organization of the non-fraternity men on the campus. The present name was adopted in 1921 when the club underwent a complete reorganization. Its increasing membership is evidence that it is meeting a real need in the college.

The "Independent Club"

Front row third to the left: Sheng Simin'24, first to the right: Chen Zhaozhang'24.¹¹²

¹¹¹ *Nugget*, 1924.

¹¹² *Nugget*, 1924.



The Chinese Students' Club

Founded 1923

With an increased number of Chinese students at Colorado College, the Chinese Students' club was organized in an effort to promote friendship and co-operation among the members. They represent two of the leading Chinese colleges.

MEMBERS

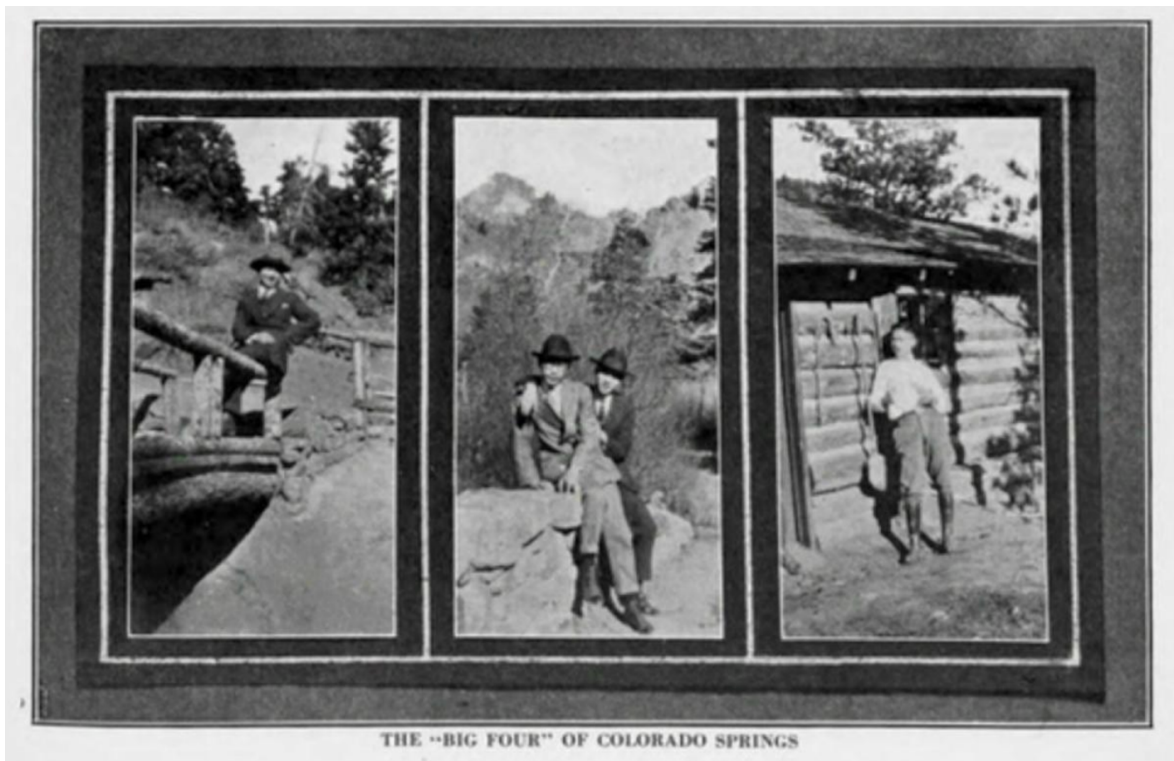
T. H. Chao
D. C. Chen
F. C. Hsieh

P. H. Howh
C. H. Liang
C. T. Mai

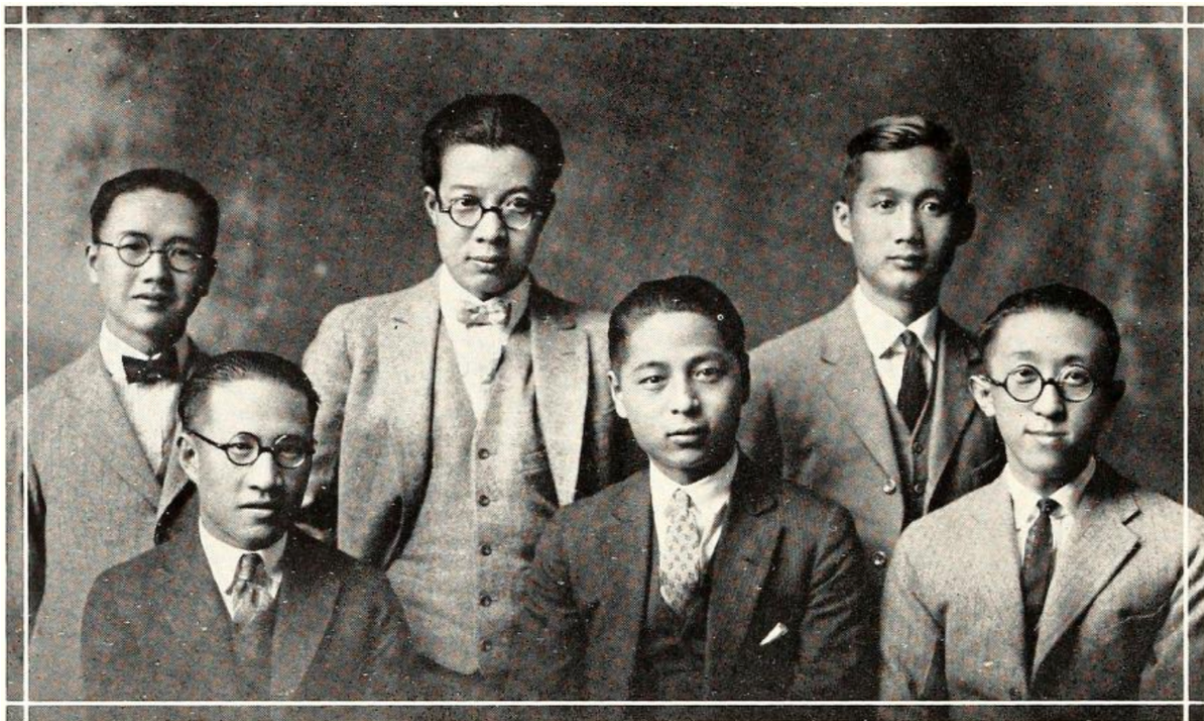
S. M. Sheng
K. H. Wang
T. Wen

The "Chinese Students Club" (1923-1924)
Front row left to right: Wang Guohua, Chen Zhaozhang, Liang Shiqiu, Philip Howh
Second row left to right: Sheng Simin, Xie Fencheng,
Mai Jianzeng, Wen Yiduo, and Zhao Minheng.¹¹³

¹¹³ *Nugget*, 1924.



“The ‘Big Four’ of Colorado Springs” (1920-1921)¹¹⁴



The “Chinese Students Club” (1924-1925)

Front row left to right: Yang Zhaotao, Xia Pingfang, Gao Han;
 Second row left to right: Chen Shufei, Sheng Simin, Li Shuqiao.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ The *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume. 16, No. 8 (June 1921): 611. The *Tiger* also reported on October 12, 1920, that in celebration of the “ninth anniversary of the Republic of China” on October 10, Chinese students at Colorado College made a “motor trip in the picturesque mountains in the morning”.

¹¹⁵ *Nugget*, 1925.



“In front of the Chinese House. Colorado Springs”,
Group photo of Chinese students at Colorado College, 1923-1924.¹¹⁶



Group photo of Chinese students at Colorado College, 1924-1925.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Tsing Hua Alumni Year Book, 1924-1925*, (United States: Tsing Hua Alumni Association, March 1925): 23.

¹¹⁷ *Alumni Year Book*: 20.

Part Four

The Great River Society [大江會] and Chinese Students' Nationalism

Experiencing sentimental moments as both outsiders to American society and insiders of their own overseas community, some Chinese students in the United States in the 1920s resorted to the formation of informal political organization in the face of both growing consciousness of national and racial identities and the dim uncertainty of the Chinese nation's future. This part of the essay briefly surveys the formation of "Great River Society (GRS)" [大江會] in the summer of 1924 and its ideological agendas through the examination of its subsequent publication *Great River Quarterly* [大江季刊]. It also expands the previously exclusive focus on Chinese students at Colorado College to a wider group of students, with continuous attention given to Liang Shiqiu and Wen Yiduo, to investigate ways in which study abroad Chinese students transformed their lived experience as racial minorities in the United States into concrete political and ideological manifestations.

What Liang and Wen were looking forward to in Chicago the summer of 1924 was a reunion with their fellow Chinese students and former classmates at Tsinghua College, Luo Longji [羅隆基], He Haoruo [何浩若], Shi Zhaoying [時昭瀛], and Wu Jingchao [吳景超], who were attending different universities across the country.¹¹⁸ A generation baptized by political and social unrest at home, they had together participated in protests against the Japanese "Twenty-One Demands" in 1915, the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and the examination boycott against the government's arrears with teachers' salaries in 1921. The eight years of shared experience of education and political activism at Tsinghua made them emotionally connected and intellectually consistent with each other.¹¹⁹ Following their graduation from Tsinghua in the early 1920s, such strong bonds of

¹¹⁸ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 48. I'm also attaching the full list of members in the appendix.

¹¹⁹ Wen Liming 闻黎明, "闻一多与大江会-- 试析 20 年代留美学生的'国家主义观' [Wen Yiduo and 'Great River Society': An Attempted Analysis of Study-Abroad Students' 'Nationalism' in the 1920s]", *近代史研究* [*Modern Chinese History Studies*], No.04(1999): 171.

friendship and comradeship naturally extended into their study-abroad career. Though scattered across the country in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Colorado, they had been in frequent correspondence discussing national affairs and global events.¹²⁰

As mentioned earlier, the 1911 Revolution, despite its historical significance in ending the thousand-year dynastic cycle and giving birth to a new Republic, did not bring about economic prosperity and political stability to this frail country. The fragmentation of political powers in forms of both numerous regional warlords and factionalism within successive “central” regimes led to continuous and disastrous warfare that had plagued many parts of China. The unreconciled colonial presence of western imperialist powers inherited from the previous imperial regime remained widely rampant across the country with both territorial concessions in treaty port cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin as well as their economic exploitation through entities such as railways and mines. The process of domestic unrest and foreign intrusion during this period also intertwined with each other, marked by economic compradorship and pacifist politics such as the infamous “Twenty-One Demands” by imperial Japan. The challenge to the sovereignty of the Republic reached a historical height in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference when China’s Shandong Peninsula, a former German concession, was agreed by the Allies to transfer to Japan’s control. The unsettling status quo would continue to haunt the country and its people for at least another decade into the 1920s. It was in this context that study abroad Chinese students studied in this essay became increasingly concerned with the future of the nation and different notions of political ideologies, which were to be counted on for the national salvation.

Among a variety of school of thoughts, a specific form of nationalism conceived by the Italian political activist Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) was particularly appealing to the Chinese students. Under the oath “one free, independent, republican nation”, Mazzini founded a secret

¹²⁰ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 48-51.

organization “Young Italy” to promote the cause of Italian nationalist movement for the ultimate unification of the nation.¹²¹ Albeit setbacks of Mazzini’s own cause of Italian unification, a series of nationalist movements around the globe, including the Irish independence movement led by Sinn Fin Party and the triumph of Turkish revolution in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, all became sources of inspiration for Chinese students’ conceptualization of their version of nationalism.¹²²

Building upon a previous correspondence group among Tsinghua alumni studying in the United States, a larger group of Chinese students traveling from Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin reconvened in Chicago in the summer of 1924.¹²³ Their reunion at “Drexel Hotel”, a small hostel near the campus of University of Chicago, declared the founding of the “Great River Society”¹²⁴ With a clear notion announcing its distinction from a political, revolutionary party or interest-seeking secret society, GRS upheld following values by the consensus of the first meeting:

1. Concerning the current emergency state of China, (the society) does not engage in the discourse of universalism or the ideal of internationalism; instead, it shall promote the concept of nationalism.
2. Concerning the raging warlordism in China, (the country) should practice the system of freedom and democracy, and support and promote human rights.
3. Concerning the backward domestic economy and destitution of the Chinese masses, the society advocates for a state-guided transformation of the country from an agricultural society into an industrial society; it also stands against class-struggle-oriented Communism.¹²⁵

The Articles of the Society more explicitly stated its mission: “Our principle is ‘Great River’s Nationalism’, which aims to enforce reform movement internally and resist western imperialist aggressions externally; ‘Great River’s Nationalism’ is meant by Chinese people striving for the free

¹²¹ Giuseppe Mazzini, “The Voice of Italian Nationalism: Giuseppe Mazzini and Young Italy”, *Internet Archive*, accessed on March 16, 2024.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210730133643/https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hist151/mazzini.htm>

¹²² Wen Liming, “Wen Yiduo and ‘Great River Society’”: 171.

¹²³ Wen Liming’s “Wen Yiduo and ‘Great River Society’” has provided more details regarding the process of the formation of this correspondence group and its evolution into the Great River Society.

¹²⁴ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 48-51.

¹²⁵ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 48-51.

development of Chinese politics, free choice of Chinese economy, and free progression of Chinese culture.”¹²⁶

The original Chinese spelling for “Nationalism” is “國家主義”, whose first two characters are literally translated as “country” or “state”, while the commonly used term for nationalism today is “民族主義”, whose first two characters stand for a conceptual agglomeration of “nation”, “ethnicity”, and “race”. In order to understand “Great River’s Nationalism” as an uniformly agreed upon ideological thinking, it is essential for us to go back to the writing of its members published both outside of the Society and within Society’s publication *Great River Quarterly* [大江季刊]. Pu Xuefeng [浦薛鳳], a graduate student of economics and political science at Harvard University, wrote in an article in 1924 to caution against the popular association between “nationalism” and “jingoism”, “militarism”, and “imperialism”. He then proposed “rational nationalism” as an ideology deemed fit for the Chinese reality:

Nationalism proper, nationalism when rational and reason-controlled, is no antithesis of peace... What our country lacks today is a strong wholesome national spirit. Only when a collective consciousness permeates the length and breadth of our land, only when our people, saturated with love of country, will there be a miraculous change.¹²⁷

Pu’s conceptualization of nationalism inclined towards American President Woodrow Wilson’s proposed “self-determination of peoples [民族自決]” and the construction of nation-state [民族國家], which entailed the proposition that “every national group should establish its own independent country”. Regarding the multi-ethnic nature of China, Pu assumed “Chinese nation [中華民族]”, consisting of multiple ethnic-national group such as Tibetans, Mongolians, Manchurians, and

¹²⁶ “Appendix One, Articles of the Great River Society [附錄一, 大江會章程]”, 大江季刊 [*Great River Quarterly*], Volume. 1, Issue. 2 (1925): 181-184.

¹²⁷ Dison Poe, “A Reply to Mr. A. J. L. Waddell’s ‘Scheme For the Regeneration of China’”, *Chinese Students Monthly*, Volume. 19, No. 3 (January 1924): 7-10.

Uyghurs, as an unitary and integral nationality that would constitute the Chinese nation-state.¹²⁸ Another member He Haoruo, a graduate student of economics at University of Wisconsin, once conversed with the English philosopher Bertrand Russell who was visiting the campus. An advocate for peace and internationalism, Russell nevertheless encouraged He and the Chinese to adapt “militarist nationalism” for only could “such a weak nation as China could defend imperialist aggression if equipped with nationalism”. Reflecting upon this conversation, He wrote: “We acknowledge that peace is the ultimate destination of humanity. Yet in order to achieve peace, the riddance of unequal treatment among nations is required; in order to break all the unequal treatments, weaker nations have to strive for their national self-determination.”¹²⁹ More examples of writings published by the *Quarterly* that attested to its ideological agendas include Hu Yi [胡毅]’s “A Brief History of Chinese Exclusion in North America” [北美排華略史], Chen Shifu [陳石孚]’s “History of Turkish Regeneration” [土耳其復興史], Pan Guangdan [潘光旦]’s “A Brief History of Modern Racism” [近代種族主義史略], Shen Youqian [沈有乾]’s “A Brief Discussion of National Psychology” [國家心理略說], and Cui Yifu [崔毅夫]’s “Irish Sinn Fin Movement and Nationalism” [愛爾蘭新芬運動與國家主義], etc. It is clear in both Pu and He’s writings that “national self-determination”, the independence and sovereignty of China was central to the ideology of Great River Society. Their wide reference to the global nationalist movement from Turkey to India, Italy to Ireland, indicate the influence and inspiration they’d taken from a broader international discourse of nationalism.

As ideological and political the Great River Society’s agenda was, however, some members of the Society also contributed to its conceptual narrative through the lens of emotions and

¹²⁸ Pu Xuefeng 浦薛凤, 《浦薛凤回忆录（上）万里家山一梦中》 [Memoirs of Pu Xuefeng (Part One)], (Anhui China: 黄山书社 [Huangshan Publishing House], 2009): 92.

¹²⁹ He Haoruo 何浩若, “祇要此心不死我們終有一日 [As long as our faith persists, There will be one day for us]”, *Quarterly*, Issue 2 (1925): 79-90.

sentiments derived from their personal experiences as study abroad Chinese students in the U.S. As an emotionally sensitive person, Wen Yiduo often reacted intensely to his observations of and encounters with racial inequalities in the United States. In Colorado Springs where “an overall environment of friendliness (towards Chinese) mixed with (Americans’) patronizing attitude”, Wen not only lived as a racialized subject himself but also observed the lives of Chinese immigrants working in the laundry business who were often socially stigmatized and marginalized.¹³⁰ As a result of this interaction between elite educated Chinese students and the working class Chinese immigrants whose arrival to the country predated the former, Wen Yiduo’s “Laundry Song” best attests to his “racial shock” by his observations and indignation for the social inequality that Chinese immigrants had been enduring:

Laundry Song

(One piece, two pieces, three pieces,)

Washing must be clean.

(Four pieces, five pieces, six pieces,)

Ironing must be smooth.

I can wash handkerchiefs wet with sad
tears;

I can wash shirts soiled in sinful crimes.

The grease of greed, the dirt of desire...

And all the filthy things at your house,
Give them to me to wash, give them to me,

Brass stinks so; blood smells evil.

Dirty things you have to wash.

Once washed, they will again be soiled.

How can you, men of patience, ignore them!

Wash them (for the Americans), wash them!

You say the laundry business is too base.

Only Chinamen are willing stoop so low?

It was your preacher who once told me:

Christ’s father used to be a carpenter.

Do believe it? Don’t you believe it?

There isn’t much you can do with soap and
water.

Washing clothes truly can’t compare with
building warships.

I, too, say that great prospect lies in this ---

Washing the others’ sweat with your own
blood and sweat?

(But) do you want to do it? Do you want it?

Year in year out a drop of homesick tears;

Midnight, in the depth of night, a laundry
lamp...

Menial or not, you need not both,

Just see what is not clean, what is not
smooth,

And ask the Chinaman, ask the Chinaman.

I can wash handkerchiefs wet with sad
tears,

I can wash shirts soiled in sinful crimes.

The grease of greed, the dirt of desire...

And all the filthy things at your house,

¹³⁰ Liang, *About Wen Yiduo*: 40.

Give them to me – I'll wash them, give
them to me!¹³¹

Among a series of serious academic writings that the *Quarterly* had published mentioned above, Wen's poems including "Laundry Song" [洗衣歌], "A Patriotic Heart" [愛國的心], and "I Am Chinese" [我是中國人], stood out to root in his personal experiences as a racial minority abroad. Unsurprisingly, Wen's unique mode of associating literary expression with a nationalist discourse resonated with his literary companion and classmate at Colorado College, Liang Shiqiu. As discussed in the beginning of the essay, Liang's "Justice" [公理] published in the first issue of *Quarterly* narrated an even more detailed account of his encounter with a case of racially targeting law enforcement in Denver Colorado. In parallel to the main story line, Liang also made consistent references to the Chinese national "five-color" flag, where he was first offended and upset by an American classmate's ignorance of his national flag and eventually staring at the flag in room as he reflected upon the American notion of "justice" in the ending scene. Liang's juxtaposition and convergence of his experience as racial minority and self-esteemed national identity, whether intentional or not, indicates a more unique mode of development of racial-national identities for the overseas Chinese. For both Wen and Liang, their experiences and observations of mistreatment by the Americans which was rooted in a popular racial prejudice dating back to the 19th-century mass immigration of Chinese laborers, however, were understood and internalized at a national level: the political instability, diplomatic inferiority, economic underdevelopment, and social turbulence of Chinese nation which they emotionally identified with was the cause of such experiences of "injustice" abroad. As these experiences continuously shocked, upset, and infuriated them, they also became the source of a growing sense of patriotism that inspired the Chinese students to actively

¹³¹ Wen Yiduo, "洗衣曲 [Laundry Song]", *Quarterly*, Issue Chinese. The English translation above is quoted from Kai-Yu Hsu's *Wen I-to* (United States: Twayne Publishers, 1980): 78-79.

engage in ideological and political discourses to fulfill their responsibility as “young Chinese”. In a poem “I Am Chinese”, Wen Yiduo wrote passionately:

..... I have not fallen asleep! I have not fallen asleep! The sprit fire in my heart is still inflaming, My fire it inflames even brighter, I inflame for my nation shakingly.	I am the five-thousand years of history in the past, I am the five-thousand years of history in the future. I will restore the stage of this history, rehearse the future of history.
The future of our history is a drop of tear, My tear washes off the tragedy of humanity; The future of our history if a laughter, My laughter expels all the troubles of the universe. 	The Great Nation! The Great Nation! I am the originator of eastern culture, My life is the life of the world, I Am Chinese, I Am Chinese! ¹³²

In the poem above, Wen’s blunt proses expressed not only his conceptualization of Chinese history and culture but also his relations with the abstract idea of “Chinese nation”. A more detailed analysis of Wen Yiduo and Liang Shiqiu’s writings submitted to *Great River Quarterly* is beyond the scope of this essay; yet it is clear that both students’ works distinguished themselves from others published in the *Quarterly* by exhibiting a more passionate and emotional dimension of their national identities that simultaneously conformed to the “Great River’s Nationalism” theoretically elaborated by others. For Wen and Liang as both educated young Chinese who felt a sense of alarm and responsibility for the nation, active reflection of their national identities intertwined with their strongly emotional experiences as racial minorities studying abroad. This process of interaction soon culminated into their more concrete political activism through associational activities and publications.

A loose spontaneous organization in nature, Great River Society asserted most influence when its members were active in the United States. Following the return of study-abroad students to

¹³² Wen Yiduo, “我是中國人 [I Am Chinese]”, *Quarterly*, Issue 1: 97-100. The original poem was written in Chinese.

China, the Society continued to engage in political matters through collaborations with other organizations that shared the similar ideologies.¹³³ Wen Yiduo remained socially, culturally, and politically active throughout the rest of his life and is remembered today as one of the most influential patriotic poets in China. He was assassinated by Nationalist government police agent in 1946 in Yunnan, Kunming Province, as he was walking home from a memorial of the death of the political dissident Li Gongpu [李公僕], where Wen gave a public speech condemning the authoritarian rule of the Nationalist regime.

¹³³ For the development of Great River Society in China, see Wen Liming, “Wen Yiduo and ‘Great River Society’”.

Conclusion

The history of Chinese and Chinese Americans' experience during the era of exclusion in the United States remains of prime academic interest today. Nevertheless, the story of Chinese students studying in America following the enactment of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program has yet to be told to a wider audience. Enrolled in prestigious educational institutions, Chinese students enjoyed officially sanctioned social status and legal protection which starkly contrasted with their fellow working-class Chinese immigrants. The experience as a racial minority studying in the U.S, often expressed in the form of encounters with provocation or direct discrimination, overshadowed some of their study-abroad careers.

This essay attempts to reconstruct the lived experience of Chinese students at Colorado College in the early 1920s through an archival inquiry. Facing racial prejudices on campus and in the urban community of Colorado Springs, Chinese students such as Liang Shiqiu, Wen Yiduo, and Chen Changtong utilized available resources, such as the college newspaper and legal institution, to defend their racial-national identities as well as lawful rights. When targeted by authorities, however, these students found no means of self-defense, despite their language skills, and so could only give in to the unjust demands. Living with both the pressure as a racial minority and nostalgic sentiments, they resorted to daily practices from festive celebrations to cooking that were intrinsically part of their cultural identities. For some students, the process of internalization and reflection on encounters with racial prejudices abroad intertwined with their intellectual conceptualization of the ideas of "nationalism" and "patriotism". The formation of the *Great River Society* with a nationalist and patriotic agenda by a network of Chinese students in 1924 in Chicago reflected their conversion of real-life experience into concrete political and ideological initiatives.

Overcoming obstacles, a group of young Chinese embarked on a journey full of challenges and uncertainty to the foreign land across the Pacific. Their paths grew apart after the completion of study at Colorado College. Yet just like the coral tree that grew at the "bottom of the far-off Pacific"

depicted in Liang Shiqiu's poem, their intellectual aspirations and cultural pride dazzled others' eyes and radiated angelic charm for the rest of their lives, in China and in the world.

Epilogue

After receiving a bachelor's degree from Colorado College after one or two years of study, almost all the Chinese students headed to the east coast to continue their academic career. Upon graduation from graduate school, some of them chose to stay in the United States as they were offered professional opportunities while the majority returned to China, from which the paths of their lives diverged greatly. The content below is a list of biographies of Chinese students who graduated from Colorado College in the early 1920s. Students whose lives after CC are not traceable are thus not included here.

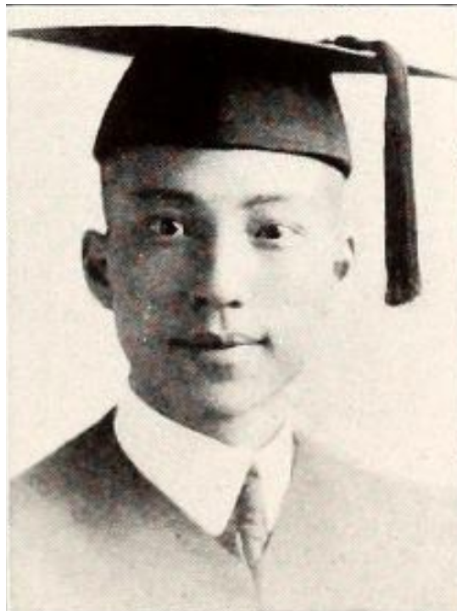
陳長桐 [Chen Changtong] (Reignson Chen)

1896-

Fuzhou, China

Major at Colorado College: Business and Banking

K.U.K, Phi Beta KappTau Kappa Alpha, Political Science Club, Debating Team



Born in Fujian, China on October 17th, 1896.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1919; B.A. Colorado College, 1921; M.B.A. New York University, 1923.

Past Experience:

Manager of Trading Department, Wah Chang Trading Corporation, New York, and Shanghai,
1923-26;

Professor and Lecturer on Foreign Exchange Foreign Trade at several leading colleges and
Universities in China, 1925-28;

Joined Bank of China, 1929;

During the Second World War, served as the Chief Representative of China Defense Supplies, Inc.
for handling Lend-Lease supplies in China, Burma, and India, 1941-43;

Member of War Production Board, Chungking, 1944-45;

Recipient of Victory Medal by the Chinese government and Medal of Freedom by the American government;

Secretary-General, Export and Import Board, China, 1946-47;

Chairman, Foreign Exchange Bankers' Association, Shanghai, 1946-49; Chairman, Foreign Trade Association, Shanghai, 1947-49;

Chief of Chinese Delegation to the ECAFE Trade Promotion Conference, Singapore, 1951 and Manila 1953;

Adviser to the Chinese Delegation to the IMF and the World Bank's Conference, Washington, 1953;

Managing Director and President, Bank of China, Taipei; Chairman, China Products Trading Corporation; Director, China Banking Corporation, Manila;

President, China Insurance Company; Managing Director, Ming-Seng Steamship Company; Managing

Director, Yung-Hsin Industrial Corporation;

Advisor to the Foreign Exchange & Foreign Trade Control Commission under the Provincial Government of Taiwan; President of Rotary Club of Taipei, 1953-54, etc.

Reignson Chen was granted an honorary degree by Colorado College in 1955.¹³⁴



¹³⁴ The Colorado College Alumni Records Office, "Reignson Chang-Tung Chen", November 3, 1967, Information File "Students-Chinese", Colorado College Special Collections.

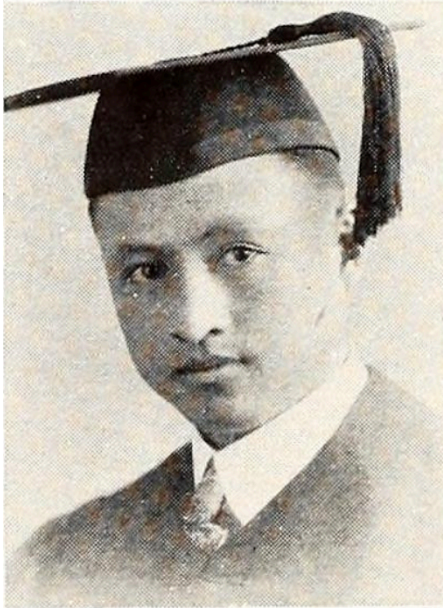
陸梅僧[Lu Meison] (Y. Lewis Mason)

1896-1971

Yixing, Jiangsu, China

Major at Colorado College: Economics

Alpha Kappa Ksi



Born in Yixing, Jiangsu on December 26, 1896.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1920; B.A. Colorado College, 1921; M.A. Columbia University, 1923;
Degree of Master of Commercial Science, New York University, 1925.

Past Experience:

Returned to China in 1925, after visiting England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy,
Egypt, India, Malai, and Hongkong.

Chinese Executive, World Wide Advertising Corporation, New York, 1923-25;

Assistant Manager, S.D. Ren & Co., Shanghai, 1925-28;

Managing Director, United Advertising Advertisers, 1929;

Director and Manager, Consolidated National Co., 1929- 1940s; Concurrently Managing Director of
China General Machinery Co., Shanghai;

Director and General Manager, China Angora Wool Co. Ltd., Shanghai, since 1940;

General Manager of Cathay Mercantile Corp.;

Lecturer on Commercial Subjects, School of Commerce, National Southeastern University,
Shanghai, 1925-27;

Lecturer on Advertising, Downtown College of Commerce of University of Shanghai, Great China
University, Soochow University;

Author of *Advertising Principle and Practice in China* [中國廣告原理及實用]
(Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1941);

Member of Honorary Fraternities Alpha Kappa Psi and Eta Mu Pi;

President, Y's Men's Club, 1936;

Shanghai Bankers' Club; American University Club; Tsing-Hua Club;

Active in social welfare institutions, Lu Meiseng was the Director of the Shanghai Public Maternity
and

Children's Hospital, Shanghai Y.M.C.A., National Committee Y.M.C.A. of China, Shanghai
Children's Aid Society, China Institute of Agricultural Development(Founder), Christian
Service Union, Shanghai Anti-Tuberculosis Association, China Nutritional Aid Council,
Institution for the Chinese Blind, Health League of China, China International Famine Relief
Commission, Chinese Mission to Lepers, and member of the Industrial Social Service
Committee of the former Shanghai Municipal Council (International Settlement), etc.

Married to Zhu Lanzhen [朱蘭貞]: B.Sc., University of Michigan (1922), M.A., Columbia

University (1923), Chair of National Committee Y.W.C.A. of China, Principal of St. Mary's Hall.¹³⁵



¹³⁵ Yuanxin Li 李元信, “陆梅僧”, 《環球中國名人傳略》 [*World Chinese Biographies: Shanghai commercial and professional ed.*], (China: 環球出版社 [Globe Publishing Company], 1944): 157-159.

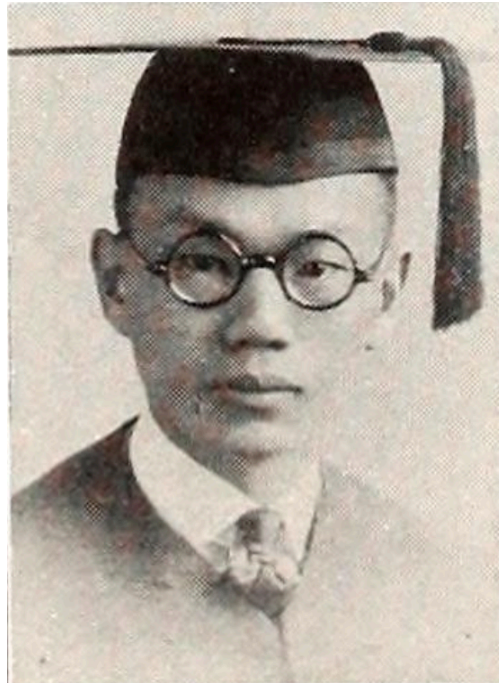
楊光洸 [Yang Guangsheng] (Clarence K. Young)

1900-1942

Jiangsu, China

Major at CC: Roman Languages

Band, Debating, Political Science Club



Born in Shanghai, 1900.

Education :

Tsinghua College, 1920; B.A. Colorado College, 1921; B.A. Political Economy, Princeton University; Doctor of Philosophy in International Law, Princeton University, 1924.

Past Experience:

Attaché and third secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of China in the United States, 1924-26;

Secretary of Chinese Delegation to Geneva International Opium Convention, 1925;

Editor-in-chief of *Chinese Students' Monthly*;

Lecturer on East Asian History at Washington University and Georgetown University, 1926.

Returned to China in 1927, and taught Political Science at Tsing-Hua College as a Lecturer.

Deputy Director-General of the Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [外交部情報司幫辦兼科長], 1928;

Successively served as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission, First Secretary and Consul General of the Embassy of the Republic of China in London, and Chinese Commissioner in Europe, 1928-32.

Returned to China in 1933 and founded the “World Telegraph Agency [世界電訊社]” with its branches in Geneva and Paris; served as its president.

General Inspector of the North China Provinces of the Foreign Ministry [外交部華北視察專員], 1934.

Manager and Editor-in-chief of the “Continental News [大陸報]” in Shanghai;

Attaché of the Chinese Delegation to the Coronation of George VI in London, 1937; then the head of the London and Paris headquarters of the Chinese News Bureau in Europe.

Consul General of the Republic of China in the Philippines, 1938-42.

Yang was married to Yan Youyun [严幼韵], the daughter of a prestigious family in Republican China.

Yang Guangsheng was arrested after the Japanese occupation of Manila in 1942. He was murdered by the Japanese on April 17 the same year along with seven other Chinese diplomats in Manila for their refusal to surrender.¹³⁶



Yang Guangsheng as Consul-General of Republic of China in the Philippines (first on the right);

¹³⁶ “楊光泮”, *Wikipedia*, Last edited April 21, 2022. 楊光泮-維基百科, 自由的百科全書. Youchun Xu 许友春, ed. 《民国人物大辞典》 [*Dictionary of Figures during Republic of China*], Vol.2 (China: 河北人民出版社 [Hebei People's Press], 1991): 2131-2132.

his wife Yan Youyun next to him.¹³⁷

梁實秋 [Liang Shiqiu]

His original name was 梁治華 [Chih-hua Liang], by which he was registered at CC.

1903-1987

Beijing, China

Major at Colorado College: English



Secretary, Chinese Students Club

Born in Beijing, 1903.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1915-1923; B.A. Colorado College, 1924; M.A. in Literature, Harvard University, 1925 (studied literary criticism with Irving Babbitt, whose New Humanism helped shaped his conservative literary tenets).

Past experience:

Returned to China in 1926 and started his teaching career as a professor of English at several leading

¹³⁷ “杨光注：效忠成志 舍生取义的外交官”，China: *The Paper*, posted on February 28, 2022. Accessed on March 20, 2024. https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_16891116

universities in China, including Peking University [北京大學], Tsingtao University [青島大學], and Jinan University [濟南大學];

Editor of a succession of literary supplements and periodicals, including the famous *Crescent Moon Monthly* (1928-1933). During this period, he published a number of literary treatises, among which were *The Romantic and the Classical* [浪漫的與古典的], *Literature and Revolution* [文學與革命], *The Seriousness of Literature* [文學的紀律], and *The Permanence of Literature*. His theoretical inclination in literature triggered a polemic war between him and Lu Xun and drew the concerted attacks of leftist writers. He also translated worldwide renowned works such as *Peter Pan* and *Wuthering Heights* during this period.

During the Sino-Japanese War, he lived in the wartime capital of the Nationalist government in Chongqing.

May 1949, Liang moved to Taiwan with the Nationalist government as a result of the Chinese Civil War. He taught at Taiwan Normal University and National Taiwan University and served as the Director of National Institute for Compilation and Translation until his retirement in 1966. During this period, he brought out a series of English-Chinese and Chinese-English dictionaries. His translation works included George Orwell's *Animal Fall* and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. Today, Liang is chiefly remembered as the first Chinese scholar to single-handedly translate the complete works of Shakespeare into Chinese, which spanned from 1930 to 1967. Another of his monumental accomplishment was the completion of a comprehensive history of English literature in Chinese in 1979, consisting of a three-volume history and a companion set of Selected Readings in English Literature in Chinese translation.

His literary fame rests first and foremost on the collection of short essays he had written over a span of more than four decades (1940-1986), *Yashe Xiaoping* [雅舍小品]. Its English translation, *From a Cottager's Sketchbook*, is available at the Special Collection of Tutt Library of Colorado College as part of the alumni collection.

Liang Shiqiu lived between Taipei and Seattle, Washington in his late life. He passed away in Taipei, Taiwan in 1987.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Xu, *Dictionary* :1732.



Liang Shiqiu (left) and the Director of Academia Sinica Hu Shi in Taiwan.¹³⁹



Liang Shiqiu in Seattle.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ “Liang Shih-Chiu”, Wikipedia, Last edited September 4, 2021, [Liang Shih-chiu - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁴⁰ “Biographical introduction of Liang Shiqiu”, <http://archives.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/exhibitions/LiangShihChiu/>, accessed on April 6, 2024.

陳肇彰 [Chen Zhaozhang] (Donan C. Chen)

Shanghai, China

Major at Colorado College: Economics

President, C.C. Chinese Students' Club; A and B Club; Independent Club.



Education:

Tsinghua College, 1923; B.A. Colorado College, 1924;

M.B.A. Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University.

Past Experience:

Chen worked for J.P. Morgan Co. in New York before returning to Shanghai in 1928. There, he worked in a private bank, the Kincheng Banking Corp. [金城銀行], until 1953. Under the new Socialist regime, he was then transferred to the People's Bank as an ordinary worker following the nationalization of private banks.



A Colorado College alumni met up with Chen as he visited China in the 1980s.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Donan Chen, "Letters", *The Colorado College Bulletin* (Colorado Springs: Colorado College, November 1980). Photocopy of the article "These two tired tigers.....". Information File "Students-Chinese", Colorado College Special Collection.

趙敏恆 [Zhao Minheng] (Thomas Ming-Hung Chao)

1904-1961

Nanjing, China

Major at Colorado College: English

Member, The Colorado College Union



Born in 1904, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China, 1904.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1923; B.A. Colorado College, 1924; B.A. Journalism, Missouri School of Journalism, 1925; M.A. Journalism, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 1927 (The first Chinese to receive a master degree of Journalism in the United States).

Past experience:

Deputy Editor-In-Chief, *Peking Leader*, Beijing, China; Dispatched Reporter of *Reuters*, 1929; Far East Bureau Chief 1938; Concurrently freelancer for *The Associated Press* and *United Press International* of the U.S, *The Daily Telegraph* of the UK, *TASS* of the Soviet Union, *Dōmei News Agency*, and *The Asahi Shimbun* of Japan.

Zhao was the first to report the Xi'an Incident in 1936. He was also the very first to report the Cairo Conference to the world at *The Reuters*. Facing strict censorship at Cairo Telegraph Bureau, Zhao flew to Lisbon, Portugal, which was then in neutral state, to send the telegraph to the *Reuters'* London headquarter. It was 14 hours earlier than reports from *The Associated Press*

and the *UPI*. This is the accomplishments that he was most proud of throughout his entire professional career.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Zhao served as the director of Hankow and Chongqing Branch of Reuters. He risked life to report the Japanese bombing campaign of Chinese wartime capital Chongqing. He was also teaching at Journalism and Writing at the Journalism Department of Fudan University and Central Political Institute during this period.

Zhao resigned from *Reuters* and started as Professor at Journalism Department of Fudan University, 1945.

Zhao decided to stay on the mainland when Nationalist regime was fleeing to Taiwan towards the end of the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949). He was interrogated for suspicion of “foreign espionage” during the “Sufan movement [肅反運動]” in 1955. He died in a labor camp in Xinyu, Jiangxi on January 6, 1961. He was only rehabilitated in 1982 by the Shanghai Intermediate People’s Court.

Zhao had written 《採訪十五年》 [*Fifteen Years of Interviewing*], 《新聞圈外》 [*Inside and Outside of Journalism*], 《外人在華的新聞事業》 [*Foreign Journalism Endeavors in China*], etc.



Zhao Minheng and his wife Xie Yulan [謝蘭郁]¹⁴²

¹⁴² Yushen Chen, “赵敏恒——‘最了不起的华人记者’” Tsinghua Alumni Association, Last modified on January 11, 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20191110015221/http://www.tsinghua.org.cn/publish/alumni/4000359/10084492.html>
Wei Li, “新闻奇才赵敏恒”, 《校友文稿资料选编》 [*Selected Edition of Alumni Document Materials*], (Beijing: Tsinghua Alumni Association), Issue 18: 84-89. Xu, *Dictionary*: 2286.

麥健曾 [Mai Jianzeng]

1900-1977

Guangdong, China

Major at Colorado College: Economics

A and B Club; Independent Club



Born in 1900, Shunde, Guangdong, China. Grandson of Kang Youwei, the late Qing political thinker and reformer.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1923; B.A. Colorado College, 1924; M.B.A Harvard University;
Ph. D in Economics, Columbia University, 1930.

Past experience:

Taught at National Tsinghua University [國立清華大學] in Beijing and National Jiaotong
University [國立交通大學] in Shanghai;

Director-General of Guangdong Provincial Finance Bureau, 1936;

Professor at National Beiping Railway Management Institute [北平鐵道管理學院];

Professor of Economics at Lingnan University [嶺南大學];

Founder of Hongkong Chun Chi College [崇基學院], the Economics Department of the Chinese

University of Hongkong [香港中文大學], and Business School of Lingnan University. Mai Jianzeng's son Mai Jiqiang [麥繼強] was a renowned professor of Biology at the Chinese University of Hongkong.¹⁴³



¹⁴³ “麥繼強教授五代與香港中文大學及香港的關係 [The Five Generations of Professor Mark with CUHK & HK]”, The Chinese University of Hongkong. Accessed on March 20, 2024. <http://docs.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/Exhibition/ChineseJade/mark.htm>

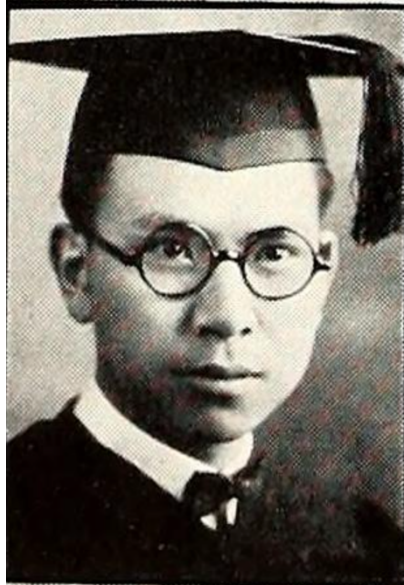
謝奮程 [Xie Fencheng]

1898-1941

Guangdong, China

Major at Colorado College: Economics

A and B Club; Independent Club.



Born in 1898 in Guangdong, China. Moved to Singapore with the family in 1913.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1917-1923; B.A Colorado College, 1924; M.B.A, Harvard Business School.

Past experience:

Returned to China and served as the Secretary of the Political Department of National Revolutionary Army Command [國民革命軍總司令部政治部秘書], 1926;

Section Chief of the Ministry of Finance of Nationalist Government [南京國民政府財政部科長], Nanjing, 1927;

Successively served as the Director-General of Hebei Coal and Petroleum Taxation Bureau [河北煤油特稅局局長], Hubei Tabaco Taxation Bureau [湖北捲煙稅局局長], Chief of the Xiang-E-Gan Regional Taxation Bureau [湘鄂贛區統稅局局長], Member of the National Economy Planning Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Nationalist Party

and the Deputy Leader of the Central Finance Group [中國國民黨中央執行委員會國民經濟計劃委員會委員兼中央財政組副組長];

Director of General Affairs of the Ministry of Railway [鐵道部總務司司長], 1935;

Dispatched to Hong Kong to direct international communication affairs following the outbreak of Sino-Japanese War, 1937;

Counselor of the Ministry of Transport and Communication [交通部參事], Member of the Procurement and Bid Review Committee in Hong Kong [購料審標委員會駐港委員], 1938.

Xie was also ordered to study the reconstruction of Chinese transportation system in postwar era during that period.

Xie Fencheng was killed by Japanese soldiers in his colleague's apartment on December 12, 1941, when Hong Kong fell under Japanese military occupation following the outbreak of Pacific War.

Xie had written *The Change of Chinese Fiscality in the Recent Seven Years* [最近七年來中國財政之興革] and *Observing Fiscality in Modern China from the Perspective of Fiscal Theories* [從財政學理觀察中國現代之財政].¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Xu, *Dictionary*: 2727-2828.

王國華 [Wang Guohua]

1900-1973

Shaanxi, China

Major at Colorado College: Economics



Born in Yulin, Shaanxi, China on February 1, 1900.

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1923; B.A. Colorado College, 1924; M.B.A. The University of Chicago.

Past experience:

Returned to China and acted as the Chair of Economics Department and Professor of the Hujiang University in Shanghai [上海滬江大學商科主任], 1928;

Secretary of Director-General of Commission of Construction of Zhejiang Province [浙江建設廳長 曾養甫之秘書], 1932;

Secretary General of New Roads Construction Committee of the Ministry of Railway of the Nationalist Government [國民政府鐵道部新路建設委員會秘書長]; directed the construction of Beijing-Jiangxi, Jiangxi-Fujian, Hunan-Guangxi railways etc.;

Moved to Chongqing with the Nationalist regime and served as the acting Director-General of National Highway Bureau [全國公路總局], 1937;

Director of Waterway & Land Coordinated Transportation under the Ministry of Transportation, 1940 [交通部水陸聯運]; Head of the Delegation Team of Procurement to the United States under Supplies Materials Committee [物資供應委員會駐美採購團團長], November, 1941; Counselor and Director of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of Transportation [交通部參事兼外事室主任], August, 1943; Counselor of the Ministry of Transportation, assisting the post-war regeneration of transportation [交通部顧問], 1946; Invited to serve as the General Manager of Taiwan Navigation Co., Ltd., Taiwan [台灣航業公司總經理], 1948; Director General of Kaohsiung Port Bureau [高雄港務局局長], May, 1950; Resigned from the previous job and served as the Director of the International Corporation Committee of the Ministry of Transportation, and Counselor of the Directorate General of Telecommunications [交通部國際合作小組委員會主任及電信總局顧問], 1958.

Wang Guohua died in a car accident on his way to attend the Tsinghua alumni reunion of their Fiftieth Anniversary of Graduation, March 12, 1973.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Xu, *Dictionary*: 143-144.

聞一多 [Wen Yiduo]

1899-1946

Hubei, China

Major at CC: Arts (Special Student)



Born on November 24, 1899. Originally named 闻家驊 [Wen Jiahua].

Education:

Tsinghua College, 1913-1922; Arts Institute of Chicago, 1922-1923;

Special Student, Colorado College, 1923-1924; The Art Students League of New York, 1924-1925.

Past experience:

Editor and Editor-in-chief of *Tsinghua Weekly*, 1914;

Vice President of Tsing-Hua Students' Theater Club, 1916;

Provost, National Beiping Art College [北京國立藝術專科學校教務長], fall 1925;

Dean of Students, National Wusong Political University in Shanghai [上海吳淞國立政治大學訓導長], Fall 1926;

Section Chief of Arts Office of General Political Department, Northern Expedition Army [北伐軍總政治部藝術股股長], Spring 1927;

Director of Foreign Language Department, National Fourth Zhongshang University [國立第四中山大學外文系主任], Fall 1927 (taught English and American poetry, theater, and prose);
Head of the Literature School and Director of Chinese Department, National Wuhan University [國立武漢大學文學院長兼中文系主任], Fall 1928;
Head of the Literature School and Director of Chinese Department, National Tsingtao University [國立青島大學文學院長兼中文系主任], Fall 1930 - Summer 1932;
Professor of Chinese Department, National Tsinghua University [國立清華大學中文系教授], Fall 1932;
Professor at National Changsha Provisional University [國立長沙臨時大學], 1937, following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War;
Professor of Chinese Department, National Southwestern Associated University [國立西南聯合大學], Yunnan, May 1938;
Joint the Southwestern Cultural Research Society [西南文化研究會], Spring 1943;
Joint China Democratic League [民主同盟], 1944;
Elected as the Member of the Yunnan Branch of the Democratic League, Editor of the *Democratic Weekly* [民主週報], December, 1944;
Elected as the Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Democratic League [民盟中央執行委員] and Head of the *Democratic Weekly*, September, 1945;

Wen attended a press conference organized by the *Democratic Weekly* on July 15, 1946 for the assassination of Li Gongpu [李公朴] and gave a speech; he was assassinated by an agent of Nationalist regime on his way home following the event.

Wen Yiduo's legacy rests in his rich poetry production including 《紅燭》 [*Red Candles*], 《死水》 [*Dead Water*], “七子之歌 [Song of the Seven Sons]”, which embodied his strong sense of patriotism and national consciousness in a romantic and surrealistic style. He had also conducted extensive research and organization of classic Chinese literature texts including 《周易》 [*I Ching*], 《詩經》 [*Classic of Poetry*], 《莊子》 [*Zhuang Zhou*], and 《楚辭》 [*Chu Ci*], combining the study of Chinese classics with Freud's psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology. 《聞一多全集》

[*The Complete Works of Wen Yiduo*] that included Wen's scholarly writing, art work, and personal correspondence was first published in August, 1948, edited by a group of scholars.¹⁴⁶



¹⁴⁶ Xu, *Dictionary*: 2362-2363. “聞一多”, Wikipedia, Last edited: December 12, 2023. [闻一多- 维基百科，自由的百科全书](#)



Wen Yiduo shortly before he was assassinated.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ “聞一多”, posted on June 13, 2020.

<https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E9%97%BB%E4%B8%80%E5%A4%9A#/media/File:%E9%97%BB%E4%B8%80%E5%A4%9A01.jpg>.

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