



# Research on the Establishment of New Schools in Leshan Area during the Reform in the Late Qing Dynasty (1901-1911)

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## Abstract

The establishment of new schools in Leshan area during the reform in the late Qing Dynasty marked the beginning of modernization of education in Leshan area. Through the research on the school innovation, educational funds, curriculum and educational purposes in Leshan area during the reform in the late Qing Dynasty, the significance and limitations of the establishment of new schools in Leshan area can be seen. Influenced by such factors as time constrains and insufficient funds, the new schools in Leshan area started late, but developed rapidly in general. After more than ten years of development, a considerable number of new schools have been built, which have promoted the development of modern education in the region, the transformation from traditional education to modern education and the establishment of modern education system. In the late Qing Dynasty, the establishment of new schools in Leshan area was of great significance to the educational transformation in Leshan.

## Keywords

The reform in the late Qing Dynasty, Leshan area, New schools

The establishment of new schools in Leshan was one of the remarkable signs of modernization in Leshan and the carrier of modern education in Leshan. However, the researches on the new schools in Leshan are still insufficient, and most of them focus on the influence of the new schools on the characters. In the late Qing Dynasty, Leshan City was called Jiadingfu. Its regional scope was different from now. "In the Yongzheng 12 years, Jiadingzhou was promoted to Jiadingfu. The government of Jiadingfu was in Leshan County. It ruled seven counties, Leshan, Emei, Hongya, Ji Jiang, Qianwei, Rong, Weiyuan." (Wen Liang & Chen Yaocai, 1864). And "In the Jiaqing 13 years, Ebianting was set up" (Wen Liang & Chen Yaocai, 1864). Therefore, Jiadingfu led seven counties and Ebianting during the reform in the late Qing Dynasty. This article Leshan area refers to the jurisdiction of Jiadingfu in the late Qing Dynasty.

## 1. The innovation of the New Schools in Leshan area during the reform in the Late Qing Dynasty

After the rebellion of Gengzi, the Qing government was determined to learn from the West and reform and become stronger. The reform involved all fields, and the education reform had been put on the agenda again. Moreover, it was regarded as an important policy by the Qing government.

### 1.1 The establishment of educational institutions

The Sichuan authorities responded to the reform immediately, especially the education reform. At the same time, the

every counties in Leshan had also set up the Quanxuesuo. Quanxuesuo was in charge of the whole county educational affairs, divided of school district, and selected the staff member and so on, to become a new local administrative education institution in Leshan. The establishment of educational institutions in Leshan marked that the modern education in Leshan was gradually on the right track, and it had special administrative institutions in education, which was the fundamental difference with the old education, and greatly promotes the development of modern education in Leshan.

## 1.2 The establishment of the new schools

During the reform, the Qing government repeatedly ordered the establishment of new schools. Sichuan authorities also took various measures to develop the new education in Sichuan. Leshan authorities had also actively responded to the policy, and its modern education had also been greatly developed. There were a large number of schools established in Leshan during the reform of the late Qing Dynasty, which laid the foundation of modern education in Leshan. The establishment of new schools was one of the remarkable signs of the modernization in Leshan.

### 1.2.1 General education

In 1903, some counties in Leshan area had opened new schools. Hongya County "official higher primary school", Qianwei county "county higher primary school", Rong County "higher primary school" all were founded in 1903. Since then, the counties had established higher primary schools. In 1907, "Jiadingfu Government Middle School" officially opened, for the beginning of Leshan Middle School (The local records codification committee of Sichuan Province Leshan City Shizhongqu, 2003). There had new schools in various counties in villages and towns to 1911. A variety of private new schools were constantly created during this period, such as Leshan county Canadian merchant Shushen founded "HuaYing girls school" in 1905. The establishment of the private school made up for the limitations of the government run schools, widened the scope of education, let more children enjoy education. These new schools were a new atmosphere in Leshan at that time. It represented the education level of Leshan, and led the education development of Leshan to the modern transformation.

In anti-illiteracy education, simple schools, half-day schools, farmers' night schools were set up in Leshan. Anti-illiteracy education was undoubtedly a great progress in education in Leshan when the education of the populace was low that made low literacy rate of people. It not only expanded the opportunities for people to receive education but also had certain significance in opening up the wisdom of the people. And it was a great progress in social development, and played a certain role in the liberation of people in the mind. Anti-illiteracy education had increased the literacy rate of farmers, who could learn more new modes of production and improve social productivity. However, due to the limitations of the late Qing Dynasty, anti-illiteracy education had not yet been popularized in some remote areas. According to the information currently obtained, the data statistics of general education (including anti-illiteracy education) all counties in Leshan area are shown in the table below (the statistical years are up to 1911).

**Table 1. Overview of the new general education schools in Leshan area in the late Qing Dynasty**

site	Leshan	Jiajiang	Emei	Hongya	Weiyuan	Qianwei	Rongxian	Ebian	Total
Number of Schools	84	87	91	27	71	74	208	12	654
Number of Students	2905	3219	4256	1911	3064	3049	3827	284	22231

According to the above table, the regional development of new schools in Leshan area was unbalanced, as many as 208, or as few as 12. But the number of new schools in most places was between 70 and 90, which was due to geographical, political, economic and other reasons. All counties could ensure that there were new schools, indicating that the establishment of new schools in Leshan area was universal despite the unbalanced regional development.

### 1.2.2 Industrial education

At that time, various kinds of industrial education in Leshan also developed, and various Industrial Education Schools were founded. Industrial Education Schools in Leshan area was first built in Rong County, founded by Zhu Guochen in 1905 (Rong County Annals compilation Committee, 1993). After that, Emei, Weiyuan, Qianwei and other counties had established Industrial Education Schools. Industrial Schools were divided into official and private. For example, Weiyuan County Sericulture Commune (private) was set up by Chen Xiyi in 1907, and it taught populace the new method of silk reeling and need not accommodation fees (The Weiyuan County Annals Compilation Committee of Sichuan Province, 1994). Another example, Emei County Tea Institute (official) was set up by magistrate Mingyuan in 1910 (Li Jincheng & Zhu Rongbang, 1935). Industrial Education School was the first time building vocational education into the education system in Leshan area, which is making vocational technology that was closely related to educa-

tion. This was a great progress in the history of education in Leshan. The industrial education spread the advanced mode of production, also objectively improve the social productivity. But its influence was also limited due to many limitations.

### 1.2.3 Normal education

With the rapid development of the new school, the teachers were not competent for the new subjects in the new school (Lei Fengxing, 1985). The teachers left over in the old education were obviously insufficient, so it was urgent to establish schools that train their teachers. In order to trained teachers, Normal Schools were set up all counties in Leshan area. For example, in 1904, the Junior Normal Crash Class was set in the Rongxian Girls' School, the length of schooling was one year (Rong County Annals compilation Committee, 1993). The establishment of these Normal Education, to a certain extent, alleviated the shortage of teachers, so that the new schools founded by various counties at that time could have the corresponding new teachers. However, due to their short training time, the teachers could not learn systematically, so they also had limitations. The establishment of Girl's Junior Normal School enabled women to engage in education, which to a certain extent emancipated the mind and liberated women to a limited extent. In a word, the establishment of Normal Education Schools in Leshan made the new school have enough teachers, provided the teacher guarantee for the establishment of the school, promoted the development of the new school to a large extent, and made an important contribution to promoting the development of the new education.

## 1.3 The curriculum and educational purpose of the New School

In the setting of the general education curriculum, the new education still retains a large number of classics. Course was offered explicitly stipulated in the *Constitution of Zou Ding Xue Tang*. Since the guiding ideology of the constitution was still "Chinese-style Westernization", the setting of the primary and secondary school curriculum mainly included two aspects. First, Chinese classics, such as the Analects of Confucius. Second, "western learning", such as arithmetic, foreign languages. And no matter the primary school, junior middle school and senior high school, the Chinese classics account for the proportion was relatively large. At that time, the courses of all the new schools in Leshan were set up in accordance with the *Constitution of Zou Ding Xue Tang*.

The purpose of education, the *Constitution of Zou Ding Xue Tang* stipulates that "no matter what the school, with loyalty and filial piety for the purpose" (Gu Mingyuan, 2005). In 1905, the purpose of education was further defined as "Loyal to the king, Worshipping Confucius, Advocate public morality, Advocate martial virtues and Advocate practice" (Gu Mingyuan, 2005). The purpose of education in the late Qing Dynasty, the core was the thought of "loyalty", which was used as the basis for formulating teaching. In 1905, "Loyal to the king" was placed in the first place, deliberately emphasizing the position of "king". The new education in Leshan also took this as the purpose of education, so the form and assessment of the new education had been reformed, but it also had a strong feudal background. Both from its curriculum and other aspects, its essence was to maintain the feudal rule, namely the so-called "Loyal to the king".

## 1.4 Source of funds for the New Schools

After the new school was established, "the property of the academy was accepted by the school" (Chen Qian & Chen Shiyu, 1937). Education funds shall been raised by the local governments themselves. The education funds in Leshan were not included in the local financial plan, so the education funds in all counties in Leshan were different. But almost all official schools came from school assets, student payment, enthusiastic education, personnel donations and so on. These funds were deposited in the bank for earning interest, and some counties local government allocated them from the tax as appropriate. In order to raise educational funds, the part was drawn out from the meat tax and deed tax, and even the part of the income increase was used as educational funds. The tax increase was used to make up for the lack of educational funds, which increased the burden of the people to a certain extent. However, the education funds in Leshan was not into special plan in the late Qing Dynasty, but have special tax as a supplementary education funds, which was providing certain conditions for the development of education. But it is a drop in the bucket. During the reform of the late Qing Dynasty, the government faced with financial difficulties, insufficient educational funds, very limited teaching conditions, and incomplete teaching facilities

## 2. The significance and limitation of establishing the New Schools in Leshan Area

In the late Qing Dynasty, most of the new schools in Leshan were rebuilt from the original academies and temples. In the educational reform, it reflected the social reform at that time and broke the old educational system to a great extent. Although the new education in Leshan had its limitations, it also conformed to the development trend of the Times and lie a foundation for the development of modern education in Leshan.

## 2.1 Significance

Modern scientific and cultural knowledge was introduced, new talents were trained, and new educational concepts were put into practice, so that the education in Leshan area began to transform from traditional education to modern education. Objectively introduced modern science and culture, which made students not only learned traditional culture, but also learned western such as arithmetic, foreign languages. In addition, students were learning music, painting, sports and others. "In the Ding Wei 33 years...the primary school sports meeting was hold in the autumn" (Chen Qian & Chen Shiyu, 1937). Although these activities were not universal, they promoted the development of sports in the new schools at that time. Guo Moruo was most interested in reading classics courses when he was in Higher Primary School. Because his teacher Shuai Pinjun gave very distinctive lectures and taught students the method of reading classics, which laid a deep foundation for Guo Moruo's historical research in the future (Lei Fengxing, 1985). The establishment of Normal Education had trained a number of new teachers and laid a talent foundation for the continued development of the new schools. The new schools was also the "vane" of education in Leshan, which was leading the development trend of education in Leshan. After the abolition of the imperial examination, Mr. Shen, Guo Moruo's old-style private school teacher, his teaching methods were also changed. He adapted to the new form and trend, boldly reformed the family school education, and taught his students with new teaching materials (Lei Fengxing, 1985). It showed that the new school had a great influence on the education in Leshan area.

To a certain extent, it had emancipated people's the mind and expanded the educated group.

Industrial education had been formally incorporated into the education system. The Industrial Schools in Leshan area established according to local conditions to spread new modes of production, which to some extent promoted the development of local industries and improved social productivity.

## 2.2 Limitation

Modern education in Sichuan was first established in 1892 (Kui yingtao, 2004). Modern education in Leshan area started relatively late. The old education such as old-style private schools still remained. The curriculum setting also retained a large number of old education components.

The purpose of education emphasizes "Loyal to the king", in fact, it was just a way to maintain the feudal rule.

The establishment of new schools in Leshan was not balanced. The new education in Ebian was the weakest. The establishment of Industrial Schools in Leshan area were obviously not enough. According to incomplete statistics, only four counties had Industrial Schools, which was lagging behind compared with the whole Sichuan Province. Moreover, the industrial school had a single type, almost all of them were agricultural schools, which were not conducive to the transformation of agriculture to industry, and the impact was also limited. The scientific methods of breeding sericulture had been introduced, but the local people were not good at using it, so they remained using the old methods (Chen Qian & Chen Shiyu, 1937). There were many reasons for the educational imbalance in Leshan area, which were related to degree and wealth, the attitudes of the bureaucrats and gentry, geographical location and educational traditions in various counties.

In summary, the modern education in Leshan was not all satisfactory during the reform in the late Qing Dynasty. The new education in Leshan also retained the old education component and attached great importance to the classics. In practice, the development of new education was restricted by the limitation of conditions, the shortage of teaching equipment and insufficient funds. Nevertheless, the new schools in Leshan developed rapidly. It marked the collapse of the feudal education system in Leshan, and the birth of the new education system and began to rise. The establishment of the new school had a certain influence on the dissemination of science and culture, the cultivation of new talents and the liberation of ideas, and was of more important significance to the development of modern education in Leshan. In the late Qing Dynasty, the establishment of new schools in Leshan promoted the transformation from traditional education to modern education and the establishment of modern education system.

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