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The 3, 4, 5 Literature:
Ideopolitical-moral education in Mainland China
as a Barometer of
Political and Economic Change

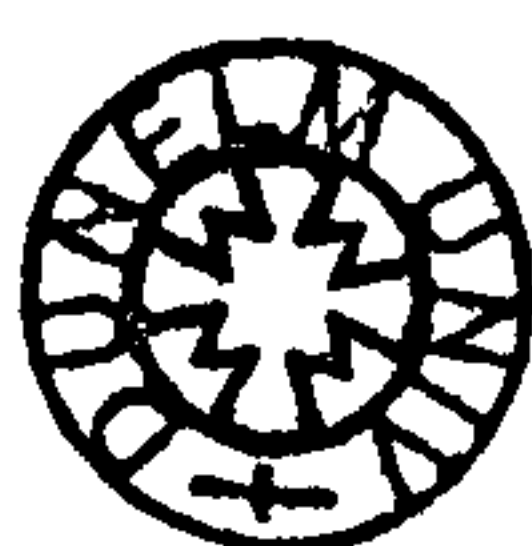
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Ho, Chi-hang

17 OCT 2007

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of
the Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Durham University**

March 2007



DECLARATION

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Thesis Title:

The 3, 4, 5 literature: Ideopolitical-moral education in Mainland China as a
Barometer of Political and Economic Change

ABSTRACT

Moral education is inseparable from ideology and politics in China. This study investigates the rise and fall of the “3,4,5 literature” and its related movement. The “3,4,5 literature” (the *New Three Character Classic*, *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* and *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*) were bestselling moral education texts generated in Guangdong, a southern SEZ, since the adoption of a policy of opening up the economy in 1978.

This study employed the method of content analysis to identify distinctive values embedded in the 3,4,5 literature and other related moral texts. Major stakeholders involved in the development of the 3,4,5 literature were interviewed in order to understand the dynamic process of the 3,4,5 movement. In addition, documentary analysis was employed to show how the government’s policy on ideopolitical-moral education led to the rise and the fall of the 3,4,5 literature and to assess the implications of the 3,4,5 literature for the government in formulating its subsequent policies in ideopolitical-moral education.

The findings of this study indicated the pioneering role of the 3,4,5 literature in the reform of ideopolitical-moral education in China. Ideopolitical-moral education in China is currently characterized by concerns for students’ psychological health, moral qualities, democracy and legal education rather than political themes.

This study also shows that a de-politicization in ideopolitical-moral education resulted from decentralization, with greater autonomy granted to the regions. In turn, this made it possible to professionalize ideopolitical-moral education. The professionalisation made it possible to free ideopolitical-moral education from party dogma, in other words to secularise it. All this was made possible by the rapid social transition initiated by market-oriented reforms. Nevertheless, in spite of decentralization and regionalization, the national government remained highly influential. This study also reveals the sustaining power of traditional ethics in current ideopolitical-moral education and its power in maintaining official legitimacy and moral authority as China increasingly integrates with the global world economy. Finally, the study depicts the changes in methods of political socialization. These were initiated by economic liberalization rather than changes in political system.

It is hoped that the findings will enhance the understanding of recent development of ideopolitical-moral education in China and add to existing knowledge of such research fields as culture, political socialization and soft-power.

Contents

| | Page No: |
|--|--------------|
| Abstract | i |
| Contents | ii |
| List of Tables | ix |
| List of Figures | xii |
| List of Appendices | xiii |
| List of Abbreviations | ix |
| Note of Transliteration | ix |
| | |
| Chapter 1 Introduction and background | 1-32 |
| 1.1 Background to the study: the 3,4,5 movement | |
| 1.1.1 Introduction | 9 |
| 1.1.2 The emergence of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 11 |
| 1.1.3 The emergence of the “3,4,5” literature | 14 |
| 1.1.4 The <i>New Three Character Classic</i> Heat | 18 |
| 1.1.5 Further Extensions to the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 20 |
| 1.1.6 Replications of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> after 2001 | 24 |
| 1.1.7 The 3,4,5 movement and its recent development | 25 |
| 1.1.8 Conclusion | 27 |
| 1.2 Research questions | 28 |
| 1.3 Significance of the study | 29 |
| 1.4 Limitations of the study | 30 |
| 1.5 Organization of the thesis | 31 |
| | |
| Chapter 2 Literature Review: 1. Historical background to moral education in China | 33-85 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 33 |
| 2.2 A brief account of Chinese history | 33 |
| 2.3 Communist China | 35 |
| 2.3.1 Pre-reform China (1949-1978) | 36 |
| 2.3.2 Post-reform China (since 1978) | 39 |
| 2.3.3 Economic achievements in post-reform China | 40 |
| 2.3.4 Impacts of economic reform and opening up | 45 |
| 2.3.4.1 Social Impacts | 45 |
| 2.3.4.2 Political Impacts | 61 |
| 2.4 Economic liberalization in Guangdong | 66 |
| 2.4.1 General background to Guangdong Province | 67 |
| 2.4.2 Guangdong as a pioneer in the opening up and economic reform | 70 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 2.4.3 Social transformations in post-reform Guangdong | 72 |
| 2.4.4 Political impacts of economic reform in Guangdong | 80 |
| 2.5 Conclusion | 83 |
| | |
| Chapter 3 Literature Review: 2. Chinese moral philosophy | 86-118 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 86 |
| 3.2 Confucianism: moral-orientation | 86 |
| 3.2.1 Imperial Confucianism (Han Confucianism) | 93 |
| 3.2.2 Neo-Confucianism (Song Confucianism) | 94 |
| 3.2.3 Modern Neo-Confucianism | |
| (Confucianism in the contemporary China) | 95 |
| 3.3. Moral education in China: A historical review | 98 |
| 3.3.1 Confucian teaching in ancient China | 98 |
| 3.3.2 Secular Confucian teaching: from classic to rhyme text | 100 |
| 3.3.3 Moral education in Nationalist (GMD) China | 101 |
| 3.3.4 Ideopolitical-moral education in “pre-reform China” | 103 |
| 3.3.4.1 Formal ideopolitical-moral education in schools | 103 |
| 3.3.4.2 Mass campaigns | 106 |
| 3.3.4.3 Slogans | 107 |
| 3.3.4.4 Role models | 108 |
| 3.3.4.5 Ideopolitical-moral education through children’s literature | 109 |
| 3.3.5 Ideopolitical-moral education in “post-reform China” | 109 |
| 3.3.5.1 Challenges faced by ideopolitical-moral education | 111 |
| 3.3.5.1.1 Irrelevance of communist ideology to the society | 111 |
| 3.3.5.1.2 Inadequacy of ideopolitical-moral education | |
| in face of economic liberalization | 114 |
| 3.4 Conclusion | 117 |
| | |
| Chapter 4 Literature Review: 3. Theories of Moral Education | 119-137 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 119 |
| 4.2 Moral education as political socialization | 119 |
| 4.3 Contribution of moral education to individuals | 121 |
| 4.4 Balancing the freedoms and obedience | 122 |
| 4.5 Political socialization and nation-building | 122 |
| 4.6 Moral education in the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc | 124 |
| 4.6.1 Soviet moral/ ideological education | 124 |
| 4.6.2 Moral/social education in Western democracies | 127 |
| 4.7 Moral education and textbook | 130 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| 4.7.1 Previous studies of textbooks in China | 131 |
| 4.8 Moral education and literature | 133 |
| 4.8.1 Moral education and rhyming literature | 135 |
| 4.8.2 Previous studies of children's books in China | 136 |
| 4.9 Conclusion | 137 |
| Chapter 5 Research Methodology | 138-168 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 138 |
| 5.2 Definitions of key concepts | 138 |
| 5.3 Questions arising from the Literature | 143 |
| 5.4 Research design | 146 |
| 5.5 Research Methodologies | 148 |
| 5.5.1 Content analysis | 148 |
| 5.5.1.1 Data base of content analysis | 149 |
| 5.5.1.2 Conceptualization (categorization) | 150 |
| 5.5.1.3 Development of instrument for content analysis | 151 |
| 5.5.1.4 Operationalizations (measures) | 155 |
| 5.5.1.5 Coding | 155 |
| 5.5.1.6 Reliability | 157 |
| 5.5.2 Documentary analysis | 159 |
| 5.5.3 Interviews | 161 |
| 5.5.3.1 Design of the interviews | 161 |
| 5.5.3.2 Validity | 162 |
| 5.5.3.3 Safety measures | 164 |
| 5.5.3.4 Facilitating measures | 166 |
| 5.5.3.5 Focus Group Meeting | 167 |
| 5.6 Trustworthiness of the present study | 167 |
| 5.7 Conclusion | 168 |
| Chapter 6 Findings from Content Analysis of Moral Education Texts | 169-215 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 169 |
| 6.2 <i>The New Three Character Classic</i> | 169 |
| 6.3 <i>The Four Character Song of Social Ethics</i> | 180 |
| 6.4 <i>The Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics</i> | 183 |
| 6.5 Content features of the 3,4,5 literature | 187 |
| 6.5.1 Themes/values | 187 |
| 6.5.2 Sub-themes | 190 |
| 6.5.3 Way of Expression | 192 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| 6.5.4 Reader groups | 193 |
| 6.6 Comparing Guangdong, Shanghai and Beijing versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 194 |
| 6.6.1 Traditional themes | 196 |
| 6.6.2 National themes | 196 |
| 6.6.3 Personal values | 197 |
| 6.6.4 Social values | 197 |
| 6.7 Comparing the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> with previous government documents in ideopolitical-moral education | 198 |
| 6.8 Comparing the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> with subsequent documents on ideopolitical-moral education that emerged in the late 1990s | 202 |
| 6.8.1 The <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | 203 |
| 6.8.2 Moral education curricula developed in the late 1990s | 205 |
| 6.9 Conclusion | 207 |
| 6.9.1 Patriotic education in the mid-1990s | 207 |
| 6.9.2 De-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education | 208 |
| 6.9.3 Moral qualities | 209 |
| 6.9.4 Shifting focuses in moral orientations | 210 |
| 6.9.5 Prevalent sub-theme in moral education texts | 212 |
| 6.9.6 Significance of the findings from the content analysis | 214 |
| Chapter 7 Findings from Documentary Analysis | 216-241 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 216 |
| 7.2 Government’s emphases in ideopolitical-moral education | 216 |
| 7.2.1 Guiding principles | 216 |
| 7.2.2 Composition of “moral education” | 217 |
| 7.2.3 Objectives | 218 |
| 7.2.4 Inadequacies | 220 |
| 7.2.5 Teaching approaches | 221 |
| 7.2.6 Teaching resources | 223 |
| 7.2.7 Themes in moral education | 226 |
| 7.3 Periodization of moral education in China | 228 |
| 7.3.1 Political and ideological elements: 1989-1992 | 228 |
| 7.3.2 Nationalistic Education: 1992-1996 | 229 |
| 7.3.2.1 Education in the history of modern and contemporary China | 229 |
| 7.3.2.2 Chinese traditional culture | 230 |
| 7.3.2.3 National cohesion | 231 |
| 7.3.2.4 The Cultivation of Socialist Spiritual Civilization | 232 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| 7.3.3 Moral Qualities: 1997- 2002 | 232 |
| 7.3.3.1 Psychological Health | 232 |
| 7.3.3.2 Individual well being | 233 |
| 7.3.3.3 Democracy and Legal education | 234 |
| 7.3.3.4 International outlook | 235 |
| 7.4 Conclusion | 235 |
| 7.4.1 De-politicisation in ideopolitical-moral education | 235 |
| 7.4.2 Student-centred moral education | 236 |
| 7.4.3 <i>Shou</i> and <i>Fang</i> in ideopolitical-moral education | 237 |
| 7.4.4 Favourable conditions for the 3,4,5 literature | 238 |
| 7.4.5 Conditions leading to the fall of the 3,4,5 literature | 240 |
| 7.4.6 Significance of the Findings from the Documentary Analysis | 240 |
| Chapter 8 Findings from Interviews | 242-279 |
| 8.1 Introduction | 242 |
| 8.2 Profile of the Informants | 243 |
| 8.2.1 Authors | 243 |
| 8.2.2 Government Officials | 244 |
| 8.2.3 Academics in Moral Education | 244 |
| 8.2.4 School teachers | 245 |
| 8.2.5 Focus Group Meetings | 245 |
| 8.3 Findings from the Interviews: A story of the 3,4,5 literature | 246 |
| 8.3.1 The rise of the 3,4,5 literature | 246 |
| 8.3.1.1 Moral deregulation arising from rapid social changes | 246 |
| 8.3.1.2 Spoiled young generation | 248 |
| 8.3.1.3 Challenges arising from incoming cultures | 248 |
| 8.3.1.4 Failure of socialist moral education | 249 |
| 8.3.1.5 Government’s initiatives to strengthen moral education | 250 |
| 8.4 The Commissioning of the 3,4,5 literature | 252 |
| 8.4.1 The publication of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 252 |
| 8.4.2 The publication of the <i>Four Character Song of Social Ethics</i> | 255 |
| 8.4.3 The publication of the <i>Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics</i> | 256 |
| 8.5 The rise of the 3,4,5 literature | 258 |
| 8.5.1 The 3,4,5 literature in schools | 258 |
| 8.5.2 Extension of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> in the society | 261 |
| 8.5.3 Popularity of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 262 |
| 8.6 Favourable factors leading to the popularity of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 263 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 8.7 The fall of the 3,4,5 literature/the cooling of the 3,4,5 movement | 265 |
| 8.8 Significance of the 3,4,5 literature | 269 |
| 8.9 Conclusion | 271 |
| 8.9.1 The 3,4,5 literature in relation to social transformation | 271 |
| 8.9.2 Professional support for the publication of the 3,4,5 literature | 272 |
| 8.9.3 A positive collaboration between the government and the intellectuals | 273 |
| 8.9.4 The 3,4,5 movement as a “secularization” of moral education | 274 |
| 8.9.5 The 3,4,5 literature and national curriculum reform | 276 |
| 8.9.6 The 3,4,5 movement as a moral education reform in a pluralistic society | 277 |
| 8.9.7 Significance of the Interviews | 277 |
| Chapter 9 Discussion | 280-350 |
| 9.1 Introduction | 280 |
| 9.2 The 3,4,5 literature | 280 |
| 9.3 The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature in Guangdong province | 282 |
| 9.3.1 Social context | 282 |
| 9.3.2 Political context | 285 |
| 9.3.3 Context of ideopolitical-moral education: “New” wine in old bottle | 287 |
| 9.4 The rise of the national 3,4,5 movement | 290 |
| 9.4.1 Guangdong’s “one step ahead” experience of economic reform | 291 |
| 9.4.2 Guangdong’s “one step ahead” in reforming moral education | 292 |
| 9.4.3 Teaching value of the 3,4,5 literature | 295 |
| 9.4.4 Market value of the 3,4,5 literature | 296 |
| 9.5 The retreat of the national 3,4,5 movement | 297 |
| 9.5.1 Social context | 297 |
| 9.5.2 Political context | 299 |
| 9.6. Implications of the 3,4,5 literature for ideopolitical-moral education in China | 301 |
| 9.6.1 Policies in ideopolitical-moral education | 301 |
| 9.6.1.1 Changing themes in ideopolitical-moral education | 301 |
| 9.6.1.2 Changing approach in ideopolitical-moral education | 302 |
| 9.6.1.3 Flexibility in ideopolitical-moral education | 303 |
| 9.6.2 Practice in ideopolitical-moral education | 305 |
| 9.6.2.1 Professionalism in moral education | 305 |
| 9.6.2.2 “Secularization” of moral education | 309 |
| 9.6.2.3 Moral education movement | 311 |
| 9.7 Significance of the 3,4,5 literature in ideopolitical-moral education | 312 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| 9.7.1 Moving from state-oriented to student-oriented moral education | 312 |
| 9.7.2 De-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education | 314 |
| 9.7.3 The sustaining of traditional ethics | 316 |
| 9.7.4 Shifts in models in the process of marketization | 322 |
| 9.7.5 Piloting curriculum reform | 325 |
| 9.8 Significance of the 3,4,5 case | 328 |
| 9.8.1 <i>Fang</i> in ideopolitical-moral education | 328 |
| 9.8.2 Moral education as soft power | 332 |
| 9.8.3 A sign of democratization | 336 |
| 9.8.4 Interplay of moral education with economic, social and political changes | 338 |
| 9.8.5 Moral education in the post-communist regime | 343 |
| 9.8.6 Set texts in ideopolitical-moral education | 346 |
| 9.8.7 Rhyme literature in moral education for the young and the old | 348 |
| 9.8.8 Research methodology Review | 348 |
| 9.9 Conclusion | 349 |
| Chapter 10 Conclusions | 351-356 |
| References | 357-387 |
| Appendices | 388-406 |

List of Tables

| Table | Description of Table | Page No.: |
|------------|---|-----------|
| Table 1.1 | Content area of the imitations of the 3,4,5 literature | 24 |
| Table 2.1 | Indicators of China’s National Economy, 1978-1994 | 42 |
| Table 2.2 | Selected standard of living indicators, 1980 -1994 | 45 |
| Table 2.3 | Numbers of Crimes and Crimes per 100,000 population | 52 |
| Table 2.4 | Statistics on Marriage (Registration and Divorces) | 58 |
| Table 4.1 | Differences between moral education in Western democracies and former Soviet Union | 130 |
| Table 5.1 | Data base for content analysis in this study | 150 |
| Table 6.1 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 169 |
| Table 6.2 | Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 170 |
| Table 6.3 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>Four Character Song</i> | 180 |
| Table 6.4 | Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the <i>Four Character Song</i> | 181 |
| Table 6.5 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 184 |
| Table 6.6 | Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 184 |
| Table 6.7 | Rank Order of Frequency of the 3,4,5 literature | 187 |
| Table 6.8 | Social problems mentioned in the <i>Four Character Song</i> | 188 |
| Table 6.9 | Familial problems mentioned in the <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 189 |
| Table 6.10 | Top three “Social Values” in the 3,4,5 literature | 190 |
| Table 6.11 | Top three “Personal Values” in the 3,4,5 literature | 191 |
| Table 6.12 | Percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 195 |
| Table 6.13 | Rank order of values in three versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 195 |
| Table 6.14 | Traditional themes in three versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 196 |
| Table 6.15 | National themes in three versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 197 |
| Table 6.16 | Personal values in three versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 197 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Table 6.17 | Social values in three versions of the <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 197 |
| Table 6.18 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and previous documents | 199 |
| Table 6.19 | Top “Personal Values” in <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and the previous documents | 201 |
| Table 6.20 | Top “Social Values” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and its previous documents | 201 |
| Table 6.21 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and the <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | 203 |
| Table 6.22 | Top three “Personal Values” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and the <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | 204 |
| Table 6.23 | Top three “social values” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and the <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | 204 |
| Table 6.24 | Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education | 206 |
| Table 6.25 | Top three “Personal Values” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education | 206 |
| Table 6.26 | Top three “Social Values” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education | 207 |
| Table 6.27 | Top three “National themes” in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education | 207 |
| Table 6.28 | Values distribution of the documents analyzed in the present study | 210 |
| Table 6.29 | Common categories of values in moral texts analyzed | 212 |
| Table 6.30 | Core values in the moral education texts analyzed | 214 |
| Table 7.1 | Guiding principles of ideopolitical-moral education | 217 |
| Table 7.2 | Ingredients of ideopolitical-moral education | 218 |
| Table 7.3 | Objectives of ideopolitical-moral education | 219 |
| Table 7.4 | Inadequacies of ideopolitical-moral education | 221 |
| Table 7.5 | Suggested teaching approach of ideopolitical-moral education | 222 |
| Table 7.6 | Suggested teaching media of ideopolitical-moral | 225 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| | education | |
| Table 7.7 | Suggested themes of ideopolitical-moral education | 227 |
| Table 9.1 | Values distribution of the 3,4,5 literature | 280 |
| Table 9.2 | The most frequently mentioned social values of the 3,4,5 literature | 283 |
| Table 9.3 | The most frequently mentioned personal values of the 3,4,5 literature | 284 |
| Table 9.4 | Themes/values in the 3,4,5 literature and relevant social problems | 285 |
| Table 9.5 | Relative percentage of themes/values in the 3,4,5 literature (selective) | 301 |
| Table 9.6 | Editorial Members of the 3,4,5 literature | 306 |
| Table 9.7 | Number of officials/non-officials in editorial boards of the 3,4,5 literature | 307 |
| Table 9.8 | Values distribution of the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent moral curricula | 326 |
| Table 9.9 | The most frequently mentioned personal values in the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent moral education curricula | 326 |
| Table 9.10 | The most frequently mentioned social values in the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent moral education curricula | 328 |

List of Figures

| Figure | Description of Figure | Page No.: |
|------------|---|-----------|
| Figure 2.1 | Gross domestic product (GDP) of China, 1984-1994 | 43 |
| Figure 2.2 | Map of Guangdong | 68 |
| Figure 5.1 | Dynamic interactions in the case of the 3,4,5 literature | 147 |
| Figure 6.1 | Shift in value orientations of moral texts | 211 |
| Figure 7.1 | Newly added themes in moral education | 236 |
| Figure 7.2 | <i>Shou</i> and <i>Fang</i> cycle in ideopolitical-moral education in the 1990s | 238 |
| Figure 8.1 | Interactive role of stakeholders in the publication the 3,4,5 literature | 274 |
| Figure 9.1 | Significant themes/values contained in the 3,4,5 literature | 287 |
| Figure 9.2 | “Back to the culture, Response to the public” in moral education | 317 |
| Figure 9.3 | Overlapping virtues of the models quoted in the Confucian role model and Lei Feng [adapted from Reed (1995, p.236)], the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> and the <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | 324 |
| Figure 9.4 | Changes of political socialization initiated by political changes (Sigel, 1970) | 341 |
| Figure 9.5 | Changes of political socialization initiated by economic changes (the 3,4,5 case) | 342 |
| Figure 9.6 | New political-cultural context in ideopolitical-moral education | 342 |

List of Appendices

| Appendix | Description of Appendix | Page No.: |
|------------|---|-----------|
| Appendix 1 | Cover of the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 388 |
| Appendix 2 | Cover of the <i>Four Character Song</i> | 389 |
| Appendix 3 | Cover of the <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 390 |
| Appendix 4 | Data base for Content Analysis | 391 |
| Appendix 5 | Instrument for Content Analysis | 392 |
| Appendix 6 | Data base for Documentary Analysis | 393 |
| Appendix 7 | Interview questions for different categories of interviewees | 396 |
| Appendix 8 | Role models employed in three versions of <i>New Three Character Classics</i> | 401 |
| Appendix 9 | Composition of the editorial broad of the 3,4,5 literature | 403 |

List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| CCYL | Chinese Communist Youth League |
| CPC | Communist Party of China |
| CPPCC | Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GMD | Guomindang (Nationalist Party) |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| GSIB | Guangdong Smuggling Investigation Bureau |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NPC | National People's Congress |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| PSB | Public Security Bureau |
| ROC | The Republic of China |
| SARS | Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome |
| SEC | State Education Commission |
| SEZ | Special Economic Zone |
| TV | Television |
| TVE | Township and village enterprises |
| UNESCO | United Nation Education, Science and Cultural Organization |
| US | United States |
| USSR | Soviet Union |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

Note: The term 'the Party' is also used to refer to the Chinese Communist Party

Note on Transliteration

The new "*pinyin*" romanization system is applied to Chinese names of persons, places, and terms. The transliteration is also used for the titles of Chinese publications.

However, traditional spellings for a few names of prominent persons like Sun Yatsen are not within the "*pinyin*" system.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

Education has long been thought to contain an essential moral component. It transmits not only knowledge but also moral values. In ancient China, Confucius, “the teacher for all ages” placed the greatest emphasis on the education of moral character (The *Analects*, 7:6).¹ Moral education was ranked the first among the so-called “five educations”.² In the West, Greek philosopher Socrates held that “virtue is knowledge”.³ The call for moral education is still strong in recent years. It is frequently claimed that “all teachers are teachers of moral education”.⁴ Likewise, Kelly (2004) argues that “all education is (actually) moral education”.⁵

The importance of value transmission in education is recognized by not only educators and philosophers but also political leaders. To transmit values, beliefs, and behaviour consistent with the continuance of its own political order to the succeeding generation is regarded as essential task of every political regime, even with contrasting ideologies, with the aims of producing either obedient passive subjects or active participating citizens. In the Western democracies like the United States (US), there is wide and regular building up of children’s earliest conception of American government and politics.⁶ In socialist regimes, centralized moral education is always

¹ Confucius said, “I set my heart on the Way, base myself on virtue, lean upon benevolence for support and take my recreation in the arts.” See, Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.56-7.[Note: all quotations from the *Analects* in this thesis are followed by a reference to chapter and section, following the numbering and following the interpretation in D.C. Lau’s translation, unless otherwise stated.]

² The “five educations” are the education in morality, intelligence, physical strength, group cohesiveness, and aesthetics.

³ Taylor, C.C.W. (1999) Socrates, in C.C.W. Taylor et al. *Greek Philosophers*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.32.

⁴ Straughan, R. (1990) *Can we teach children to be good?: Basic Issues in Moral, Personal, and Social Education*, Milton Keynes, [England]; Philadelphia: Open University Press, p.13.

⁵ Kelly, A.V. (2004) Moral Education, Democratic Imperatives and Political and Political Constraints, *Journal of Basic Education*, 13(1), 55.

⁶ Greenstein, F. (1970) Children and Politics, in E. S. Greenberg (Ed.) *Political Socialization*, New



linked with politics and ideology and acts as a means to indoctrinate the public with revolutionary and communist ideals.

In the People's Republic of China (PRC), a nation which, in recent decades, has combined one of the ancient civilization in the world with a few elements of the "remaining socialist regime", the term 'moral education' (*daode jiaoyu*) is also known as ideological education (*sixiang jiaoyu*) or political education (*zhengzhi jiaoyu*) and/or ideopolitical education. Moral qualities are coined as ideomoral and/or ideopolitical-moral qualities (*sixiang zhengzhi suzhi*) (e.g. see PRC State Education Commission 1988, 1990)⁷ indicating the interchangeable nature of ideological, political education and moral education.⁸ Moral education in China is thus termed "ideopolitical-moral education" in this thesis hereafter.

*"China has stood up for itself."*⁹ (Mao Zedong)

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chairman Mao Zedong made that announcement in Tiananmen Square in the fall of 1949. With the aims of modernizing China and getting rid of the poverty that had caused the nation to lag behind other countries in the past 100 years, Mao and the CCP exercised communist rules: tight ideological control, a Soviet model of administration and a centrally planned economy with the ideal of communism, and the creation of a "socialist next generation" in

York: Atherton Press, p.60.

⁷ PRC State Education Commission (PRCSEC) (1990) Guojia jiaowei guanyu jinyibu jiaqiang zhongxiao xue de yugongzuo di jidian yijian [Opinions on further strengthening moral education work in primary and secondary schools], 13 April, in China Education Yearbook Editorial Board (Ed.) *Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian 1991 [China education yearbook 1991]*, Beijing: People's Education Press, pp. 869-873

⁸ Lee, W.O. and Ho, C.H. (2005) Ideopolitical shifts and changes in moral education policy in China, *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(4) (December 2005), 417-435.

⁹ <http://www.algebra.com/~pavlovd/wiki/China> [Accessed 21 March, 2007]

China (CCP, 1949, pp. 684-5).¹⁰ Subsequently, Confucianism, the root of Chinese philosophy, was condemned by the CCP as the ultimate cause of China's backwardness. During the Cultural Revolution, Confucian classics were severely attacked and almost vanished in the mainland.

Mao was nevertheless not successful in leading China to become a "great power". China remained one of the poorest countries in the world (with the lowest Gross National Product (GNP)) until his death at the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. In addition, China isolated herself from the rest of the world with her alliance with the Soviet Union. China was further isolated from the outside world following her break with the Soviet Union in the 1960s.

The 1990s was an era of changes evidenced by dramatic disintegration of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite political bloc, and the end of communist rule there. China became the only remaining socialist society and a focus of worldwide attention following the end of communism.¹¹ China also achieved eye-catching economic growth in the 1990s. Between 1993 and 1997, the Chinese economy grew at a rate of about 11 percent per year.¹² This average annual growth rate was not only unprecedented in Chinese history but also the highest growth rate globally during this period, higher than that of developed nations (2.2 percent) or less-developed nations (6.3 percent), or of the United States (2.9 percent) or Japan (1.4 percent). By 1995, estimates of China's gross domestic product (GDP)¹³ stood at US\$698 billion. This

¹⁰ Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (1949) *Diyici quanguo jiaoyu gongzuo huiyi zongjie yaodian* [The spirit of the first Education Work Conference in 1949], in China Education Yearbook Editorial Board (Ed.) *Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian 1949-1981* [China education yearbook 1949-1981], Beijing: People's Education Press, pp. 684-5.

¹¹ Stockman, N. (2000) *Understanding Chinese Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p.5.

¹² *People's Daily*, 3 March, 1998, p.1.

¹³ GDP is a measure of all the goods and services produced and consumed in a country/region.

was well behind the GDP in the United States (US \$6.952 trillion) or Japan (US \$5.109 trillion), but above Brazil (US \$688 billion) and well ahead of Russia (US \$345 billion) or India (US \$324 billion).¹⁴ Economic prosperity made China a new strong Asian economy in the late 1990s, especially when other Asian economies were suffering from severe economic setbacks.

The rise of the Chinese economy has been attributed largely to the “economic reform and opening up” (*gaige kaifang*) policy adopted in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping took power after Mao’s death. The economic reform and opening up led China to escape from her previous poverty but widened the rich-poor gap and triggered social dissatisfaction. There were also notable problems of corruption. “To combat official corruption” was one of the slogans voiced during the tumultuous student demonstrations around Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989.

The CCP maintained the ruling status quo after the demonstrations, and survived subsequent international economic bans and economic setbacks. But how could the CCP respond to the public calls to combat (official) corruption and “moral deregulation” (*daode shifan*) arising from rapid marketisation? Deng Xiaoping’s southern tour in 1992 is widely regarded as “the watershed in China’s recent history”. It re-affirmed the official line of economic reform and opening up in the wake of the 1989 student demonstrations.¹⁵ According to Mackerras et al., the reform and open period in China since 1978 can be divided into four political periods:

Political History I: Two “Third Plenums”¹⁶ and the Interim, 1978-84;

¹⁴ Barrett, R.E. and Li, F. (1999) *Modern China*, Boston: McGraw-Hill College, p.1.

¹⁵ Liu, K. (2004) *Globalization and Cultural trends in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p.1.

¹⁶ Two “Third Plenums” refer to the third plenums of the Eleventh and Twelfth plenary session of the Central Committee of the CCP which were held in December 1978 and October 1984 respectively.

Political History II: The Worsening of Reform Problems, 1984-89;

Political History III: Crisis to Recovery, 1989-92;

Political History IV: The Strengthening of Reform, 1992-97.¹⁷

“The Strengthening of Reform period” is characterized by “acceleration of economic reform” and “very rapid economic growth”. It began with Deng Xiaoping’s 1992 southern inspection tour¹⁸ but has continued since the year 1997 as the Chinese economy has kept rocketing since then.

*“Men at their birth, (ren zhi chu)
are naturally good. (xing ben shan)
Their natures are much the same; (xing xiang jin)
their habits become widely different. (xi xiang yuan) ...”*¹⁹

This rhyme is the beginning of the *Three Character Classic*, an ancient Chinese children’s reader to foster both literacy acquisition and moral growth from the Song dynasty (960-1279). The classic had however been denounced by the CCP government for its Confucian background and was further blamed as a “cheating classic”²⁰ during the Cultural Revolution and the Criticizing Lin Biao and Criticizing Confucius (*pilin pikong*) Campaigns.²¹

¹⁷ Mackerras, C. et al. (1998) *China since 1978*, Sydney: Addison Wesley, pp.15-63.

¹⁸ Mackerras, C. et al. (1998) *China since 1978*, Sydney: Addison Wesley, p.52.

¹⁹ In this thesis, English translation of the *Three Character Classic* is adopted from the work of Herbert A. Giles (1910), see <http://www.openface.ca/~dstephens/trimetric.htm> [Accessed 30 July, 2004].

²⁰ Zhou, Z.P. (2003) Geming gele sishinian yiye huida wusi qian: xinsanzijing duhou [Returning to the May Fourth at one night from forty-year revolution: After Reading the *New Three Character Classic*], in Z.P. Zhou (Ed.) *Jindai renwu yu sichao [Modern Figures and Trends of Thought]*, Taipei: Sanmin, p.333. Examples of publications which attacked the *Three Character Classic* during the Cultural Revolution include Writing Group of Shanghai Fifth Iron and Steel Factory Worker (1974) *Sanzijing shi pianrenjing [The Three Character Classic is a cheating classic]*, Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press; Zhe, J., et al. (1974) *Pi Sanzijing [Criticize the Three Character Classic]*, Beijing: People’s Education Press; Study Group of Political Theory of Beijing Petroleum Machinery Worker and Beijing Appearance Industry (1974) *Pipan Sanzijing Cankao Cailiao [Reference Material of Criticism on the Three Character Classic]*, Beijing: People’s Education Press.

²¹ Guo, Y.J. (2004) *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Search of National Identity under Reform*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, p.72.

In 1995, three years after Deng's southern tour, the *New Three Character Classic*²² (the "*New Three Character Classic*" hereafter in this thesis) (Editorial Committee, 1995) (Appendix 1), an adaptation of the previously denounced *Three Character Classic*, was published in Guangdong province, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in China. Interestingly, the *New Three Character Classic* was developed by Guangdong provincial propaganda department, a CCP mouthpiece, and published by Guangdong Education Press, a para-government publisher. The editorial board of the *New Three Character Classic* was led by the Guangdong provincial mayor and a group of high-rank provincial propaganda officials. In addition, Guangdong provincial propaganda department explicitly organized a variety of propaganda activities for the publication in schools and in the society.

The *New Three Character Classic* became a bestseller soon after appearing on bookshop shelves.²³ Its high turnover quickly triggered the publication of two subsequent rhyme texts, namely the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*²⁴ (the "*Four Character Song*" hereafter in this thesis) (Editorial Committee, 1996a)

²² Editorial Committee of the *New Three Character Classic* (Ed.) (1995) *Xin Sanzijing* [The New Three Character Classic], Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.

²³ Statistics available on the turnover of the *New Three Character Classic* were counted on a particular period. According to different sources, approximately 10 million copies of the *New Three Character Classic* were sold in about one month since its publication. Its annual turnover in 1995-1996 was about 30 million copies. Nan, S.Y. (1995) (Zhongnanhai fachu hongtou wenjian Jiang Zemin tuidong aiguo jiaoyu [Zhongnanhai document: Jiang Zemin's initiation of Patriotic Education], *Guangjiaojing* [Wide Angle Monthly], (May 1995) Vol. 272, p.36) suggests that 9 million copies of the *New Three Character Classic* were sold in 35 days since its publication; *Asia Weekly* (12 March 1995, p.15) reports that "more than 10 million copies" of the *New Three Character Classic* were sold "soon" after its publication; *Ming Pao Monthly* (June 1995, Vol. 354, p.120) records more than 20 million copies of the *New Three Character Classic* were sold within one month since its publication. Huang, T. J. (1995) (*XinSanjijing jiangjie* [An Annotation of the New Three Character Classic] Guangdong: Guangdong Higher Education Press, p.3) claims that 30 million copies of the *New Three Character Classic* were sold; Liang, Q.F. (1998) *Deng Xiaoping jiaoyu sixiang yu Guangdong jiaoyu gaige* [Deng Xiaoping's Educational Thoughts and Guangdong Educational Reform] (Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press, pp.370-1) reports that approximately 35 million copies were sold (13 million in Guangdong province and 22 millions in other provinces) in at least 23 provinces from 1995 to 1996.

²⁴ Editorial Committee of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Ed.) (1996a) *Shehui Gongde Sizige* [The Four Character Song of Social Ethics], Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.

(Appendix 2) and the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*²⁵ (the “Five Character Rhyme” hereafter in this thesis) (Editorial Committee, 1996b) (Appendix 3). As the *New Three Character Classic*, *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* were written in three-character, four-character, and five-character rhymes respectively, they are called the “3,4,5 literature”²⁶ in this thesis hereafter.

The *New Three Character Classic* was not only popular in Guangdong province, but it also triggered emulations in other provinces, such as Beijing, the capital and Shanghai, a major economic centre in China. Its fast spread soon became a hot issue in Chinese publication circles.²⁷ The seemingly dramatic changing official attitude towards the previously denounced *Three Character Classic* came as a surprise even to overseas scholars like Zhou Zhiping from Princeton University who further questioned how the value orientations of the mainland Chinese had moved so rapidly in a “fast-changing” era.²⁸

Zhou was right to associate the publication of the *New Three Character Classic* with the changing value orientations of the Chinese. But what changes in value orientations of the Chinese are actually reflected in the *New Three Character Classic*? Does the official production of moral texts associated with a previously denounced classic and the subsequent great propaganda forces promoting its publication hint at any change in official policies towards Confucianism or ideopolitical-moral education?

²⁵ Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996b) *Jiating Meide Wuziyao [The Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics]*, Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press.

²⁶ The author acknowledges his gratitude to Prof. Lee Wing On for his suggestion of the term “3,4,5 literature”.

²⁷ Guangdong xin sanzijing meili sishe [Glamour Guangdong's *New Three Character Classic*], *Asia Weekly*, 9(10) (12 March 1995), p.15.

²⁸ Zhou, Z. P. (2003) Geming gele sishinian yiye huida wusiqian: xinsanzijing duhou [Overnight returning to pre-May Fourth from forty-year revolution: After Reading the *New Three Character Classic*], in Z.P. Zhou (Ed.) *Jindai renwu yu sichao [Modern Figures and Trends of Thought]*, Taipei: Sanmin, pp.332-4.

The fast spread of the *New Three Character Classic* should not be regarded as a matter of single publication but a social movement (the “3,4,5 movement”²⁹ hereafter in this thesis) in view of the number of people and provinces involved, and the number of texts sold. The northward spread of the *New Three Character Classic* also contradicts the usual top-down flow of ideopolitical-moral education, i.e. from the central government to the sub-nations. It is thus worthwhile to study if the movement reveals any ultimate change in ideopolitical-moral education in China.

The heat of the *New Three Character Classic* has to a certain degree cooled down in official discourse in recent years. In 2001, Guangdong provincial government published *Guangdong Provincial Maxims on ethic building for citizens*³⁰ (the “*Guangdong Maxims*” hereafter in this thesis) in response to the national *Implementation Outline on Ethic Building for Citizens* (CCP Central Committee, 2001).³¹ At the same time, new curricula on ideopolitical-moral education such as “Morality and Society”³² were also developed. What is the relationship of the 3,4,5 literature with subsequent moral education texts and ideopolitical-moral curricular reform in the early 2000s? What are the implications of the 3,4,5 literature for ideopolitical-moral education in China?

In the Western literature, economic development is always associated with political

²⁹ The author acknowledges his gratitude to Prof. Lee Wing On for his suggestion of the term “3,4,5 movement”.

³⁰ Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department (2002) *Guangdongsheng gongmin daode geyan* [*Guangdong Provincial Maxims on Ethic Building for Citizens*], in *Nanfang Ribao*, 23 April, 2002, p.A03; Le, Z. and Duan, Y.B. (Eds.) (2002) *Gongmin daode jianshe tongshu duben* [*The Ethic Building for Citizens: A Secular Version*], Shenzhen: Haitian Press, pp.32-7.

³¹ <http://www1.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20011024/589496.html> [Accessed 16 January 2006].

³² PRC Ministry of Education (MOE) (2002) *Pinde yu shehui kecheng biao zhun (shixing)* (*Morality and Society Curriculum Standards (Experimental Version)*), Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press.

development. However, the CCP still firmly holds sovereignty without apparent political reform or democratic development, according to the Western view, taking place. China has had no drastic “overnight” political transformation like her central and eastern European counterparts.³³ Hence, some authors like Shirk contend that China achieved economic reform without political reform.³⁴ Sautman further observed strengthening of politicized moral education following the 1989 student demonstrations.³⁵ What was the direction of ideopolitical-moral education in China during her economic boom?

This study takes the 3,4,5 literature and its related movement as a case study in order to examine (1) value orientations revealed in the moral texts and their interplay with economic, social and political circumstances, and (2) the causal dynamics of the movement and its implications for ideopolitical-moral education in China in the decade of Strengthening of Reform (1992 to 2002). The findings of the present study will aim to shed light on ideopolitical-moral education in recent decade in China and enhance our understanding of the recent social, ideological and political development of this old populous nation, which is now a new Asian economic power.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: THE 3,4,5 MOVEMENT

1.1.1 Introduction

In the PRC, moral education has been inextricably linked with ideological and political education since 1949. The communist government has placed much emphasis on instilling political doctrine in students in order to raise a generation of ‘revolutionary successors’ to continue the work of the CCP and to maintain its

³³ Van Hoorn, J.L. et al. (2000) *Adolescent Development and Rapid Social Change: Perspectives from Eastern Europe*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p.3.

³⁴ Shirk, S.L. (1994) *How China opened its Door: The Political Success of the PRC's Foreign Trade and Investment Reforms*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, p.4.

³⁵ Sautman, B. (1991) Politicization, Hyperpoliticization, and Depoliticization of Chinese Education, *Comparative Education Review*, 35(4), p.669.

legitimacy.

To achieve her goals, the communist government exerts tight control on education and publication. Firstly all aspects of the educational system in the PRC are regulated by the State Education Commission (SEC)³⁶, an agency of the State Council. The SEC certifies teachers, standardizes curriculum and textbooks, establishes standards and generally monitors the entire education system.³⁷

The government also controls publications through the General Administration of Press and Publication which provides general direction and guidelines for publishing books.³⁸ Basically all publication houses in China are under tight governmental scrutiny. Publications in China, especially those on ideopolitical-moral education to a certain extent indicate the government's expressions and orientations in relation to ideopolitical-moral education.

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping paid a visit to southern China, including Guangdong and Shenzhen. This tour reaffirmed the official line of economic reform and opening up and was generally regarded as "the basis of a reinvigorated reform process" after the crackdown on the 1989 student demonstrations.³⁹ Guangdong is situated in the southern tip of China. It is farthest away from the central government and at the same time enjoys a lot of economic and political freedoms. In this context, Guangdong has become a pioneer of Chinese economic reform.

³⁶ The SEC was changed to the Ministry of Education (MOE) after the restructure of the State Council in 1998.

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Education_Commission [Accessed 21 March, 2007]

³⁸ http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_artists/2003-09/24/content_26984.htm [Accessed 21 March, 2007].

³⁹ Mackerras, C. (2001) *The New Cambridge Handbook of Contemporary China*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge, p.46.

In 1995, three years after Deng's visit to the south, a moral text, the *New Three Character Classic* was published in Guangdong province. The *New Three Character Classic* replicated the rhyme form of the original *Three Character Classic* (*San Zi Jing*), a well-known Chinese text which distils the essentials of Confucian thought in couplets of three characters (syllables) for easy memorization. However, the *Three Character Classic* had been denounced by the CCP for disseminating "feudal" and "counter-revolutionary" values, and was removed from all public schools in 1949.⁴⁰ Hence, did the official adoption of the genre of the *Three Character Classic* in a "new" moral text indicate any change in ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC in an era of rapid economic reform? In addition, the *New Three Character Classic* triggered numerous replications like a "gust of wind,"⁴¹ spreading northwards to Shanghai (a metropolitan city along the coast) and to Beijing (the capital) from southern Guangdong, for several years, and without a clear endpoint. In the following paragraphs, a brief chronology of the emergence of the *New Three Character Classic* and its subsequent publications will be presented as the background to this study.

1.1.2 The emergence of the *New Three Character Classic*

The *New Three Character Classic* (Editorial Committee, 1995) was published by Guangdong Education Press⁴² in January 1995. The text consists of 125 pages, 424 three-character verses (grouped in four line verses), with a total of 1272 characters. It is written in the form of rhyme. For example, "~u":

Man at birth (*ren zhi chu*)

⁴⁰ Banned Book Taught Again, *China Daily*, 26 February, 2004, see <http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/88469.htm> [Accessed 21 March, 2007]

⁴¹ The metaphor was borrowed from an interview in the present study.

⁴² Guangdong Education Press, a publication house under Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group, was established in 1985. Its major financial source came from publication of (supplementary) teaching materials. The group is one of experimental units of national publication under the supervision of Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department. See, <http://www.gjs.cn/left.asp> and <http://www.gdpg.com.cn:8080/www/aboutus/index.jsp> [Accessed 21 March, 2007]

is like unpolished jade (*ru yu pu*)
 personalities and characters, (*xing yu qing*)
 both can be shaped (*ju ke su*) (lines 1-4, p.6)

Sometimes “end rhymes” appear in alternate verses, for example, “~ian” in the following verses,

If children are not taught, (*ruo bu jiao*)
 their deeds will be slanted. (*xing nai pian*)
 The way of teaching, (*jiao zhi dao*)
 is to put morality in the first place. (*de wei xian*) (lines 5-8, p.7)

“End rhymes” also appear in repetition, like the sound “~i” which appear in the second, third and fourth lines in the following verses,

The virtuous mothers of the old days, (*xi xian mu*),
 knew how to teach their children; (*shan jiao zi*)
 the mother of Mencius broke the shuttle from the loom, (*meng duan ji*)
 the mother of Yuefei tattooed words. (*yue ci zi*) (lines 9-12, p.8)

Though Putonghua pronunciation is provided, the rhymes of the *New Three Character Classic* are to a greater extent based on Cantonese rhyme, for example,

The four Great novels, (*si xiao shuo*)
 are famous in China; (*yu shen zhou*)
 these precious works, (*ci gui bao*)
 have been passed on generation after generation. (*liu chuan jiu*)
 (lines 309-312, p.93)

“zhou” and “jiu” do not have rhymed ending in Putonghua but have rhymed ending when read in Cantonese, i.e. “dzɛu” and “gɛu”.

In addition to text, there are illustrative pictures and brief explanations of key figures mentioned (e.g. Qu Yuan, p.87); historical events (e.g. the late Qing Reform (*weixin*), p.71) and vocabulary (e.g. to pick up energy (*dousou*) p.20) are also included.

According to the preface, the *New Three Character Classic* has clear ideopolitical-moral objectives in promoting “spiritual civilization”, new patriotic thought, communist ideals, collectivism and socialism (the so-called “contemporary national spirit”) among the young (*qingshaonian*) with Deng Xiaoping’s theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The preface maintained that the text was the fruit of repeated discussions of a panel of “experts” in the fields of ideopolitical work or education organized by Guangdong’s provincial Propaganda Department.⁴³ Yu Youjun, the then director of Guangdong provincial Propaganda Department and the chief editor of the *New Three Character Classic* added that the publication aimed at preventing students from only knowing Andy Lau (a Hong Kong pop star and idol of the youth).⁴⁴

The *New Three Character Classic* received an astonishing market response. From 1995 to 1996, approximately 35 million copies were sold (13 million in Guangdong province and 22 millions in other provinces) in at least 23 provinces.⁴⁵ Because of its “unprecedented” sale records⁴⁶, the *New Three Character Classic* was awarded the national “Best-selling Prize”⁴⁷ and Guangdong provincial “Distinguished Cultural Product Prize”.⁴⁸ The publisher responded quickly to the market and produced the second edition within one month. In July 1995, the *New Three Character Classic* was

⁴³ Preface to Editorial Committee of the *New Three Character Classic* (Ed.) (1995) *Xin Sanzijing [The New Three Character Classic]*, Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.

⁴⁴ Guangdong xin sanzijing meili sishe [Glamour Guangdong’s *New Three Character Classic*], *Asia Weekly*, 9(10) (12 March 1995), p.15.

⁴⁵ Liang, Q.F. (1998) *Deng Xiaoping jiaoyu sixiang yu Guangdong jiaoyu gaige [Deng Xiaoping’s Educational Thoughts and Guangdong Educational Reform]*, Guangdong: Guangdong People’s Press, pp.370-1.

⁴⁶ Nan, S.Y (1995) Zhongnanhai fachu hongtouwengjian JiangZemin tuidong aiguo jiaoyu [Zhongnanhai document: Jiang Zemin’s initiation of Patriotic Education], *Guangjiaojing [Wide Angle Monthly]*, Vol. 272 (May 1995), p.36.

⁴⁷ *Nanfang Ribao*, 13 September, 2001.

⁴⁸ Alumni of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School (Ed.) (2003) *Chunhua Qiushi: Zhangchenggan yanshuo lunwen shuibi ji [Spring flower and Autumn fruits: a collection of Speech, Essay and Articles by Zhang Chenggan]*, Guangzhou: Committee of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School, p.477.

published overseas.⁴⁹ Its popularity was thus regarded as a “miracle” in the Chinese publication field.⁵⁰

Official sources claimed that the *New Three Character Classic* was read by more than ten million students, including secondary school students and primary school students. A variety of learning activities centred on the *New Three Character Classic* were organized in schools.⁵¹ To facilitate teaching of the *New Three Character Classic* by teachers and parents, Guangdong Higher Education Press promptly produced an *Annotation of the New Three Character Classic*⁵² (Huang, 1995) for semantic elaboration of the text, and the *Teaching and Learning of the New Three Character Classic*⁵³ (Zhang and Huang, 1995) for explanation of teaching methods.

1.1.3 The emergence of the “3,4,5” literature

Following the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic*, the Guangdong Education Press published the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Editorial Committee, 1996a) with four-character rhyme in March 1996. Four-character rhyme, as a poetic form of writing, has a long history in Chinese literature. The *Shijing*, one of the earliest Chinese literary works, was mainly written in four-character rhyme. For example the Cooing [*Guan Ju*], a very famous poem written in lines of four characters,

The waterfowl would coo (*Guan guan ju jiu*)

Upon an islet in the brooks, (*zai he zhi zhou*)

⁴⁹ Liang, Q.F. (1998) *Deng Xiaoping jiaoyu sixiang yu Guangdong jiaoyu gaige* (*Deng Xiaoping's Educational Thoughts and Guangdong Educational Reform*), Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press, pp.370-1.

⁵⁰ Xin Sanzijing chuangzao chubanjie qiji [The *New Three Character Classic* has created a publication miracle], *Mingpao Monthly* (1995), Vol. 354, (June 1995), p.120; *Nanfang Ribao*, 13 September, 2001.

⁵¹ Xu, R.Z. (1996) *Guangdong pujiao gaige shijiantan (xubian)* [*Discussions on Guangdong Education Reform (a sequel)*], Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press, p.119.

⁵² Huang, T.J. (1995) *XinSanzijing jiangjie* [An Annotation of the *New Three Character Classic*], Guangdong: Guangdong Higher Education Press.

⁵³ Zhang, C.G. and Huang, S.L. (Eds.) (1995) *Xin Sanzijing jiaoyuxue* [*The Teaching and Learning of the New Three Character Classic*], Guangdong: Guangdong Higher Education Press.

A lad would like to woo (*yao tiao shu nu*)
 A lass with pretty looks. (*jun zi hao qiu*)⁵⁴ (lines 1-4)

The *Four Character Song* consists of 105 pages, 200 four-character verses (grouped in four line verses) with a total of 800 characters. Rhymed endings of the text also appear in the original Chinese. For example, “~ang” in the second and fourth lines in the following verses:

The glorious China, (*jin xiu zhong hua*)
 is a nation of politeness and righteousness, (*li yi zhi bang*)
 It is an ancient civilized country, (*wen ming gu guo*)
 in the Orient. (*yi li dong fang*) (lines 1-4, p.6)

Rhyming in alternate lines is a common form in Chinese poems, like “~uan” and “~ang” in the following verses,

In public, (*gong zhong chang he*)
 one should observe the rules and regulation, (*yan shou gui zhang*)
 without order there will be chaos, (*wu xu ze luan*)
 with order everything will be smooth. (*you xu ze chang*)
 Public safety, (*gong gong an quan*)
 should be born in mind. (*lao ji xin shang*)
 dropping things from height, (*gao kong zhi wu*)
 will harm others. (*ta ren zao yang*) (lines 41-48, pp.26-8)

Like the *New Three Character Classic*, the *Four Character Song* was produced by a panel of “experts” on social ethics and provincial propaganda officials. According to its preface, the *Four Character Song* covered four categories of social ethics, namely “public order and public safety”, “public property”, “public environment and hygiene”, and “interpersonal relationships”. Employing metaphor and easily-memorized rhymes, the *Four Character Song* aims to transmit social ethics

⁵⁴ The translation work refers to Wang, R.P. and Ren, X.H. (tr.) (1995) *The Shijing [The Book of Poetry]*, Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, pp.2-3.

(*shehui gongde*) to the public (*quanmin*).⁵⁵ The *Four Character Song* also won a positive market response with five millions copies sold.⁵⁶ The text was awarded the first prize for National Distinguished Readers for the Young.⁵⁷

In August 1996, the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Editorial Committee, 1996b) was published by Guangdong People's Press, another subsidiary branch of Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group.⁵⁸ Its preface declares that all three publications (the *New Three Character Classic*, *Four Character Song*, and *Five Character Rhyme*) were produced under the same project by Guangdong's provincial Propaganda Department.

The *Five Character Rhyme* consists of 83 pages, 156 five-character verses with a total of 780 characters. Five-character rhyme is a very common Chinese poetic genre, especially in the Tang dynasty (618-907), the climax of Chinese literature. The following is a five-character poem *Chun Xiao (Dawn in Spring)* written by Meng Haoran:

This morn of spring in bed I'm lying, (*chun mian bu jue xiao*)
not to awake till birds are crying. (*chu chu wen ti niao*)
After one night of wind and showers, (*ye lai feng yu sheng*)
how many are the fallen flowers! (*hua luo zhi duo shao*)⁵⁹

The *Five Character Rhyme* was written in the form of five-character rhymes, with

⁵⁵ Preface to Editorial Committee of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Ed.) (1996a) *Shehui Gongde Sizige [The Four Character Song of Social Ethics]*, Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press, p.1.

⁵⁶ *Nanfang Ribao (Daily)*, 13 September, 2001.

⁵⁷ Alumni of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School (Ed.) (2003) *Chunhua Qiushi: Zhangchenggan yanshuo lunwen shuibi ji [Spring flower and Autumn fruits: a collection of Speech, Essay and Articles by Zhang Chenggan]*, Guangzhou: Committee of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School, p.477.

⁵⁸ <http://www.gjs.cn/left.asp> [Accessed 21 March, 2007]

⁵⁹ The translation work refers to <http://www.dsej.gov.mo/cre/tmag/03/topic05-2-2.htm> [Accessed 22 March, 2007].

four five-character rhymes a verse. The majority of rhymed endings appear in the original Chinese, for example, “~ing”:

Society is like the muscle and skin, (*she hui ru ji fu*)
 cells are the family, (*xi bao shi jia ting*)
 a harmonious family makes everything prosperous, (*jia he wan shi xing*)
 a united family makes the country peaceful. (*jia qi guo an ning*) (lines 1-4, p.13)

Sometimes end-rhymes appear in alternate lines, like “~i” in the following verses,

Parents are teachers and friends, (*fu mu wei shi you*)
 children deeply benefit, (*er nu shen shou yi*)
 example is better than precept, (*shen jiao zhong yan jiao*)
 correct yourself before you correct others. (*zheng ren xian zheng ji*)

(lines 69-72, p.45)

According to the preface, the *Five Character Rhyme* was written to deal with social problems arising in the era of “opening up” such as money worshipping in marriage, unhealthy parent-children relationships, ignorance of familial responsibilities, and neighbourhoods indifferent to traditional Chinese familial virtues. The *Five Character Rhyme* was also produced by a group of “experts” after frequent discussions over half a year. The draft was openly criticised by Political Bureau members and the then provincial secretary Xie Fei. The editorial board also gathered public opinion on the draft through several public consultations.⁶⁰

The 3,4,5 literature captured wide attention within and outside Guangdong province following its publication. More than a hundred seminars and workshops were held for the introduction of the literature. Some of the seminars were broadcasted by Guangdong TV and Guangdong Radio Station.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Preface to Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996b) *Jiating Meide Wuziyao* [The *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*], Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press, pp.1-4.

⁶¹ Feng, Y.N. (2003) Xiyang wuxian hao hechang jin huanghun: fang Guangzhoushi laoganbu jiangshituan Zhangchenggan laoshi [Don't worry for getting old: an interview with Zhang Chenggan, a

1.1.4 The *New Three Character Classic* Heat

The success of the *New Three Character Classic* (Editorial Committee, 1995) triggered an upsurge of imitations in other provinces outside Guangdong. Shanghai Dictionary Press published the *Three Character Classic on Morality*⁶² (Cao, 1995) (hereafter, the “Shanghai version”) in April, 1995, three months after the publication of the *New Three Character Classic*. Shi in the preface admitted that the production of the Shanghai version was triggered by the success of the *New Three Character Classic*.⁶³ Cao Feng (the author) added that the Shanghai version was written in accordance with official expectations to teach children “how to behave themselves”. The Shanghai version has a total of twelve chapters and 484 three-character rhymes, covering topics of patriotism, dedication, determination, courage, gregariousness, honesty, courtesy, modesty, enthusiasm in learning, filial piety, law-abidance, diligence and thrift.

In May 1995, just one month later, a series of the *New Three Character Classic in China (New Version)* was published by Tongxin Press in Beijing. This publication series covered wide areas of “morality”, “diligence”, “ancient Chinese history”, “contemporary Chinese history”, “Chinese characters”, “science and technology” and “geography”. According to their prefaces, the publications aimed at enriching Chinese youth’s knowledge of various aspects of China. The editor attributed the adoption of three-character rhyme to the popularity of the ancient *Three Character Classic* and the

Guangzhou veteran cadre and lecturer], in Alumni of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School (Ed.) *Chunhua Qiushi: Zhangchenggan yanshuo lunwen shuibi ji* [Spring flower and Autumn fruits: a collection of Speech, Essay and Articles by Zhang Chenggan], Guangzhou: Committee of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School, p.446.

⁶² Cai, F. (1995) *Pinde Sanzijing* [The *Three Character Classic on Morality*], Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press.

⁶³ Shi F. (1995) Preface, in F. Cai (1995) *Pinde Sanzijing* [The *Three Character Classic on Morality*], Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, p.4.

calls from party leader Li Ruihuan and historian Wu Han to adopt this easily-memorized genre to propagate communism and socialism among the public.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, another *New Three Character Classic*, edited by Li Hanqiu, (Li, 1995) (hereafter, the “Beijing version”) was published by Science Education Press in Beijing.⁶⁵ The Beijing version introduces legends of moral figures, reformists, scientists, writers and philosophers with brief knowledge of history, geography, innovation in science and environmental protection with three character chants.

The Beijing version also had strong political background. Editor Li himself was a member of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The Beijing version was originally published as a series in *Guangming Ribao*.⁶⁶ In addition, some scholars such as philosopher Zhang Dainian were invited to the editorial board.

With extensive production of three-character rhyme literature, some of these publications called themselves three-character classic while others were called “the new three-character classic”. The upsurge of three-character rhyme literature has been described as the “new *Three Character Classic* heat”.⁶⁷ Hu (2000) particularly noticed a “competition” between the Beijing version and the *New Three Character Classic* and concluded that the Beijing version was defeated by the *New Three Character Classic* as (1) it was published a few months later than the *New Three Character Classic*, and (2) its turnover (1 million) was also far less than the *New Three Character Classic*’s (32 millions). Hu attributed the “defeat” of the Beijing

⁶⁴ Zhao, Y.W. (1995) Preface, in *Xinbian zhongguo sanzijing (qinxuebian)* [*The New Three Character Classic in China (New Version) (Diligence)*], Beijing: Tongxin Press, pp.2-3.

⁶⁵ Li, H.Q. (1995) *Xin Sanzijing* [*The New Three Character Classic*], Beijing: Science Education Press.

⁶⁶ The *CPPCC Daily*, 23 June, 2001.

⁶⁷ The term was mentioned by the informants such as Author A in interview in the present study.

version to production and marketing strategies of the relevant publication house rather than its content.⁶⁸ Hu's comment clearly shows a severe competition in the writing itself.

At the same time, other similar moral literature also began to appear in the form of longer rhymes, such as five/six/seven-character rhymes. For example, the Language Press in Beijing published a series of rhyming literature to introduce Chinese history and geography in September 1995, namely the *Three Character Song of Chinese History*, the *Five Character Song of National Conditions of China*, the *Five Character Song of Chinese Heroes*, the *Six Character Song of the Motherland*, and the *Seven Character Song of Contemporary Chinese History*.⁶⁹

In 1996, Beijing University Press published the *Thousand Character Song of China*.⁷⁰ Zhang (1996) stressed in the preface that the book was written to strengthen patriotic education through the teaching of history, geography and natural science in China.⁷¹

1.1.5 Further Extensions to the *New Three Character Classic*

Replication of the *New Three Character Classic* gradually expanded to wider content

⁶⁸ Hu, Y.H. (2000) *Sanbai liangqianwan yu yibaiwan zhijian: jingban xinsanzijing faxing buli di beihou xinwen* [Between 32 million and 1 million: the news behind the unsuccessful publication of Beijing version of the New Three Character Classic], [online] available from <http://www.booktide.com/news/20000704/200007040112.html> [Accessed 2 November 2005]

⁶⁹ Liu, Y.R. (Ed.) (1995a) *Zhongguo lishi sanzige* [The Three Character Song of Chinese History], Beijing: Language Press;

Liu, Y.R. (Ed.) (1995b) *Zhongguo guoqing wuzige* [The Five Character Song of National Conditions of China], Beijing: Language Press ;

Liu, Y.R. (Ed.) (1995c) *Zhonghua yingjie wuzige* [The Five Character Song of Chinese Heroes], Beijing: Language Press ;

Liu, Y.R. (Ed.) (1995d) *Shenzhou dadi liuzige* [The Six Character Song of the Motherland], Beijing: Language Press;

Liu, Y.R. (Ed.) (1995e) *Jindai fengyun qizige* [The Seven Character Song of Contemporary Chinese History], Beijing: Language Press.

⁷⁰ Ai, Y.C. (1996) *Zhonghua qianjige* [The Thousand Character Song of China], Beijing: Beijing University Press.

⁷¹ Zhang, D.L. (1996) Preface, in Y.C. Ai (1996) *Zhonghua qianjige* [The Thousand Character Song of China], Beijing: Beijing University Press, pp.3-4.

areas such as literature and science. Soon after the emergence of the *New Three Character Classic*, Guangdong Lingnan Art Press published the *New Three Character Classic with Multi-learning functions*⁷² in May 1995. The book introduced Chinese history, calligraphy, phonetics, and drawing with the text of the *New Three Character Classic*.

In August 1995, the *Three Character Classic on Science and Technology* was published by Hebei Science and Technology Press.⁷³ This book highlights various Chinese technological achievements with three-character rhymes, from printing and dyeing to medicine. Foreign inventions such as telephone and wireless communication were also introduced.

At the same time, the *Three Character Classic on Health (Children)* was published by People's Hygiene Press in Beijing.⁷⁴ The book introduced general hygiene knowledge to children with three character rhymes and illustrative pictures. In October 1995, People's Hygiene Press published the *Three Character Classic on Health (The aged)* to introduce general hygiene and medical knowledge to the old.⁷⁵

The *Poetry and Prose Chapter (pian) of the Three Character Classic*⁷⁶ was published by Beijing Learning Press in October 1995 to introduce the development of Chinese literature from ancient times to the May Fourth Movement. In its preface, Wu

⁷² Lin, L. (1995) *Duo xuexi gongneng xinsanzijing* [The New Three Character Classic with Multi-learning functions], Guangdong: Guangdong Lingnan Art Press.

⁷³ Lu, D.L. (1995) *Keji sanzijing* [The Three Character Classic on Science and Technology], Hebei: Hebei Science and Technology Press.

⁷⁴ Yu, H.T. and Yang P. (Eds.) (1995a) *Jiankang sanzijing (shaoerpian)* [Three Character Classic on Health (The young)], Beijing: People's Hygiene Press.

⁷⁵ Yu, H.T. and Yang P. (Eds.) (1995b) *Jiankang sanzijing (laonianpian)* [Three Character Classic on Health (The aged)], Beijing: People's Hygiene Press.

⁷⁶ Chang, F.K. and Zhang, Y.S. (1995) *Sanzijing shicipian* [The Poetry and Prose Chapter of the Three Character Classic], Beijing: Learning Press.

Han, a Chinese historian, highly praised the writing of the *Three Character Classic* and urged the educators and writers to make use of “*rhymes with precise and concise words*” to introduce different aspects of modern China e.g. agriculture and industry to their readers.⁷⁷

In November 1995, just one month later, Beijing Learning Press published the *Philosophical Chapter of the Three Character Classic*.⁷⁸ Likewise, the chapter introduced the development of Chinese Philosophy from the Shang dynasty to the Qing dynasty with three character rhymes.

In 1996, *Three Character Classic for Science* was published by Guangdong Science and Technology Press.⁷⁹ Yu Youjun, the then Head of Guangdong provincial propaganda department and the chief editor of the *New Three Character Classic* claimed the publication was an elaboration of the *New Three Character Classic*. It introduced various Chinese scientific achievements, from ancient achievements in mathematics and chemistry to contemporary invention of the computer as well as developments in biological industry with the aim of initiating “learning, loving, discussing and making use of science and technology” in the society.⁸⁰

In December 1996, Anhui Education Press published the *Song of Three Chinese Ethics*⁸¹ (social ethics, occupational ethics and family ethics), which was written in

⁷⁷ Wu, H (1995) Preface, in F.K. Chang and Y.S. Zhang (1995) *Sanzijing shicipian* [The Poetry and Prose Chapter of the Three Character Classic], Beijing: Learning Press.

⁷⁸ Yan, J.Y. (1995) *Sanzijing zhexuepian* [The Philosophical Chapter of the Three Character Classic], Beijing: Learning Press.

⁷⁹ Zhou, Z.H. (Ed.) (1996) *Kexue Sanzijing* [The Three Character Classic for Science], Guangdong: Guangdong Science and Technology Press.

⁸⁰ Yu, Y.J. (1996) Preface, in Zhou, Z.H. (Ed.) *Kexue Sanzijing* [The Three Character Classic on Science], Guangdong: Guangdong Science and Technology Press, pp.4-5.

⁸¹ Huang, S.Y. (1996) *Zhonghua sandege* [The Song for Three Chinese Morals], Anhui: Anhui Education Press.

four-character rhymes. According to its preface, the text was initiated by Anhui provincial Party committee in response to the '*Decision of the Sixth Plenum of the Fourteenth Central Committee*' to strengthen moral education among the public.⁸²

Rhyme literature was also used as an instrument to strengthen Army's discipline. In 1997, the Guangdong provincial military region Judiciary Department published a book entitled *Three Character Classic for Soldiers and Law* to inculcate law-abiding behaviour and loyalty among the People's Liberation Army.⁸³

In 1998, the *Three Character Classic on Vocabulary Learning* was published by Shanghai Youth and Children Press. This text introduced 1332 characters through the matching games of pictures and characters with three-character rhymes. It also concerns children's daily conduct.⁸⁴

In 2000, the *Three Character Classic of Language Learning Method* was published by South China (Huanan) Polytechnic University Press at Guangzhou.⁸⁵ According to the preface, the book introduces various learning strategies of Chinese Language, including making use of dictionaries, learning vocabulary and sentences, reading and writing, to primary school students with three-character rhymes.

In January 2001, the *Three Character Classic on the Hundred Year History of China*⁸⁶

⁸² Fang B.X. (1996) Preface. In Huang, S.Y. (1996) *Zhonghua sandege* [The Song for Three Chinese Ethics], Anhui: Anhui Education Press, pp.1-2.

⁸³ Guangdong provincial military region Judiciary Department (1997) *Junren yu fa sanzijing* [Three Character Classic for Soldier and Law], Beijing: People's Court Press.

⁸⁴ Liu, Z.P. (1998) *Shizi sanzijing* [Three Character Classic on Vocabulary Learning], Shanghai: Shanghai Youth and Children Press.

⁸⁵ Zhong, C.Y. (2000) *Yuwen xuexi fangfa sanzijing* [The Three Character Classic of Language Learning Method], Guangzhou: South China (Huanan) Polytechnic University Press.

⁸⁶ Zhu, G.X. (2001) *Zhonghua Bainian Sanzijing* [The Three Character Classic on the Hundred Year History of China], Beijing: Commercial Press.

was published by Commercial Press in Beijing to introduce contemporary Chinese history (from 1900 onwards). In 2001, Nanhai Press published the *Three Character Classic on the Love of Hainan*. The book introduces regional political, economic, cultural developments in Hainan Island, a remote island in southeast China.⁸⁷

There was also publication of three-character rhymes on science, for example, Yazi’s (2001) *Three Character Classic on Science for Youth* in Beijing. The author held that three-character rhymes were an easily-memorized means to introduce science knowledge to the young.⁸⁸

Table 1.1 summarizes the rhyme literature mentioned in this section. It is obvious that the *New Three Character Classic* heat has extended beyond the area of moral education, covering such other areas as science, health and so forth.

| Content area | Number of publications |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| History | 3 |
| Science | 3 |
| Language/literature | 3 |
| Ethics | 2 |
| Health | 2 |
| Philosophy | 1 |

Table 1.1: Content area of the imitations of the 3,4,5 literature

1.1.6 Replications of the *New Three Character Classic* after 2001

On 24 October, 2001, the CCP Central Committee distributed an *Implementation Outline on Ethic Building for Citizens* (CCP Central Committee, 2001).⁸⁹ The *Outline* was a directive document on ideopolitical-moral education in China under the leadership of Jiang Zemin. Guangdong provincial propaganda department responded

⁸⁷ *Hainan Ribao (Daily)*, 18 June 2001.

⁸⁸ *Beijing Youth News*, 1 June, 2001.

⁸⁹ <http://www1.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20011024/589496.html> [Accessed 16 January 2006].

quickly by inviting a large group of “experts” to produce the *Guangdong Maxims* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department 2002). The *Guangdong Maxims*, produced by a large group of “experts”, consisted of 1,000 characters, written in couplet rhymes with varying number of characters, from three to eight couplets, and were divided into five sections: “Me and Myself,” “Me and my family,” “Me and others,” “Me and the Society,” and “Me and nature.”⁹⁰

Replications of the *New Three Character Classic* continued to emerge after the issue of the *Outline* (CCP, 2001). In January 2002, Anhui Education Press published the *Song on Ethic Building for Citizens*⁹¹, covering “patriotism,” “social ethics,” “occupational values,” “family ethics,” and “personal cultivation” written in five-character rhymes. In the preface Luo (2002) claimed that the book was written to comply with the *Outline* (CCP, 2001) and was targeted on building morality as the market economy developed in the PRC.⁹²

In March 2002, the Beijing version (of the *New Three Character Classic*) was reprinted with amendments in accordance with the *Outline* (CCP, 2001). The book was distributed among participants of the Ninth Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and attracted much attention from the leadership.⁹³

1.1.7 The 3,4,5 movement and its recent development

The above discussion shows a clear wave of subsequent publications with

⁹⁰ Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department (2002) *Guangdongsheng gongmin daode geyan* [Guangdong Provincial Maxims on Ethic Building for Citizens], in *Nanfang Ribao*, 23 April, 2002, p.A03; Le, Z. and Duan, Y.B. (Eds.) (2002) *Gongmin daode jianshe tongsu duben* [The Ethic Building for Citizens: A Secular Version], Shenzhen: Haitian Press, pp.32-7.

⁹¹ Qian, N.S. (2002) *Gongmin daode ge* [The Song on Ethic Building for Citizens], Anhui: Anhui Education Press.

⁹² Luo, H.N. (2002) Foreword. In Qian, N.S. (2002) *Gongmin daode ge* [The Song on Ethic Building for Citizens], Anhui: Anhui Education Press, pp.2-3.

⁹³ *Guangming Ribao (Daily)*, 21 March 2002.

three-character, four-character, or five-character rhymes to the production of the 3,4,5 literature. This can be seen as a 3,4,5 movement using rhyme literature to implement moral education.

The production of the *Guangdong Maxims* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department, 2002) by the Guangdong's provincial Propaganda Department did not mean the withdrawal of the *New Three Character Classic* from moral education. It is nevertheless the case that the *New Three Character Classic* is still adopted in schools today, for example, in Huangshi First Secondary School in Pushi County⁹⁴. It is also still a selected moral text in such regions as Shajing town in Bao On County⁹⁵ and Nanou town in Longgang Area⁹⁶ and at (private) schools like the Eastern Experimental School at Silver City of Zhuhai province⁹⁷. Students wrote their own *New Three Character Classic* in schools in An Shan City.⁹⁸ In 2001, schools in Xinshao County of Hunan province edited their own county's *three-character classic on moral education (daode jiaoyu sanzijing)* as teaching material for moral education.⁹⁹

Apart from being taught in school, the *New Three Character Classic* seems to have penetrated into the grassroots of the society. In recent years, the text of the *New Three*

⁹⁴ Lin, S.H. (2000) Xiaojingke shangchu haoxiaofeng: Haungshi yizhong peiyang xuesheng aifumu aishehuiaizuguo [Creating good school ethos through the lesson for love and respect: nourishing the love of parents, society, and the motherland at Huangshi First Secondary School], *Fujian Ribao (Daily)*, 23 May, 2000; see also, http://202.101.139.129/Fujian_w/news/fjrb/fjrb5/000523/6-1.htm [Accessed 22 March, 2007]

⁹⁵ See, <http://www.7cworld.com/tqb/200004/0418/newsfile/n8-6.htm> [Accessed 10 August, 2004]

⁹⁶ See, <http://www.hkcd.com.hk/1999a/tqb/0430/newsfile/fl4-3.htm> [Accessed 10 August, 2004]

⁹⁷ Zhong, Fuqing, *Jianshe you zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi xiandaihua minban xuexiao* [The construction of Private (Minban) Schools by Socialism with Chinese Characteristics], <http://www.bdedu.com.cn/zuanjia/html/teseminban.htm> [Accessed 22 March, 2007]

⁹⁸ See, <http://www.asedu.com.cn/Html/Info/Gove/2005-07-07-13674.htm> [Accessed 20 October, 2005]

⁹⁹ See, <http://hn.rednet.com.cn/Articles/2004/09/610371.HTM> [Accessed 5 November, 2005]

Character Classic has been published in different forms such as riddles¹⁰⁰, and calligraphic copybook.¹⁰¹ The *New Three Character Classic* has also been adopted for literacy learning in various websites.¹⁰²

People also wrote their own rhymes in the genre of the *New Three Character Classic*, some of which were specific for moral education. For example, residents in Yingzhou village in Ningpo province wrote and sang their own "*New Three Character Classic*".¹⁰³ Another version of the *New Three Character Classic* was published in 2001 in Qufu County of Shandong province.¹⁰⁴

1.1.8 Conclusion

The production of the *New Three Character Classic* (Editorial Committee, 1995) was regarded by Guangdong provincial department as a pioneering work in moral education.¹⁰⁵ The text was popular in Guangdong province and quickly spread to other provinces such as Beijing. The spread of the 3,4,5 literature clearly showed a bottom-up movement in moral education which contrasted with the usual top-down development of moral education in China.

On the other hand, the replications of the *New Three Character Classic* initially concentrated on ideopolitical-moral education but then expanded to broader content areas such as language, history, philosophy, science and technology as the 3,4,5

¹⁰⁰ See <http://www.fengyunms.cn/mcck.asp?id=47> [Accessed 20 October, 2005]

¹⁰¹ *Beijing Ribao (Daily)*, 16 December, 2001.

¹⁰² See, <http://www.zgma.com/szj2.htm>; <http://www.cnyww.com/show.asp?id=843> [Accessed 20 October, 2005].

¹⁰³ See *Zhejiang Ribao (Daily)*, 29 November, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Qufu dali tuijin gongmin daode jianshe (To push forward Ethic Building in Qufu County), *People's Daily*, 29 November, 2001; also see <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper464/4832/524670.html> [Accessed 20 October, 2005]

¹⁰⁵ Xu, R.Z. (1996) *Guangdong pujiao gaige shijiantan (xubian)* [Discussions on Gaungdong Education Reform (a sequel)], Guangdong: Guangdong People's Press, p.119; Yang, H.Q. (2002) Nanfang tanhua yu Guangdong xiandaihua jianshe [(Deng Xiaoping's) southern talk and Modernization in Guangdong], *Nanfang Ribao (Daily)*, 3 February, 2002.

movement gathered greater momentum. Evidence also showed that the impact of the *New Three Character Classic* has continued until now, and penetrated into even deeper strata of the society.

The 3,4,5 movement thus affected not only ideopolitical-moral education but also other disciplines, not only in Guangdong province but also in many other provinces in the PRC, and not only in the mid-1990s but also in recent years. Why did this type of literature exert such a powerful influence in ideopolitical-moral education in China? What is the unique characteristic of the 3,4,5 literature? How does it compare with the Confucian classic? Why did it emerge? Why was it replicated and why did it spread so quickly across provinces in the mid-1990s? There are the questions to be explained in this thesis.

In addition, the prefaces of the 3,4,5 literature revealed active involvement of provincial propaganda officials in the publication process. As ideopolitical-moral education was tightly controlled and directed by the government, why did the regional government place the 3,4,5 literature in the agenda of the Propaganda Department? Why was the regional government supportive, and to what extent was it actively involved in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature? Was it relevant to official policy in ideopolitical-moral education in a period of rapid social transition? The discussion of the 3,4,5 literature and its related movement in the present study is thus centred upon development of value orientations in the context of social, economic and political development in China, and their implications for moral education in China.

1.2 Research questions

The present study aims to investigate the following research questions:

- (1) As the 3,4,5 literature is the key element in the 3,4,5 movement and has led to the subsequent publications of rhyme literature, the first question to be answered in the present study is: what is the content of the literature? What values does it transmit?
- (2) As some “experts” were involved in the writing of the 3,4,5 literature, we should ask: what is/are the driving force(s) for their participation in the production of rhyming literature for moral education? Why was the literature written? Who were the target readers? What was the role of the regional government and the central government in the writing?
- (3) As the 3,4,5 literature was adopted in schools, then what was its role in school teaching, especially in relation to formal ideopolitical-moral education? Did the literature receive positive responses from school teachers, students, and parents?
- (4) As the 3,4,5 literature spread so quickly and became influential in such a short time, what reasons contributed to this phenomenon?
- (5) The 3,4,5 movement cooled down after a short period of “heat”. Why did the movement decline so quickly?
- (6) With tight government control of ideopolitical-moral education, what were the implications of the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 movement for ideopolitical-moral education in China? What is the significance of these para-government publications in the context of moral education in China?

1.3 Significance of the study

The 3,4,5 literature pioneered a social movement with strong influence on the development of ideopolitical-moral education. The present study aims to enhance our understanding of the development, its implications for policy-making in moral education, and the interaction between different stakeholders in ideopolitical-moral education in China in a period of rapid economic reform.

In addition, the 3,4,5 literature was initiated by Guangdong provincial propaganda department. Did the regional government initiate the project in line with central government policy? The present study will investigate the relationship between provincial and central government in the context of ideopolitical-moral education.

Some previous studies concentrated on the textbooks or children's literature issued in either the pre-reform period or the early reform era, that is, the 1980s. What recent developments are evident in the textbooks or children's literature issued in the 1990s, the strengthening economic reform period?

Previous studies have attempted to depict the government's influence on political socialization through the analysis of textbooks or children's literature. However, the *New Three Character Classic* is children's literature which was adopted in schools. Hence it played the unprecedented dual role of textbook and children's literature. It is also unique among normal children's literature as it was developed by the local government. A study of the classic can not only fill the void of studies on moral literature developed in the 1990s but also shed light on the nature of the policymaking process within the PRC in the context of ideopolitical-moral education.

1.4 Limitations of the study

This study explores the content of the 3,4,5 literature, initiated by the regional government with the participation of a group of intellectuals, examines its policy making and the social, economic and political backgrounds to the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature, and the rise and fall of its relevant movement. The study focuses on the supply side of cultural/moral production. However, the study is not designed to

examine the actual classroom teaching of the literature. Nor is it an attempt to measure how the literature affected the students' behaviour. Though the consumption side of the production is important, it would require a totally different research design. In addition, the analysis of the content of the literature is crucial for understanding the direction in which important political agents such as the central government, regional government, and civil groups (intellectuals) are attempting to make changes in orthodox communist ideopolitical-moral education.

In addition to the aforementioned restrictions, this study also has limitations in research methodology. Though the 3,4,5 literature has spread to other provinces, this study is limited to interviews with the personnel who participated in the movement, such as government officials, academics, teachers in Guangdong province rather than other provinces. Therefore this study is not intended as a national evaluation of the 3,4,5 literature.

1.5 Organization of the thesis

This chapter has described the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature and its influence in attracting imitations in Guangdong and other provinces, in moral education and other content areas, in order to build up the case for the thesis.

The review of the related literature in Chapter 2 and 3 examines historical background to moral education in China, political and social transformation before and after the adoption of economic reform in China in 1978, philosophical perspectives on the moral orientation of the Chinese, and a historical review of moral education in China.

Chapter 4 will give an account of theories of moral education and their relationship

with children's literature, particularly rhyme literature. Then Chapter 5 will provide a comprehensive outline of the methodology used in this study. After describing the sample and the data collection procedures, the combined results of the analysis are displayed and discussed from Chapter 6 to Chapter 8. After detailed discussion in Chapter 9, a summary of the entire study is presented in Chapter 10 along with conclusions drawn from the research and recommendations for future policy and research initiatives.

Chapter 2

Literature Review:

1. Historical background to moral education in China

2.1 Introduction

The review of the related literature will focus on four major areas. First, this chapter outlines the social, economic and political context of the emergence and development of the 3,4,5 literature and its related movement. It will give an overview of political and social transformation before and after the adoption of economic reform in China in 1978. Major strategies for the economic reform and opening up will be highlighted and then their impacts on the economic, social and political life of the country will be discussed. Particular attention will be paid to Guangdong province which served as a pioneer in the process of marketization.

Second, philosophical perspectives on the moral orientation of the Chinese will be outlined. Special attention will be paid to Confucianism, from the ancient Confucian stage to contemporary Neo-Confucian thinking.

Third, there will be a historical review of moral education in China, from ancient Confucian teaching to nationalistic education in the Guomindang (GMD) period, and to ideopolitical-moral education in communist China. Fourth, theories outlining moral education in relation to political socialization, and rhyming literature will be elaborated for further discussion. Finally, combining these four areas will set the stage for identifying the study's methodology and interpreting the research results.

2.2 A brief account of Chinese history

Before introducing the political and social features of the PRC, it is essential to provide a brief account of China to help the reader to develop a fundamental

understanding of China. China is one of the world's most ancient civilisation. Her history has been largely characterized by repeated divisions and reunifications amid imperial dynastic change. The name *China* is believed to have derived from the name of the Qin dynasty (221-207BC). Qin Shi Huangdi (259 BC - 210 BC) first unified the country. The Han dynasty (206BC – AD220) came after the fall of the authoritarian Qin Dynasty in 206 BC. Since then, the Chinese territory has expanded outward in all directions, and was largest during the Tang (618 -907), Yuan (1206 -1368), and Qing (1644 -1911) dynasties.

By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China's political, economic, and military influence had declined, relative to the influence of Western powers. The imperial system in China ended with the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC) under Sun Yatsen (1866-1925) in 1912. In the nationalist periods, China's stability was marred by warlord control and Japanese invasion during the World War II. After the end of the Second World War and the Chinese Civil war, the CCP, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, established the PRC in 1949, forcing the ROC to retreat to the island of Taiwan.¹⁰⁶

China is one of the largest countries in the world. With 3.7 million square miles land area, China is slightly larger than that of the United States.¹⁰⁷ The Chinese landmass is dominated by the Tibetan-Qinghai plateau, the greatest highland region in the world. All China's major rivers, including the Yellow, the Yangzi, and the West rivers, run out through gorges on the fringes of the plateau.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China> [Accessed 24 October, 2005]

¹⁰⁷ Wang, J.C.F. (1995) *Contemporary Chinese Politics: an Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, p.1.

¹⁰⁸ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, p.48.

China is the most populous country in the world, with 1.3 billion people by the end of 2004, one fifth of the world's total.¹⁰⁹ China is also a multi-ethnic nation, with 56 ethnic groups, according to official sources. Among them, the Han Chinese is the pre-eminent ethnic group in terms of numbers.¹¹⁰

In addition, China was one of the earliest centers of human civilization and was at one time the world's most technologically advanced civilization. Technological inventions from China include compass, paper and printing technology, Asian abacus, gunpowder, silk and fireworks. China has also the world's longest continuously used written language system, with a dominant cultural influence on continental East Asia. Chinese philosophers, writers, and poets have been highly respected, and played a key role in preserving and promoting the Chinese culture.¹¹¹

2.3 Communist China

The CCP overthrew the GMD regime and established the PRC on October 1, 1949. The first generation of CCP leadership was known as "Mao Zedong era" (1949-1978) which was characterized by "highly centralized economy." The second generation of CCP leadership was known as "Deng Xiaoping era" (1978-1997) which advocated "economic reform and opening up". This was widely regarded as the watershed of the contemporary history of the PRC. Deng's line on economic reform and opening up was continued by his successors Jiang Zemin (CCP General Secretary from 1989 to 2002) and Hu Jintao (CCP General Secretary since 2002). The following paragraphs will highlight some general features of the party's rule in both pre-reform China and post-reform China.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/China2005/142009.htm> [Accessed 23 March, 2007]

¹¹⁰ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/China2005/141992.htm> [Accessed 23 March, 2007]

¹¹¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China> [Accessed 24 October, 2005]

2.3.1 Pre-reform China (1949-1978)

Pre-reform China was characterized by highly centralized rule in all walks of life with the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought.¹¹² A centrally planned economy was implemented to ensure that industrial and agricultural production was conducted on the basis of public ownership and put under the control of the state's administrative plan.

Social organization in the Maoist era was also highly centralized, vertical and hierarchical, which enabled the state to assume broad economic and political control. The entire population was centrally assigned by the state to various kinds of "work units" (*danwei*) such as industrial and commercial enterprises, rural "production brigades," academic and educational institutions, and government offices and "residences" (*hukou*).¹¹³ The CCP established branches at all levels of work units. All important decisions were made by the party secretary.¹¹⁴ In addition, para-government organizations such as Labour Unions, the Youth League, and Women's Federation were established within the work unit to help the party in ensuring that employees were in line with the party's policies. Leaders of such organizations were usually appointed by the party (or at least had to have party membership).¹¹⁵ State workers were guaranteed permanent employment and social

¹¹² Mao Zedong's thought had been the official doctrine of the CCP which was a variant of Marxism-Leninism. Mao focused on the peasantry as the main source of revolution which could be mobilized by a Communist Party and thus made all-round rural development the priority. To Mao, power comes from the barrel of the gun, and the peasantry can be mobilized to undertake a "people's war". Mao also emphasized revolutionary mass mobilization, village-level industries independent of the outside world, deliberate organizing of mass military and economic power where necessary to defend the nation from outside threat or where centralization keeps corruption under supervision, and strong control of the arts and sciences. Mao stressed the class struggle throughout the socialist period. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maoism> [Accessed 17 November, 2005].

¹¹³ Ding, Y.J. (2001) *Chinese Democracy after Tiananmen*, Vancouver: UBC Press, pp.10-11.

¹¹⁴ Zang, X.W. (1999) Introduction, in X.W. Zang, (Ed.) *China in the Reform Era*, Commack, New York: Nova Science Publishers, p.1.

¹¹⁵ Zhang, L.N. and Deng, X.G. (1998) The Effects of Structural Changes in Community and Work Unit in China, in J. Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, p.147.

security. The pattern of income distribution was characterized by egalitarianism. Such centrally planned economy was attributed to a rise of a culture of collectivism that denied individuality and creativity, and a culture of dependence on the state of an individual.¹¹⁶

The CCP set model rules of conduct and prescribed thought, and suppressed individual deviations through systematic social control in the pre-reform phase of governance.¹¹⁷ Education in Maoist China focused more on the instillation of party loyalty and revolutionary fervour rather than educational credentials and expertise. The quest for virtuocracy won over meritocracy.¹¹⁸ Ideological indoctrination over the people was exerted through literature and art. All writers and artists were required to praise and glorify the CCP and in particular, Mao. Together with the censorship of literature and art, all news media became mouthpieces for the Party line.¹¹⁹

In Maoist China, the CCP strengthened its political control over the masses through “class-struggle” and political campaigns. In the 1950s there were campaigns for Land Reform (1950-1953)¹²⁰, the Three-Anti Campaign (1951-1952)¹²¹ and the Five-Anti Campaign (1951-1952)¹²², The Hundred Flowers, Anti-Rightist (1957)¹²³, and the

¹¹⁶ Zang, X.W. (1999) Introduction, in X.W. Zang, (Ed.) *China in the Reform Era*, Commack, New York: Nova Science Publishers, p.1.

¹¹⁷ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp.348-9.

¹¹⁸ Tang, W.F. and Parish, W.L. (2000) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: the changing social contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.55.

¹¹⁹ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp.160-2.

¹²⁰ The Land Reform (1950-1953) campaigns in rural China attempted to redistribute land from landlords to farmers.

¹²¹ The Three-Anti Campaign (1951-1952) was a movement against corruption among cadres.

¹²² The Five-Anti Campaign (1951-1952) was a movement to take over industrial enterprises from the bourgeoisie.

¹²³ The Hundred Flowers Movement (1957) was a movement originally to encourage public criticism of the Party in order to combat bureaucracy but ended with an Anti-Rightist Campaign.

Great Leap Forward campaigns (1958-1960).¹²⁴

The Party line struggled between relaxing (*fang*) and tightening (*shou*) of political and economic control, exemplified by the Hundred Flowers Movement in the mid-1950s. The movement was initiated by Mao to encourage public criticism of the Party in order to combat bureaucracy but was superseded by an Anti-Rightist Campaign in June 1957 as an avalanche of hostile criticism from students and intellectuals descended on the Party. As a result, more than 500,000 people were removed from their jobs or imprisoned.¹²⁵

The shifts in the Party's line revealed by these political campaigns were closely related to conflicts in the party leadership. Conflict was between the Maoist 'left', which usually refers to the line of Mao and his supporters, who pursued policies that were a mixture of idealistic radicalism, authoritarianism, and personal adulation of Mao, and 'rightists', i.e. those Communist leaders like Deng Xiaoping, who espoused more pragmatic, although still Marxist, policies in communist China. Struggles within the leadership were exemplified during the Cultural Revolution (1967-1976) when the Red Guard attacked Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and their followers on the 'capitalist road' after a call from Mao to 'bombard the Headquarters'.¹²⁶

In the highly centralized PRC, grassroots participation in the political process was largely restricted. Articulation of individual and group interests was restricted by the organizational structure. In contrast, cadres in grassroots work units could take advantage of the situation and turn their power into a source of income due to the lack

¹²⁴ The Great Leap Forward Campaigns (1958-1960) attempted to increase agricultural production.

¹²⁵ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, p.27.

¹²⁶ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp.31, 34-7.

of grassroots participation in the political process as effective checks.¹²⁷

Pre-reform China was also characterized by its isolation from the outside world. The PRC 'leaned to' the Soviet camp soon after its formation. However, China split with the Soviet Union in the 1960s after a series of ideological and border disputes. Consequently all Soviet technical assistance was withdrawn from China. China further isolated itself from the outside world during the Cultural Revolution when foreign influences of all sorts were denounced and suppressed. The isolation persisted until the visit of US President Nixon to China in the early 1970s.¹²⁸

2.3.2 Post-reform China (since 1978)

There were drastic changes in political development in China after the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four. The general orientation of China shifted toward economic development when Deng Xiaoping's power was confirmed at the third Plenum of the Eleventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in December 1978. The overall goal of the reform was to achieve the Four Modernizations¹²⁹ with two general principles: 'to the outside, adopt openness; to the inside, enliven the economy'.¹³⁰

Instead of rushing ahead with a comprehensive, radical transformation of the entire system, the Chinese reformist leaders were very cautious, as if they were "*crossing a*

¹²⁷ Shi, T.J. (1997) *Political Participation in Beijing*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp.17-21; Ding, Y.J. (2001) *Chinese Democracy after Tiananmen*, Vancouver: UBC Press, p.10.

¹²⁸ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp. 31-2, 35-6.

¹²⁹ The Four Modernizations (in the fields of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and the military) were first introduced by Zhou Enlai in 1976.

¹³⁰ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong, and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, pp.2-3.

river by groping for stones.”¹³¹ At the beginning phase of economic reform, agriculture was decollectivized through the introduction of a ‘contract responsibility system’ in which peasants’ households could obtain land from collectives in return for contracting to meet a minimum target of production for sale to the state at fixed prices, any surplus being saleable on the free market. In 1982, the People’s communes were officially abolished and were replaced by township governments.¹³²

Besides the decollectivization of rural area, four Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were established in southern Guangdong (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou) and Fujian province (Xiamen), where overseas connections were extensive and the tradition of international links was strong as a means to attract foreign investment and advanced technology into the country. In order to win provincial support for the reform drive, local authorities were given an incentive to expand their revenue base by developing local industry and were empowered to participate in reform policymaking in foreign investment projects, special trade and investment zones, and tax rates for foreign investment firms, export subsidies and so forth.¹³³ The number of SEZs then increased rapidly. In 1984, fourteen port cities along the eastern coast were opened up. In 1988 the policy was further extended to cover all coastal provinces.¹³⁴

2.3.3 Economic achievements in post-reform China

In 1978, just before the economic reform, China was one of the poorest countries in the world as its GNP was only US\$253 per head, which was comparable to that of

¹³¹ Perry, E.F. and Selden, M. (2000) Introduction: Reform and resistance in Contemporary China, in E.F. Perry, and M. Selden, (Eds.) *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, London and New York: Routledge, p.1.

¹³² Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp.38-9, 74.

¹³³ Shirk, S.L. (1994) *How China opened its door: The Political Success of the PRC's Foreign Trade and Investment Reforms*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, pp.30-31.

¹³⁴ Lin, G.C.S. (2003) An Emerging Global City Region? Economic and Social Integration between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta, in A.Y. So, (Ed.) *China's Developmental miracle: Origins, Transformations, and Challenges*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, pp.81-2.

Haiti or the Central African Republic.¹³⁵ The standards of living remained low though basic food, health care, and education were generally assured. Dramatic economic growth was noticed in post-Mao economic reform as Chinese GNP growth increased from a rate of 4.5 percent in 1978 to a rate averaging 9 percent.¹³⁶

Both agriculture and industrial sectors boomed in post-reform China. Grain production grew from less than 300 million tons in 1978 to 414 million tons in 1985, sugar from 856 to 1760 million tons, cotton from 521 to 1578 million tons. The township and village enterprises (TVEs) sector¹³⁷ of Chinese industry also recorded explosive growth. In 1978, fewer than 2 million rural industries employed 28 million people. In the 1990s, there were over 20 million such firms employing more than 125 million people, around 40 percent of the industrial workforce.¹³⁸

China's economic boom since 1978 could be attributed to reduced government intervention and increased reign of the market. The CCP however recentralized the economy from previous economic liberation in the wake of 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations. The recentralization led to economic recession signalled by zero growth in industrial output while that of light industry fell to 0.2 percent from January to March 1990. A number of factories sat idle because of the slowdown in output and 1.5 million urban residents lost their jobs.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Chang, M.H. (2001) *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism*, Colorado: Westview Press, p.150.

¹³⁶ Perkins, D.H. (1997) History, politics, and the sources of economic growth: China and the East Asian way of growth, in F. Itoh. (Ed.) *China in the twenty-first century: Politics, economy, and society*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, pp.25-41.

¹³⁷ Township and village enterprises (TVEs) are non-agricultural business, which operate largely according to market forces outside of the state plan that are owned and run by local-level governments.

¹³⁸ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp.75-6.

¹³⁹ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.73-4

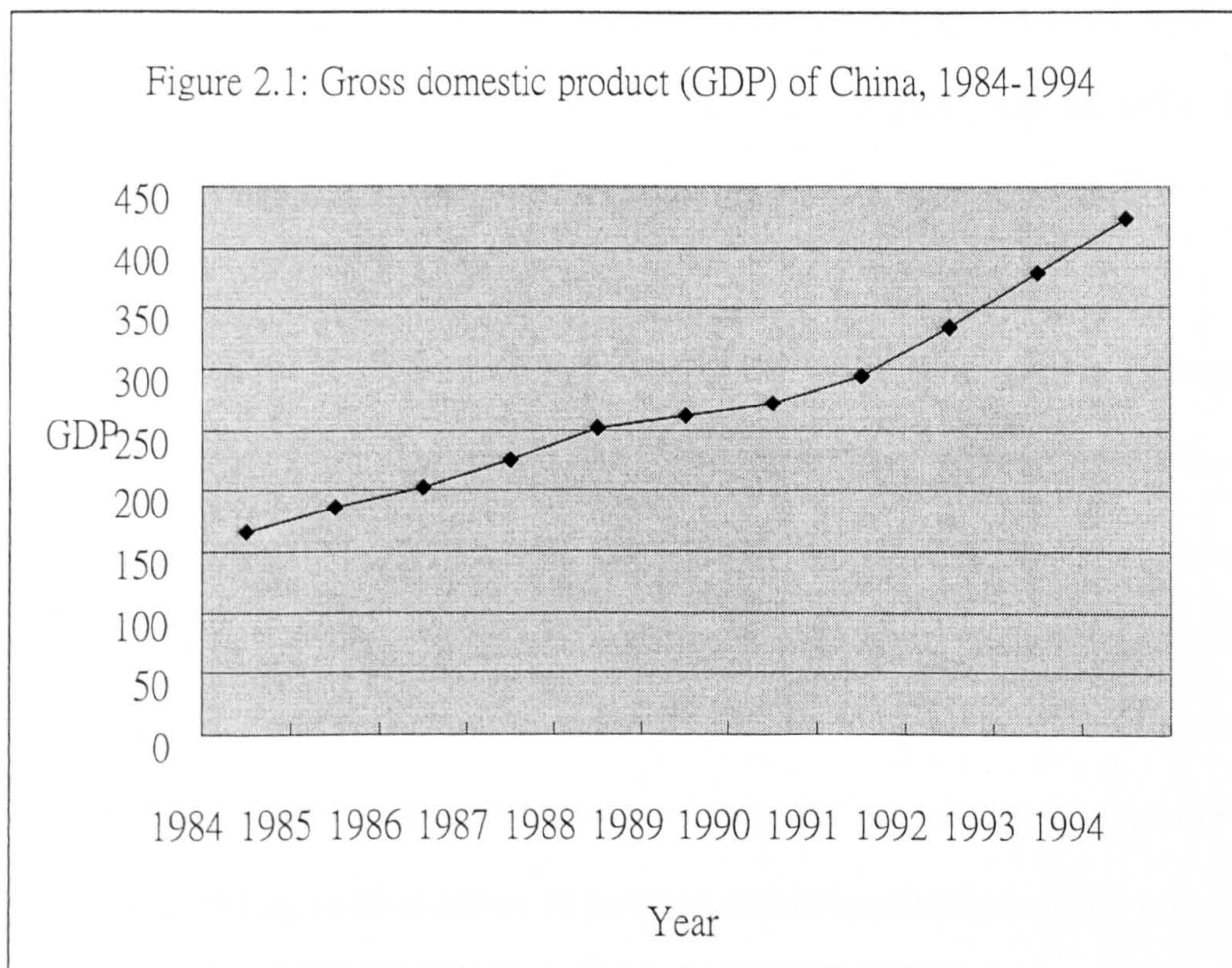
To prevent social instability arising from economic distress, attempts were undertaken to rein in economic growth. The year 1992 was a watershed of China’s economic reform signalled by Deng Xiaoping’s inspection tour to South China which constituted the basis of a reinvigorated reform process. Deng claimed that continued economic reform was vital for the party’s legitimacy and that it should ‘blaze new trails boldly’. Deng’s call for further economic reform won support in the Fourteenth Party Congress and was credited with developing the ‘theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics’. Official statistics showed that Chinese economy soared after Deng’s 1992 southern tour. The GNP in 1993 (3,447.7 billion *yuan*) was nearly double the GNP in 1990 (1,854.5 billion *yuan*). In 1994, the GNP rose to 4,491.8 billion *yuan*.

| | 1978 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1993 | 1994 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| Gross National Product (GNP) (billion <i>yuan</i>) | 362.4 | 451.8 | 899.5 | 1,854.5 | 3,447.7 | 4,491.8 |
| GNP per capita (<i>yuan</i>) | 379 | 460 | 856 | 1,634 | 2,926 | 3,679 |
| Gross value of agricultural output (billion <i>yuan</i>) | 139.7 | 192.3 | 361.9 | 766.2 | 1,099.6 | 1,575.0 |
| Gross value of industrial output (billion <i>yuan</i>) | 423.7 | 515.4 | 971.6 | 2,392.4 | 5,269.2 | 7,690.9 |

Table 2.1: Indicators of China’s National Economy, 1978-1994

Source: *China Statistical Yearbook, 1995* (Beijing: China Statistical Publishing House, 1995), pp.20-25, 32;[Quoted from Prime, P.B. (1997) *China’s Economic Progress: Is it sustainable?* in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) (1997) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, p.52.]

China’s gross domestic product (GDP) also increased more than 26.9 percent between 1992 (334.2) and 1994 (424.1).



Source: People's Republic of China Yearbook 1995, Beijing: Xinhua Publication House, p.281.

The growth of private business was also remarkable. In 1978, its share of the gross value of Chinese industrial output was less than 1 percent; by 1992, it had grown to 7 percent.¹⁴⁰ China was also successful in attracting foreign investment. In 1978, China had no foreign direct investment. But by 1993, China had attracted almost \$60 billion foreign investment in over 70,000 enterprises.¹⁴¹ Foreign trade also grew quickly. Import and Export trade volume had increased from US\$20.6 billion in 1978 to US\$195.8 billion in 1993.¹⁴² Between 1978 and 1990, annual growth rates for China's total trade were more than three times the world rates.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong, and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, p.6.

¹⁴¹ Larry, N.R. (1994) *China in the World Economy*, Washington: Institute for International Economics, p.63.

¹⁴² Perkins, D.H. (1997) History, politics, and the sources of economic growth: China and the East Asian way of growth, in F. Itoh (Ed.) *China in the twenty-first century: Politics, economy, and society*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p.35.

¹⁴³ Larry, N.R. (1994) *China in the World Economy*, Washington: Institute for International Economics,

Economic reform also increased personal income and savings. In 1994, total national savings rose to 21,519 billion *yuan*¹⁴⁴ from 210.6 billion *yuan* in 1978. Average population savings also rose to 1795.49 *yuan* from 21.88 *yuan* in 1978.¹⁴⁵

Deng Xiaoping, the ‘chief architect of socialist market reform’, died in February 1997 and was succeeded by Jiang Zemin, the “third succession” of the Chinese leadership. The leadership, while recognizing the importance of high economic growth to maintain social stability, was fearful of vicious economic overheating and financial sector problems, and was cautious in keeping economic growth on the right track. In 1998, Premier Zhu Rongji announced an integrated set of macroeconomic control measures including marketization of housing and rationalization of the tax collection system as well as a massive restructuring of the government bureaucracy, with half the officials to be laid off and reassigned to new jobs.¹⁴⁶ Zhu’s measures protected China from the backdrop of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. China’s GDP still grew by 7.9 percent in 2002 despite a global economic slowdown.¹⁴⁷

China also further integrated with the world economy as signalled by its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001. China’s accession to the WTO also marked an important milestone along its economic reform since 1978 by showing its willingness “to open to the international markets” and the “depth and breath of its commitments to liberalize access to its domestic economy” (Organization for

pp.30-37.

¹⁴⁴ “Yuan” is the unit of Chinese currency. It is also referred to RMB (*renminbi*, “people’s money.”)

¹⁴⁵ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995* [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People’s University of China, 1994-1995], Beijing: People’s University of China, pp.296-7.

¹⁴⁶ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.82.

¹⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Rongji [Accessed 25 March, 2006]

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2002).¹⁴⁸

2.3.4 Impacts of economic reform and opening up

2.3.4.1 Social Impacts

Economic growth brought massive social changes to China. Tang and Parish (2000) observed the following social changes after the adoption of economic reform and opening up policy: ration coupons for life staples were replaced by supermarkets; Mao jackets and green army uniforms mixed with mini skirts, and Coca-cola and Budweiser T-shirts; disco dancing, which was denounced as harmful to one’s bone development in the *People’s Daily* in the early 1980s replaced Taichi.¹⁴⁹ In post-reform China, material living standards of the public have significantly improved. Television sets and refrigerators have become common consumer goods in many households:

| Measure | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1994 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Consumer level (<i>yuan</i>) | | | | |
| Rural (agricultural pop.) | 178 | 346 | 571 | 1,087 |
| Urban(non-agricultural pop) | 496 | 802 | 1,686 | 3,956 |
| Ratio: urban/rural | 2.8 | 2.3 | 3 | 3.6 |
| Durable goods ownership per 100 households | | | | |
| TV sets | | | | |
| Urban(colour) | 17.2 | 59 | 86.2 | |
| Rural(black and white) | 10.9 | 39.7 | 61.8 | |
| Rural(colour) | 0.8 | 4.7 | 13.5 | |
| Refrigerators | | | | |
| Urban | 6.6 | 42.3 | 62.1 | |
| Rural | 0.1 | 1.2 | 4 | |

Table 2.2: Selected standard of living indicators, 1980 -1994

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China 1995, pp.257-263, 287, adapted from Bliney E. (1997) *Crisis and Reform*, Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., p.91).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2002) *China in the World Economy: The Domestic Policy Challenges*, Paris: OECD, p.9.
¹⁴⁹ Tang, W.F. and Parish, W.L. (2000) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: the changing social contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.42.
¹⁵⁰ Bliney, E. (1997) *Crisis and Reform*, Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.,p.91.

Since the 1980s, telephone availability in urban areas has mushroomed. In 1993, China had 26 million telephones. By 1994, the numbers of telephones had jumped to over 40 million and even rose to an estimated 50 million by 1995.¹⁵¹ Communication with the outside world further expanded when direct internet overseas links from China were established in May 1994. In the late 1990s, there was an influx of computers and access to the Internet in China. Statistics provided by the ChinaNet Information Centre at the end of 1997 showed that there were more than 49,000 host computers and 250,000 personal computers in China, with about 620,000 browsers connected to the internet.¹⁵² In January 2000, the number of computer hosts had risen to 3.5 million while Internet users had reached 8.9 million. The biggest Internet user in China was the higher education sector, largely among teachers, students and researchers.¹⁵³ Internet connection has become usual practice for students. The rapidly increasing popularity of personal computers and the internet provided users with unprecedented connectivity to the world and a challenge to the leadership to regulate its use and control the traffic. Interestingly, while realizing the difficulties in controlling the internet, the government has used the Internet to promote China's cultural image abroad.¹⁵⁴

The opening up also exposed people to Western ideas as well as commercial popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan with the proliferation of media and communication facilities. In 1992, American MTV entered China via Hong Kong

¹⁵¹ Prime, P.B. (1997) China's Economic Progress: Is it sustainable? in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, p.65

¹⁵² Yu, Y.M. (1998) The Development of Communication Information Infrastructure: A Revolution in Networking, in J. Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, pp.172-3.

¹⁵³ Lo, A.C.Y.N.. (2001) The prospects for using the Internet in collaborative design education with China, *Higher Education*, 42(1) (July 2001), p.51.

¹⁵⁴ China gets wired as cultural blitz planned, *China News Digest* (February 2, 1998); see Yu, Y.M. (1998) The Development of Communication Information Infrastructure: A Revolution in Networking, in J. Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, p.183

satellite channels, which were selectively broadcast over Chinese cable television. Hollywood movies such as *First Blood* and *True Lies* were shown together with Anti-American and anti-imperialist movies on the Korean War. Residents near the Hong Kong border, like those in Guangdong province, routinely watched Hong Kong TV programmes. To compete with Hong Kong channels, Chinese stations have had to increase their foreign programmes. As a result, movie and popular music stars in Hong Kong and Taiwan, together with such names as Michael Jordan and Madonna are known by almost every urban Chinese.¹⁵⁵

In addition, popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan has become increasingly influential in China since its opening up. Traditional revolutionary models for the young were substituted by Hong Kong singers like Teresa Tang, Alan Tam, Andy Lau, and Jacky Cheung as well as Taiwan writers Qiong Yao and San Mo.¹⁵⁶ In response to the rising commercial popular culture, the Chinese authorities banned Hong Kong and Taiwan pop concerts on the mainland but instead sponsored a number of national karaoke contests, involving singing revolutionary folk songs or traditional Peking opera in 1994.¹⁵⁷

Improvement in material living standards does not necessarily mean improvement in the quality of living. Post-reform China has been plagued with environmental degradation. Firstly, there was a shortage of water supplies. In 1985, 188 Chinese cities were short more than 10 million tonnes (Mt) of water a day. By 1990, the average daily government's deficit had risen to 15 Mt, partly due to the rising urban

¹⁵⁵ Tang, W.F. and Parish, W.L. (2000) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: the changing social contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.43-5.

¹⁵⁶ Liu, J.L. (2003) *Qingshaonian jiazhi guan jiaoyu yanjiu [A Study on Value Education on the Young]*, Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press, pp.50-4.

¹⁵⁷ Liu, K. (2004) *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p.25.

consumption. The quality of water supplies was also questionable as rural water pollution had been greatly increased by the huge expansion of industrial enterprises during the 1980s, operating without any pollution control.¹⁵⁸

Cultivated areas also decreased because of population growth and economic modernization (such as industrial, urban, and residential expansion and so forth) and natural degradative process (such as desertification), which were either accelerated or initiated by improper land management. Statistics from the State Land Administration showed that the average farmland losses between 1980 and 1985 were 492,000 hectare, from a total of 2.45 million hectare.¹⁵⁹ As the use of chemical fertilizers had more than quadrupled since the introduction of household farming, pollution of drinking water and fresh vegetables by carcinogenic nitrates was also alarming in post-reform China.¹⁶⁰

Air pollution was also serious in China. The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA, 2001) reported that two out of three cities in China failed to meet the residential ambient air quality standard, resulting in exposure to health risk of a large population.¹⁶¹ The World Bank estimated that air pollution cost China's economy more than 7 percent of GDP in 1995, largely in health damage.¹⁶²

Food and eating are always essential to "the Chinese way of life and part of the

¹⁵⁸ Smil, V. (1993) *China's Environmental Crisis: An Inquiry into the Limits of National Development*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, pp.42-7.

¹⁵⁹ Smil, V. (1993) *China's Environmental Crisis: An Inquiry into the Limits of National Development*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, p.56.

¹⁶⁰ Smil, V. (1993) *China's Environmental Crisis: An Inquiry into the Limits of National Development*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, pp.170-5.

¹⁶¹ Peng, C.Y. et al. (2002) Urban air quality and health in China, *Urban Studies*, 39(12), (Nov 2002), p.2283.

¹⁶² Smith, C. (2000) *China in the post-utopian age*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, p.378.

Chinese ethos".¹⁶³ However, food shortage has always been a serious problem which has perplexed China's huge population. In the 1960s, 30 million Chinese died in famine.¹⁶⁴ The household responsibility system, one of the themes of the 1978 reform, brought unprecedented food supply to China. Between 1978 and 1984, the average growth rate of agricultural output rose to 7.7 percent from 2.9 percent for the years 1952-1978.¹⁶⁵ In addition, the quality of available foodstuff improved, shown in the increased consumption of animal foodstuffs: by 1986 their share of the total food energy in typical diets had surpassed 10 percent; it rose to 15 percent by 1995 and was nearly 20 percent by the year 2000 (FAO 2002).¹⁶⁶

With improvement in both quality and quantity of food supply, Smil (2004) noticed an "eating better, wasting more" phenomenon in post-reform China. On one hand, there was a rising consumption of meat, sugar and so forth. On the other hand, there was a notable nutritional shift that was accompanied by industrialization and urbanization brought by the economic reform. Staple grains had become less important than meat. There was also increasing loss of grain during the post-harvesting process. Statistics showed that at least 60 to 70 million tonnes of staple grain were lost annually during harvesting, threshing, drying, storage, transport and processing.¹⁶⁷

There was a notable rise of consumerism in post-reform China following the

¹⁶³ Smil, V. (2004) *China's past, China's future: energy, food, environment*, New York: Routledge, p.94.

¹⁶⁴ Smil, V. (2004) *China's past, China's future: energy, food, environment*, New York: Routledge, p.73.

¹⁶⁵ Smil, V. (2004) *China's past, China's future: energy, food, environment*, New York: Routledge, p.92.

¹⁶⁶ FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) (2002) *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2002*, Rome: FAO; quoted from Smil, V. (2004) *China's past, China's future: energy, food, environment*, New York: Routledge, p.99.

¹⁶⁷ Smil, V. (2004) *China's past, China's future: energy, food, environment*, New York: Routledge, pp.99-105.

advancement of material living standards. With more cash in hand, people were chasing brand names and luxury products. They were willing to pay several thousand *yuan* for a bottle of wine or a watch. A survey conducted by a Beijing business consultant firm in Beijing and Le Yang municipal authorities from June to July 1994 indicated that 23.8 percent of respondents were willing to pay more money for brand products and 17.6 percent respondents were chasing new fashion products.¹⁶⁸

In the 1990s, commercialisation flourished in the economy. Intellectuals, peasants as well as other workers were all pre-occupied with making money.¹⁶⁹ Officials were also eager to “jump into the sea” (go into business).¹⁷⁰ The *Yuan*, or dollar, rather than social issues was the common code that people from all walks of life shared. In association with this the government and educators deplored the rise of moneyism among the public, explicitly young people. Moneyism has been regarded as an indicator of moral decline in China.¹⁷¹

Income inequality between individuals, between geographical regions, and between rural and urban areas was increasingly wide with economic reform. Zhang and Zhang (2003) report that the regional Gini coefficient¹⁷² rose from 0.19 in 1985 to 0.24 in 1994, and to 0.26 in 1998. Regional economic inequality also became obvious.

¹⁶⁸ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995* [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People's University of China, 1994-1995], Beijing: People's University of China, p.307.

¹⁶⁹ Ju, Y.A. (1996) *Understanding China: Center Stage of the Fourth Power*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p.70.

¹⁷⁰ Mok, K.H. (1995) Prosperity without equality: an examination of the socio-political impacts of structural modification of post-Mao society, in L. Wong, and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, pp.150-1.

¹⁷¹ Chen, H.C (1999) *deyu yousi: zhuanxingqi xuesheng gexing xinli yanjiu* [Anxieties about moral education: a study on students' psychology during the transition period], Beijing: Huawen Press, p.18.

¹⁷² The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of a distribution. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1. 0 corresponds to perfect income equality (i.e. everyone has the same income) and 1 corresponds to perfect income inequality (i.e. one person has all the income, while everyone else has zero income). See, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient [Accessed 25 March, 2006]

Coastal provinces have generated more trade volume (85.96 percent of the total in 1986-1991 period and 88.08 percent of the total in 1992-1998 period) and attracted far more FDI (foreign direct investment) (91.93 percent in 1986-1991 period and 87.42 percent in 1992-1998 period) than inland provinces. Guangdong ranked top in coastal province with both measurements in both periods.¹⁷³ Even in urban areas, unemployed and semi-employed people had no secure income and no access to work unit benefits. The State Statistical Bureau reported in 1994 an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent, affecting 7 million people. Since 1995, redundancies have increased. Reports in 1996 and 1997 calculated that some 40 million people had been laid off. At the same time, official sources disclosed that there were over 2 million Chinese millionaires, and that 3 percent of the population held total savings of 290 billions *yuan*, a figure that was in excess of the entire savings of 800 million peasants.¹⁷⁴

In post-reform China, crime has become an increasingly alarming problem. According to the State Statistics Bureau, criminal cases rose after the Cultural Revolution. By 1988, there were 830,000 reported criminal cases, averaging 7.7 cases per 100,000 population nationwide. In 1994, (i.e. six years later), however, the rate had almost doubled to 14.3 cases per 100,000 population.

¹⁷³ Zhang, X.B. and Zhang, K.H. (2003) How does Globalization affect Regional Inequality within a Developing Country?: Evidence from China, *Journal of Development Studies*, 39(4) (Apr 2003), pp.51-3.

¹⁷⁴ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, pp.94-5.

| Year | Number of crimes (in 1,000) | Crimes per 100,000 population |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1956 | 190 | 3.0 |
| 1965 | 210 | 3.0 |
| 1982 | 750 | 7.4 |
| 1988 | 830 | 7.7. |
| 1994 | 1,660 | 14.3 |

Table 2.3: Numbers of Crimes and Crimes per 100,000 population

(adapted from Chen, J.F. (1998) Crime in China’s Modernization, in J.Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, p.158.)

The problem of juvenile delinquency has become notably serious since the 1980s, especially along the coastal areas, where the juvenile crimes have been consistently maintained at around 60 percent of all the crimes and have been increasing at 5 percent annually. Statistics show that more than 80 percent of crimes committed by the young are robbery and theft.¹⁷⁵

Drug trafficking and addiction were also growing in post-reform China. From 1991 to 1995, 46,000 drug traffickers were arrested and more than 7,300 were sentenced to death or life imprisonment. By the end of 1995, 520,000 addicts were registered. There were at least one million drug addicts according to official estimate.¹⁷⁶

However, the most serious problem perceived by the people in opinion polls in the late 1980s was neither juvenile crime nor drug trafficking and addiction but corruption. Official corruption involving party members was fiercely criticized in the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations.¹⁷⁷ To address public concern, the government

¹⁷⁵ Chen, J.F. (1998) Crime in China’s Modernization, in J. Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, pp.157-9.

¹⁷⁶ Pei, M.X. (1997) Racing against time: Institutional Decay and Renewal in China, in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, p.33.

¹⁷⁷ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, p.11.

launched campaigns against official speculation and corruption after the crackdown on the demonstrations.¹⁷⁸ In response to public anger at rampant corruption, the government sometimes prosecuted officials for corruption in the 1990s. Pei (1997) however noticed that the anti-corruption was rather often used as a measure to target political rivals who were tainted by illegal activities by party leaders like Jiang.¹⁷⁹

Besides crimes, moral decline was notably perceived among the public in post-reform China. Chen Lai, Professor at Beijing University, described such “moral decline”(daode huapo) as the weakening of individual character, family ethics, occupational ethics (the society filled with fake goods), collectivism, social ethics, patriotism, and sense of national dignity.¹⁸⁰ The public seemed to have lived in a cultural void as traditional values, beliefs, and morals were being torn apart while a new culture had yet to be formulated. Ju (1996) deplored “What needs to be done in order for an economically booming China to survive a systemically and morally corrupt China?”¹⁸¹

“Occupational ethics” (zhiye daode, also termed “professional ethics” for an individual, or “corporation ethics” for an organization) in China have traditionally had two purposes: the first is that one should benefit mankind through one’s generosity; the second is that one should make people feel happy through perfect service and professional performance. A recent survey showed that traditional adherence to

¹⁷⁸ Baum, R. (1996) *Burying Mao: Chinese politics in the age of Deng Xiaoping*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.3.

¹⁷⁹ Pei, M.X. (1997) Racing against time: Institutional Decay and Renewal in China, in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, pp.12-4.

¹⁸⁰ Nan, S.Y (1995) Zhongnanhai fachu hongtouwengjian JiangZemin tuidong aiguojiaoyu [Zhongnanhai document: Jiang Zemin’s initiation of Patriotic Education], *Guangjiaojing [Wide Angle Monthly]*, Vol. 272 (May 1995), p.36.

¹⁸¹ Ju, Y.A. (1996) *Understanding China: Center Stage of the Fourth Power*, Albany: State University of New York Press, pp.94-7.

professional ethics in China had changed. In early 1995, a research group in the Institute of Philosophy, CASS, initiated a project entitled “The Difficulties in the Ethical and Moral Construction in China in a Period of Transition and the Counter-measures.” The group distributed questionnaires to people in Guangdong, Jiangsu, Henan and Shanxi provinces and found that many respondents paid no concern to the significance and demands of professional ethics.¹⁸²

Though “occupational ethics” may be broader than the production of “fake goods”, Chen was right to point out the problem of rampant piracy in China. Chinese society had been plagued with pirated handbags, music CDs, movie DVDs, and even food. Statistics showed that people were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the pirates by the 1990s. According to consumer councils, there were 411,706 complaints in various provinces with regard to fake goods in 1994, a rise of 11.4 percent from 1993.¹⁸³

Some surveys in fact revealed changes in the value orientations of the Chinese. In echoing Deng’s slogan “getting rich is glorious,” more people aspired to get rich through individual efforts. There was thus a popular saying “either rich or poor, you are on your own” in the reforming China.¹⁸⁴ A study conducted in Shanghai revealed a rise of individualism and the weakening of collectivism. When asked the most important thing in one’s life, more respondents chose “to live happily” rather than “to

¹⁸² Chen Y.Q. and Zhang Y.Y. (2002) Values and their Transformation, in K. Pohl and A.W. Müller (Eds.) *Chinese Ethics in a Global Context: Moral Bases of Contemporary Societies*, Leiden: Brill, p.100

¹⁸³ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995 [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People’s University of China, 1994-1995]*, Beijing: People’s University of China, p.301.

¹⁸⁴ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, p.12.

make a contribution to society". There was also more agreement with the statement "life is short, enjoy it while you can" than "treasure your time, work as hard as possible" when asked about the meaning of life.¹⁸⁵

The young in the 1990s were found to be more concerned about their own interests regardless of the means of satisfying them. A survey conducted by the People's University of China in Beijing reported that 14.3 percent of respondents "agreed" with the statement "I can take every means to promote my interests" while 9.0 percent of respondents chose "no comment [*wu yijian*]"¹⁸⁶ to the statement. The respondents also showed that people had a different attitude towards traditional concepts such as "honesty": 26.6 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement "honesty is an essential character for a man living in the contemporary era" while 8.6 percent of respondents replied "no comment [*wu yijian*]" to the statement.¹⁸⁷

Numerous surveys also suggest that Chinese youths were becoming more "pragmatic" than before. Chinese youths tend to pursue material benefits rather than ideological-political goals, to value their career more than their political progress, and to stress their "professional improvement" rather than "socialist morality". On the subject of party membership, many youths admit that they joined the party as a means to obtain a good job assignment rather than out of belief in communism. Furthermore, a study of over 1500 youths in Guangzhou identified the "concern with concrete

¹⁸⁵ Chu, G. and Ju, Y.A. (1993) *The Great Wall in ruins: Communication and Cultural Changes in China*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, p.185.

¹⁸⁶ Respondents who chose the option "no comment" meant they had no objection to the statement. The findings show that 23.4 percent respondents either "agreed" or "had no objection" to the statement.

¹⁸⁷ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995* [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People's University of China, 1994-1995], Beijing: People's University of China, p.315.

matters related to work” as the respondents’ most important concern.¹⁸⁸

Feather (1986) employed the Rokeach (1973) Value Survey instrument to examine the value orientations of 68 mainland China university students. He found that the four most important terminal values were “true friendship”, “wisdom”, “freedom”, and “mature love”. The four most important instrumental values were “ambitions”, “broadminded”, “intellectual” and “courageous”, whereas “forgiving”, “helpful”, “clean” and “obedience” were the four least important values.¹⁸⁹

Although traditional Confucianism had been officially challenged in communist China after the founding of the PRC in 1949, the “Chinese Value Survey” conducted by the Chinese Culture Connection in 1987 revealed that the values related to Confucianism were still ranked at the top of forty ethnocentrically produced items of Chinese values.¹⁹⁰ However some traditional concepts were indeed challenged during the economic reform. Lu (1998) observed that the value of *yi* (in Lu’s terms, *yi* includes benevolence, righteousness, morality, faithfulness) was on the verge of decline while the value of *li* (benefits, utilitarianism, profit) had become more prevalent.¹⁹¹

Traditional Chinese society was family-oriented. Until well into the twentieth century, arranged marriages were the norm. Continuity of patriarchal descent was a central

¹⁸⁸ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, pp.13-4.

¹⁸⁹ Feather, N.T. (1986) Values systems across cultures: Australia and China, *International Journal of Psychology*, 21, pp.697-715.

¹⁹⁰ Chinese Culture Connection (1987) Chinese Values and the Search for Culture-free dimensions of Culture, *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 18(2), pp.143-164.

¹⁹¹ Lu, X. (1998) An Interface Between Individualistic and Collectivistic Orientations in Chinese Cultural Values and Social Relations, *The Howard Journal of Communications*, Vol. 9, p.104.

feature of the system. Within the family, it was believed that the younger generation should obey their elders; women should obey men; the weak should be obedient and respectful; the powerful should be compassionate, upright and virtuous. It was imperative for parents to raise male children, who would bear the same family name as their father and whose sons, in turn, would also bear it. The CCP broke up such traditional familial relationships through multi-family organizations like the People's Communes. The 1950 marriage law made autonomous choice the norm in urban China. Surveys showed that the situation had somewhat changed following the adoption of economic openness. In the 1991 urban women's survey, 95 percent of all marriage choices were decided by the couple involved. For most men and women, their emphasis in picking mates was on the personal qualities of individual character or moral standard (*renpin*). In the reform era, dating has become increasingly popular among Chinese youth, including visits to dance halls and other forms of commercial entertainment. Survey findings reported that premarital sex was more likely to be accepted by the young and the better educated. One-fourth of the husbands and one-sixth of the females reported sex before marriage, though that sex was usually with an intended spouse.¹⁹²

On the other hand, marriage has become increasingly commercialized. Marriage rituals reflect an increased emphasis on ostentatious consumption, including traditional banquets. Honig and Hershatter (1988) observe that these rituals, once simplified in the Maoist period, became elaborate again in the 1980s.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Parish, W.L. and Farrer, J. (2000) Gender and Family, in W.F. Tang, and W.L. Parish, (Eds.) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp.241-2.

¹⁹³ Honig, E. and Hershatter, G. (1988) *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p.143.

Divorce rates increased notably in the reform era. In the decade 1980-1990, the divorce rate doubled from 0.7 to 1.4. In other words, about 10 per cent of all marriages eventually ended in divorce (Table 2.4). It is noteworthy that divorce rate was much higher in cities. In Beijing and Shanghai, the 1996 divorce rate per 1,000 population was about 1.7, implying that about one-fifth of all marriages could end in divorce (SSB, 1997, pp.739-740).¹⁹⁴

| Year | Registered Marriages(couples) | Divorces(couples) | Divorce Rate (%)* |
|------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1980 | 7,197,860 | 340,998 | 0.7 |
| 1985 | 8,312,837 | 457,938 | 0.9 |
| 1986 | 8,839,786 | 505,675 | 0.9 |
| 1987 | 9,267,456 | 581,484 | 1.1 |
| 1988 | 8,991,771 | 658,551 | 1.2 |
| 1989 | 9,372,304 | 752,914 | 1.3 |
| 1990 | 9,510,632 | 800,037 | 1.4 |
| 1991 | 9,509,849 | 829,449 | 1.4 |
| 1992 | 9,545,047 | 849,611 | 1.5 |
| 1993 | 9,121,622 | 909,195 | 1.5 |

Table 2.4: Statistics on Marriage (Registration and Divorces)

* Divorce rate: Divorced couples X 2 / Average population X 1000%

Source: State Statistical Bureau of the People’s Republic of China (1994) *China Statistical Yearbook 1994*, Beijing: China Statistical Information & Consultancy Service Centre, p.675.

Within a family, household labour is one of the most intransigent structures of gender inequality in industrial societies. A women’s survey conducted in 1991 found that men spent 1.4 hours on cooking and laundry compared with women’s 2.6 hours. Chinese husbands seemed to regard their wife’s proportion of the income from a dependency perspective. As the wife’s proportion of total family income increased, then the husband’s proportion of chore time increased. The survey revealed that Chinese

¹⁹⁴ State Statistical Bureau (1997) *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian (China Statistical Yearbook)*, Beijing: China Statistical Publishing House, quoted from Tang, W.F. and Parish, W.L. (2000) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: the changing social contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.263-5.

women were less satisfied with chores when they spent more time on chores.¹⁹⁵

On the other hand, spoiled single children have become a potential social problem in post-reform China. As China had 1.3 billion population, with a growth rate of around 1 percent per year in the late 1990s, the government regarded population pressure as a cause of poverty and social crisis and thus introduced the 'one-child policy' in 1979, one year after the start of economic reform. In 1990, 49.4 percent of new born babies were single children. In urban areas, more than 90 percent of new born babies were single children.¹⁹⁶ The policy, though to a certain extent it helped reduce the population pressure, led to some negative side-effects because of the persistent traditional preference for sons even though post-reform China had passed through a decade of socialist education.¹⁹⁷

The preference for a son rather than daughter not only contributed to an imbalanced sex ratio and excess female infanticide¹⁹⁸ but also fostered unrealistic parental expectations on their single children. Hundreds of thousands of single children were thus indulged and spoiled to be lazy, intractable, selfish, and uncooperative.¹⁹⁹ A Beijing scholar Wang Dianqing (2003) further questioned if the "new generation"

¹⁹⁵ Parish, W.L. and Farrer, J. (2000) Gender and Family, in W.F. Tang, and W.L. Parish, (Eds.) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.248-9, 253.

¹⁹⁶ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995* [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People's University of China, 1994-1995], Beijing: People's University of China, p.314.

¹⁹⁷ Arnold, F and Liu Z.X. (1986) Sex preferences, fertility and family planning in China, *Population and Development Review*, 12, pp.221-46.

¹⁹⁸ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.276-7.

¹⁹⁹ Zheng, H.S. (Ed.) (1996) *Congchuantong xiangxiandai kuaisu zhuanxing guochengzhong di zhongguo shehui: zhongguo renmin daxue shehui fazhan baogao 1994-1995* [Chinese society in fast transformation from traditional to modern modes: a report on social development by People's University of China, 1994-1995], Beijing: People's University of China, pp.314-5.

could be a filial generation?²⁰⁰

On the other hand, parental expectations of children increasingly moved away from collectivism to individualism as China had more contact with the outside world in the late 1990s. Using data on patterns of child socialization values in the United States and China from the World Values Survey (1990-1993), Hong Xiao (1999) concluded that Chinese were more likely than Americans to endorse children's independence.²⁰¹

As a matter of fact, some studies reported that even college students showed a lack of basic civilized behaviour and moral values. Yang Jingyun et al. (1990) noticed that students did not make their beds after getting up, or wash their hands after using the bathrooms, nor turn off the tap after using water, nor turn off the lights upon leaving a room etc. They also lacked a sense of responsibility.²⁰²

China's education has also undergone a process of marketization in the post-Mao reform period, characterized by the emergence of private educational institutions, the shift of state responsibility for educational provision towards families and individuals and the prominence of fee-charging, as well as the introduction of internal competition among educational institutions. The CCP initiated a decentralization policy in education to allow local government, local communities, individuals and other non-state actors to create more educational opportunities. From the mid-1980s, CCP leaders such as Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng encouraged administrators, principals and presidents of schools and universities to search for additional funding to run

²⁰⁰ <http://www.people.com.cn/BIG5/jiaoyu/1055/2133593.html> [Accessed 23 December, 2003]

²⁰¹ Hong X. (1999) Independence and Obedience: An Analysis of Child Socialization Values in the United States and China, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies (Canada)*, 30(4) (1999 Autumn), pp.641-658.

²⁰² Yang, J.Y. et al.(1990) Exploring the Questions of College Students' Road of Growth, *Chinese Education*, 23(1), pp.12-13.

educational services.

Marketization in education makes students' choices a very prominent factor affecting course design. Educational institutions in China have generally adopted a customer-oriented approach in running their educational business. For example, the Department of Teaching, People's University of China conducted a survey on teaching matters among faculty members and produced new teaching materials to meet current market needs.

Education in post-reform China has shifted to the quest for meritocracy rather than the quest for virtuocracy. Education provides a step for students to climb to higher social strata and get higher incomes. Since the 1980s, educational credentials have become more important to students for securing the best jobs.²⁰³

2.3.4.2 Political Impacts

Economic reform to a great extent means decentralization of state control on economic activities. Pei (1997) noticed a rapid decay of political institutions of the old regime in the process of economic liberalization.²⁰⁴ For example, migration controls were enforced from around 1960 onwards by a strict system of household registration and ration cards. However, the significance of the household registration and ration cards declined in association with the economic reform. Hundreds of thousands of peasants began flooding into the major cities in search of work. By the 1990s, economic migrants were numbered in millions.²⁰⁵ The *huko* system, or the assigning of residence through administrative control, has gradually unravelled.

²⁰³ Tang, W.F. and Parish, W.L. (2000) *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: the changing social contract*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.55, 70-7.

²⁰⁴ Pei, M.X. (1997) Racing against time: Institutional Decay and Renewal in China, in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, p.11.

²⁰⁵ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, p.62.

The erosion of social control mechanisms also occurred in cities. The *danwei*, the polyfunctional unit that provided workers with a welfare system, was under pressure from economic reconstruction as workers could now find many other ways to earn money.²⁰⁶ Lieberthal (2004) describes the population migration, from rural to urban areas and from the interior to the coast, as “one of the most massive movements of people in human history.”²⁰⁷ These massive “floating populations” or *liudong renkou* was an evidence of the collapse of the collectivist social system in post-reform China.

In Mao’s period, the CCP controlled people’s life through the party and non-party organizations. However, economic reforms led to the relaxation of the state’s iron grip on society. Zhao estimated that up to one-third of party organizations in urban enterprises and villages had stopped functioning in the post-Mao China.²⁰⁸ Saich attributes the dysfunction of state organizations to the difficulties of the party in maintaining its system of patronage for certain intellectual groups and social organizations. At the same time, the party was slowly losing control over the discourse that was filling the public spaces. The high levels of corruption that accompanied the reforms and the close identity of interest between business and official party positions made it difficult to maintain the party’s legitimacy.²⁰⁹

In addition, a new class of private traders, entrepreneurs and rich farmers emerged in China with the development of a relatively free labour market and the rise of a private

²⁰⁶ Gipouloux, F.,(1997) Comment on Lu Xueyi’s *Prospects of social development*, in F. Itoh, F. (Ed.) *China in the twenty-first century: Politics, economy, and society*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p.200.

²⁰⁷ Lieberthal, K. (2004) *Governing China: from revolution through reform*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, p.xv.

²⁰⁸ Zhao, S.S. (1997) Political Reform and Changing One-party Rule in Deng’s China, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 44(5), p.18.

²⁰⁹ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.118-9.

sector. The new elites in Deng's period were those officials and bureaucrats at the local level who not only possessed political power but wielded immense economic influence.²¹⁰

Economic reform also triggered the rise of localities. Saich argues that reforms at the local level have provided the basis for national implementation. The SEZs set up in the 1980s served as the channel for absorbing foreign technology and acted as reform laboratories. The provinces also provided the centre with a reliable organization to fine-tune policies and allow more flexibility with experimentation than would otherwise be the case.²¹¹

Competition for resources, privileges and opportunities offered by the centre in locality levels was thus strong during the process of marketization. Some provinces even erected high tariffs to prevent goods from other provinces entering that might undermine local industry or prevent raw materials leaving to other provinces. A classic case was when Guangdong sent trucks to Sichuan to buy silkworm cocoons directly from the producers, while the Sichuan authorities responded by setting up armed blockades to prevent them from leaving the province.²¹²

Official socialist ideology was apparently in decline in post-reform China. There were so-called "crises of three faiths" ("*sanxin weiji*"): the erosion of faith in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong's thought, "crisis of faith" in socialism and a "crisis of confidence" in the future of the country (plus a crisis of trust in the Party-state).

²¹⁰ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, p.10.

²¹¹ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.162-3.

²¹² Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.162-3.

People felt “that there is more or less nothing to believe in. They don’t believe in Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the superiority of socialism, or the brilliant prospect of Communism.”²¹³ The official media also admitted in the 1980s that many people, especially the younger generation, believed that “socialism cannot match capitalism;” and they seriously doubted whether “socialism can really save China.”²¹⁴

Studies suggest that the public was becoming more conscious of the distinction between state, party and nation.²¹⁵ Another survey showed that more than half of the respondents rejected the four cardinal beliefs in “socialism”, “Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought”, “people’s democratic dictatorship” and “the leadership of the communist Party” and approximately half of the respondents felt ambivalent or had no sense of pride in life under socialism²¹⁶.

In fact, two pillars, the monolithic organization of the CCP and Mao Zedong’s thought were shattered by a series of post-Mao economic and political reforms under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Deng criticized or “reassessed” Mao as a Party leader and Maoism as the official ideology in the late 1970s and the early 1980s in order to eradicate all ideological and psychological obstacles to reform programs. The opening up and reform policy was to a certain extent a denial of the previous campaigns launched earlier from the 1950s such as land reform and collectivization of agriculture

²¹³ Charlie B. (1990) *Political and Social Change in China since 1978*, New York: Greenwood Publishing, p.5

²¹⁴ *Guangming Ribao (Daily)*, 19 March, 1981.

²¹⁵ Goldman, M. et al., (1993) China’s Intellectuals in the Deng Era: Loss of Identity with the State, in L. Dittmer and S.S. Kim (Eds.) *China’s quest for national identity*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp.125-153.

²¹⁶ Wong, L. and Mok, K.H. (1995) The reform and the changing social context, in L. Wong and S. MacPherson, (Eds.) (1995) *Social Change and Social Policy in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong: Avebury, p.15.

and damaged the image of the CCP. The campaign unavoidably resulted in the loss of a strong official ideology.²¹⁷

The Party organization also echoed Deng in questioning the applicability of Marxism and Leninism, which had been seen as the ideological and theoretical geneses of Mao Zedong's thought in the past decades. For example, the *People's Daily* in a commentary in 1984 asked whether orthodox Marxist-Leninist theory was obsolete and its rigid application could no longer solve China's problems.²¹⁸

Mao himself had contributed to the weakening of the ideological influence of the CCP as the Party's image and its ruling position had been somewhat undermined during the Cultural Revolution when he mobilized the Red Guards to attack the government Headquarters and party leaders.

Fewsmith (2001) argued that public belief in Marxism-Leninism was destroyed in the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square and performance had become far more important than ideology in legitimising the government's rule.²¹⁹ Even after the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in 1989, a wide range of survey data revealed that many students still admired Western democracy and supported capitalism.²²⁰ Fairbank and Goldman (1998) noticed that more and more people had turned to religions like Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism as the official ideology had

²¹⁷ Chen, J. (1995) The Impact of Reform on the Party and Ideology in China, *The Journal of Contemporary China*, Issue 9 (1995 Summer), pp.22, 25-6.

²¹⁸ *People's Daily*, 7 December, 1984, p.1

²¹⁹ Fewsmith, J. (2001) *China since Tiananmen: the politics of transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.9.

²²⁰ Rosen, S. (1992) Students and the State in China: The crisis in ideology and organization, quoted from Rosenbaum, A. L. (Ed.) *State and Society in China: The consequence of reform*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, p.175.

become increasingly irrelevant to people's lives.²²¹

2.4 Economic liberalization in Guangdong

*Within the broad framework of China's future in relation to political developments and the question of regionalism, federalism, or disintegration, Guangdong and its behaviour might provide some crucial clues to future trend(s).*²²²

The reformist leaders implemented economic reform and the opening up policy as a way to accelerate economic growth and bolster Party authority. Deng Xiaoping's 1992 southern tour reinvigorated the 1978 reform process that has saved China from poverty. The strengthening economic reform succeeded in bringing high-speed economic development while managing to maintain the political status quo under the rule of the CCP.

Nevertheless it also had a major impact in economic, social and political aspects. Negative outcomes of the economic reform included the rise of crime and corruption. Such traditional concepts as "honesty" and "righteousness" (*yi*) were challenged. The role of family was also undergoing changes. Nevertheless some traditional concepts such as the preference for a boy under the one-child policy were retained in marketized China and eventually produced thousands of spoiled children.

Economic liberalization led to shifts in value orientations. The influence of the party has been diminishing while western thoughts as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan popular culture are increasingly influential following the implementation of the economic reforms and opening up policy, accompanied by the advancement of

²²¹ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.437.

²²² Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, p.31.

communication and Internet. There are so-called “crises of three faiths” signalling the decline of the communist ideology. How about the case of Guangdong, a pioneer SEZ in the recent economic reform in China? Did Guangdong experience the above-mentioned social transformation?

In fact, Guangdong has long been a focal point of reform and international links in Chinese history. The following paragraphs will firstly give an account of the geographical and economical features of Guangdong province, the origin of the emergence of 3,4,5 literature, and then outline the various social transformations that Guangdong has experienced since 1978.

2.4.1 General background to Guangdong Province

Geographically, Guangdong is located in southern China (approximately longitude 110E-117E and latitude 20N-25N) facing Hong Kong across the border. It has an area of 177,901 sq km, representing only 1.85 percent of China’s total area. Its coastline is the longest of all provinces, at 3,368 km, or 10.52 percent of the country’s total.²²³

The alluvial and deltaic plains formed by the three major rivers of the Pearl River (*Zhujiang*) system---the West (*Xi*), the North (*Bei*) and the East (*Dong*) rivers (the area was also known as *Lingnan*),²²⁴ not only provide fertile lands for agricultural products but also make Guangdong a transportation web, that brings about a lot of economic benefits to Guangdong. Benefiting from a long coastline, Guangdong has a long history of foreign trade, with Guangzhou as a prosperous port city since the Song

²²³ Yeung, Y. M. (1998) Introduction, in Y. M Yeung and D.K.Y. Chu (Eds.) *Guangdong: survey of a province undergoing rapid change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, p.3.

²²⁴ Schoppa, R. K. (2002) *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p.19.

dynasty (960-1279).²²⁵ Adjacent to two former Western colonies, Hong Kong (former British colony until 1997) and Macau (former Portuguese colony until 1999), Guangdong has become an economic web that links foreign business activities to the mainland.

Topographically Guangdong is separated from the rest of China by the east-west Lingnan range. The national capital Beijing is 1,887 kilometres away from Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong. As indicated in a Chinese proverb '*the mountains are high and the Emperor far away*' (*shangao huangdi yuan*), the province has a marked sense of *difang zhuyi* (regionalism) which has contributed to loyalty to its geographical unit rather than the nation-state.²²⁶



Figure 2.2: Map of Guangdong

Source: <http://china.scmp.com/map/guangdong.html> [Accessed 25 March, 2006]

In 1995, Guangdong's population reached 68.68 million, accounting for 5.67 percent

²²⁵ Lau, Y.C. (1998) History, in Y. M. Yeung and D.K.Y. Chu (Eds.) *Guangdong: survey of a province undergoing rapid change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.469-470.

²²⁶ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.31-3.

of the Chinese population.²²⁷ The original natives of Guangdong were the Yue people. Since the late Warring States Period (475-221BC), the Han people started to migrate to Guangdong from the north. Guangdong has its own dialects like Cantonese, Fukienese and Hakka which are distinct in pronunciation from Putonghua.²²⁸

Confucianism was introduced in Guangdong as early as in the Tang dynasty. Guangdong served as a destination for exiled court officials like Han Yu (768-824) and Li Deyu (787-849). Since then, its cultural and scholarly activities developed steadily. The first scholar to come out of Guangdong was the philosopher Chen Baisha (1428-1500) in the fifteenth century who taught a variety of neo-Confucianism.²²⁹

Over the centuries, the Chinese empire expanded fundamentally from north to south. However, Guangdong played an important role in leading China's ambitious drive towards economic development. It was a birthplace of revolution. For example, Sun Yatsen, the founder of the Chinese Republic, was Cantonese and staged an uprising for revolutionaries in Guangzhou city.²³⁰

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, Guangdong's traditional contact with the West was largely cut off with increased Party interference through a centralized bureaucracy. The vertical administrative socialist system of economic control stifled local and provincial initiatives. This hampered the economic performance of

²²⁷ Yeung, Y. M. (1998) Introduction, in Y. M. Yeung and D.K.Y. Chu (Eds.) *Guangdong: survey of a province undergoing rapid change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, p.3, p.3.

²²⁸ Chu, Y.K. (1973) The Chinese Language, in J.T. Meskill (Ed.) *An Introduction to Chinese Civilization*, Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company, p.589.

²²⁹ Lau, Y.C. (1998) History, in Y. M. Yeung and D.K.Y. Chu (Eds.) *Guangdong: survey of a province undergoing rapid change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.466-8.

²³⁰ Faure, D. (1996) History and Culture, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.17-21.

Guangdong province. Before 1978, Guangdong was ranked seventh and eighth respectively in gross domestic product (GDP) and national income.²³¹

2.4.2 Guangdong as a pioneer in the opening up and economic reform

Guangdong province and Fujian province were chosen by the central government to be the first two provinces to establish Special Economic Zones (SEZs) on an experimental basis at the launch of the open and reform programme in 1979 because of its proximity to Hong Kong and strong overseas Chinese connections.²³² As a SEZ, Guangdong was given discretionary powers in relation to taxation, foreign exchange, banking, resources, the setting of price and wages, and the management of state industries in order to enhance international trade and attract foreign investment. As a result, Guangdong was allowed to become a relatively free market economy in order to achieve greater prosperity. Later on, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou in Guangdong province were also granted the status of SEZs.²³³ Since then, Guangdong has been in the forefront of economic experimentations in China.²³⁴

Proximity to Hong Kong enabled Guangdong to play the role of “window,” showing the open side of China to the outside world. After an economic setback in the late 1980s, Deng Xiaoping’s tour to the South in 1992 re-activated economic reforms. The province was quick in response to Deng’s approval of economic reforms. In the National People’s Congress in the spring of 1992, Guangdong was targeted as one of

²³¹ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China’s Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.35, 37.

²³² Cheng, J.Y.S. (2000b) Guangdong’s Challenge: Organizational Streaming, Economic Restructuring and Anti-corruption, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.18.

²³³ Zhang, X.C.(2000) Guangdong and the challenges of the Twenty-first Century: The Legal Perspective, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, pp.192-3.

²³⁴ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China’s Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, p.31.

fastest growing economic regions in China.²³⁵

In 1978, Guangdong's GDP was 5.1 percent of the national total, and the proportion rose to 9.4 percent in 1995, rising from the sixth position to the first position. In per capita terms, it reached 8,020 *yuan* in 1995 from 367 *yuan* in 1978.²³⁶ In 1993, when the national economy grew by 13.4 percent, Guangdong outperformed the national average figure by 9 points.²³⁷ Guangdong has also attained a number of national "firsts" in the economic reform in terms of gross light industrial output value among the provincial units (accounting for 15 percent of the national total in 1998), foreign trade among the provincial units (accounting for 41.21 percent of China's exports and 40.13 percent of China's imports in 1998), delivery of industrial and commercial taxes (accounting for one-seventh of the national total), and per capita urban family income (amounting to 8,840 *yuan* in 1998).²³⁸

A saying prevailed in China at that time: "*Shenzhen learns from Hong Kong, Guangdong learns from Shenzhen, and the whole country learns from Guangdong*,"²³⁹ The Guangdong province always walked "one step ahead"²⁴⁰ of the rest of China and was thus the economic powerhouse of China in the process of economic reform. By

²³⁵ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.38-9.

²³⁶ Guangdong Nianjian Editorial Committee (Ed.) (1995) *Guangdong Nianjian 1995 [Guangdong Yearbook 1995]*, Guangdong: Guangdong Nianjianshe, p.122; *Nanfang Ribao (Southern Daily, a Guangdong Chinese Newspaper)*, 27 December, 1995 and 30 December, 1995; Guangdong Nianjian Editorial Committee (Ed.) (1996) *Guangdong Nianjian 1995 (Guangdong Yearbook 1995)*, Guangdong: Guangdong Nianjianshe, p.146; quoted from Cheng, J.Y.S. (1999) Local Government's Role in a Transitional Economy: The case of Guangdong, in X.W. Zang (Ed.) *China in the Reform Era*, Commack, New York: Nova Science Publishers, p.9.

²³⁷ Hunter, A. and Sexton, J. (1999) *Contemporary China*, Houndmills: MacMillan Press, p.91.

²³⁸ Guangdong Nianjian Editorial Committee (Ed.) *Guangdong Nianjian 1995 [Guangdong Yearbook 1995]*, Guangdong: Guangdong Nianjianshe, p.142.

²³⁹ Cheng, J.Y.S. (2000a) Introduction, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, p.2.

²⁴⁰ Vogel, E.F. (1989) *One Step Ahead in China: Guangdong under Reform*, Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

the early 1990s, this 5 percent of the Chinese population had created 10 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. In 1992, GDP growth in Guangdong hit 22 percent while China as a whole recorded a 13.2 percent rate that year.²⁴¹

2.4.3 Social transformations in post-reform Guangdong

Guangdong had not only attained huge economic growth but also experienced social transformation. Economic development to a great extent improved material living in Guangdong. By the early 1990s, street corners of Guangdong were full of Audis and Mercedes-Benzes, with high-rise buildings on both sides of streets. Economic development brought about a variety of consumer goods. People wore clothing with designer labels, and a surfeit of London and New York investment bankers visited the region.²⁴² Television and tape cassette players became mainstream goods.

By the mid-1990s, air-conditioners and cellular phones were included in the tally of new items. Brand-name consciousness permeated the market. Colourful, stylish, and smart clothes were the bywords for changes in attire for even villagers in southern China. Hair treatment also underwent a revolution. Beauty parlours blossomed all over the province along with the widespread use of cosmetics by women.

A wide range of entertainment also came to southern China. Karaoke stalls, videotape arcades, and movie theatres became centres of public gathering. Gambling revived in villages and towns. Consumerism was also displayed in weddings during the reform era. In the early 1990s, most people put a 10,000 or even 20,000-yuan price tag on

²⁴¹ Guldin, G.E. (2001) *What's a Peasant to do? Village becoming town in Southern China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, p.4.

²⁴² Overholt, W.H. (1993) *The Rise of China: How Economic Reform is creating a new Superpower?* New York London: W. W. Norton & Company, p.193.

wedding expenses.²⁴³

The Guangdong province, especially the Pearl River Delta, has also experienced environmental problems over the last decade. One of the problems is water pollution. The Pearl River, especially in its lower reaches, has been seriously polluted by untreated domestic sewage and industrial wastewater, posing health risks to the population and problems of water supply. The most polluted stretch of water was the Jiangmen section of the West River; mercury, petroleum, dissolved oxygen and phenol reflected the strong influence of domestic and industrial wastes from Xinhui County and Jiangmen City.

Air pollution is another serious environmental problem in the Guangdong province. Among the air pollutants, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide exhibited the highest rate of increase. Air pollution due to vehicular pollution increased in Guangzhou, and accounted for 87 percent of the carbon monoxide and 67 percent of the nitrogen oxide measured at the street level in 1998. Urban air pollution problems were expected to deteriorate rapidly in near future with the vehicle population in Guangzhou increasing at a rate of about 25 percent a year.²⁴⁴

As mentioned before, China has recorded an increase in crime rate in the process of economic reform. Guangdong had on one hand enjoyed the fruits of economic growth but on the other hand suffered from rising crime during the economic reform process. The number of criminal offences began to increase in the early 1980s and accelerated

²⁴³ Guldin, G.E. (2001) *What's a Peasant to do? Village becoming town in Southern China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, pp.151-2, 155, 157, 160,178.

²⁴⁴ Neller, R. J. and Lam, K.C. (1998) *The Environment*, in Y. M. Yeung and D.K.Y. Chu (Eds.) *Guangdong: survey of a province undergoing rapid change*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.452-4.

in the mid-1990s. In 1994, 163,000 criminal cases were reported to the Public Security Bureau (PSB), which represented a 10.6 percent increase over 1993. Even with serious clampdowns on criminal activities launched by the government since 1983, the crime rate remained high during the late 1990s. According to *China Yearbook 1998-1999*, the reported criminal cases filed by the PSB in 1997 amounted to 1,613,629 cases. Included in this figure were 1,058,110 larceny cases and 142,000 robbery cases. Economic crime was also serious in 1997, as fraud cases increased by 14 percent. The police confiscated about 300 million *yuan* in counterfeit money, an increase of 40 percent over 1996.

Types of crime became increasingly diversified after the reform began. Before the reform era, criminal offences were basically larceny, theft and homicide (mainly caused by domestic disputes). In the early 1980s, there was a notable rise in prostitution, pornography, and kidnapping cases. In the mid-1980s, triad activities began to increase in the province. Other types of crime appeared including highway robbery, and white-collar and commercial crimes such as credit card and computer crimes. In the 1990s, the manufacture and sale of illicit drugs began to rise. Murders, kidnapping, and armed robberies also increased in number.

Crime was widely considered a serious social problem among the citizens in Guangdong province in the 1990s. A questionnaire survey conducted by the PSB and the Public Opinion Research Centre in Guangzhou reported that 58 percent of the respondents rated the law and order situation in the city as “getting worse” and 21 percent as “very bad” in 1994.

The increase of juvenile delinquency was alarming as juveniles composed about 70

percent of those arrested. Che (1995) argued that the young have been badly influenced by capitalism, and only interested in material gain without working hard for a living. They wished to get rich quickly and live an easy life. As they believed that study could not bring them financial success, they dropped out of schools and were easily induced by bad elements to commit criminal offences.

Criminologists in China attributed the increase in crimes to the unequal distribution of wealth, rising unemployment, migration and the Open Door Policy. The Guangdong PSB admitted that the police had lost control of people as the government could no longer control the household population through food coupons and the household registration system. Ironically, police themselves were also under the influence of capitalism. Some police officers had even participated in corruption and smuggling activities which further hampered people's confidence in the government officials and made crime detection more difficult.²⁴⁵

The 'single child' became a serious problem in Guangdong after the implementation of 'one-child policy' in China in 1979. Zhang Chenggan (2003), an editorial member of the 3,4,5 literature, pointed out there was an increasing number of spoiled single children in Guangdong who were lazy, uncooperative, shy, quiet and timid. They lacked problem-solving and social skills, collectivism, spirit of competition, determination, perseverance, and good manners. They were physically, emotionally and intellectually weak.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Che, W.K. (2000) The Crime Scene in Guangdong province, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, pp.324-341.

²⁴⁶ Zhang, C.G. (2003) Deyu gaige luzai hefang [What is the direction of moral education reform], in Ma, H. (Eds.) *Chunhua Qiushi: Zhang Cehnggan yanshuo lunwen suibi ji [Spring Flower and Autumn Fruit: A collection of Speech, Essay, and Articles by Zhang Chenggan]*, Guangzhou: Alumni Association of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School, pp. 50-53.

Family education has also become a notable concern in Guangdong province. A survey on familial education in Shenzhen SEZ conducted in 1996 reported 66.2 percent of parents expressed their love of their children in term of pocket money instead of talking with them, thus causing money worshipping among the young children. Parents are also found to overly spoil their children. 19.5 percent and 35.8 percent of parents “never” and “sometimes” involved their children in household chores respectively. On the other hand, parents have high expectations on their children. 85.5 percent of parents expected their children to become experts at some particular discipline while 92.9 percent of parents expected their children to rank in the “top ten” in their classes.²⁴⁷

Economic reforms in China altered people’s values orientation. Surveys conducted in Guangdong reported changing value orientations among the young during the process of marketization. One notable feature was the rise of individualism. A study conducted in 1989 on the value orientations among Guangzhou secondary school students showed that 81.78 percent of respondents agreed that “personal effort is the key to success.” Respondents ranked “personal ethics”, “intelligence”, and “knowledge” as the three most important factors leading to “success”. 72.7 percent of respondents believed that “my fate is controlled in my hands” but only 18.55 percent of respondents chose “to prosper the motherland” as their ideal.²⁴⁸ The belief in individual struggle had become prevalent in Guangdong. People who were ambitious to climb the social ladder had joined the tide of those who ‘jumped into the sea’ (venturing into the sea of commerce and business).

²⁴⁷ Yang, K.Q. (1997) *Tequ qingshaonian xuesheng deyu duice yanjiu* [A study on moral education policies on the young in the SEZs], Shenzhen: Haitian, pp.93-5.

²⁴⁸ Zhong, X.Y. (Eds.) *Jiaoyu yu Shehui: Zhongqinnian jiaoyu lilun gongzuozhe yantaohui lunwenji* [Education and Society: A collection of conference for mid-aged and young teachers], Chengdu: Si Chuan Education Press, pp.136-8.

Emphasis on individualism affected interpersonal relationships. Unlike its old Guangzhou neighbourhood where people shared their meals, conversations and childcare, people now read books or watched television at home but had little social interaction with their neighbours when they moved to apartment buildings.²⁴⁹

The concept of social responsibility also changed in the post-reform period. The notion of egalitarianism was generally regarded as incompatible with a market economy. On the contrary, more and more people accepted income inequality and differential rewards as a natural consequence of the market economy.²⁵⁰

Changing values orientation was also evident in the social status of different occupations. A study analyzed 102 occupations in Guangdong and revealed that economic, political and ideological factors were evident in the occupational status structure. There were three layers to this occupational status structure. The occupations in the upper end of the status structure were professor, company director, party cadres, general manager, lawyer, judge, architect, and so forth. In the middle group were project technician, secondary school teacher, actor, worker in party committee and so forth, whilst blue-collar and low-level jobs in the service sector were found at the lower end of the status structure. The findings showed that cadres in state and government had somewhat lost the social status they used to enjoy before the economic reform. The social status of workers in state-owned enterprises had also declined. In contrast, the social status of professional and technical personnel had improved. Workers in the non-state-owned enterprises were seen as more competitive

²⁴⁹ Guldin, G.E. (2001) *What's a Peasant to do? Village becoming town in Southern China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, p.154.

²⁵⁰ Mok, K.H. and Chan, D. (1996) The Emergence of Private Education in the Pearl River Delta: implications for social development, in S. MacPherson and J.Y.S. Cheng (Eds.) *Economic and Social Development in South China*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, p.249.

and enjoyed higher social status than before.²⁵¹

Guangzhou secondary students also expressed doubts about socialism. A survey reported that only 40.67 percent of respondents agreed that “socialism was the only way for China to prosperity,” whilst 46.94 percent of respondents claimed that the future of socialism in China was uncertain. At the same time, students demanded democracy on the school campus. 75.91 percent of respondents agreed that “class cadres” should be chosen “through democratic election.”²⁵²

Some traditional concepts were challenged in the process of marketization. For example, traditional Confucianism emphasized “righteousness” rather than “profits”. Money was denounced in traditional Chinese society. But in opening Guangdong, there was a saying “time is money, efficiency is life.” Efficiency, profits, and even money were no longer taboo but targets for some Guangdong people.²⁵³

In regard to education, Mok (1997) noticed that the central government had progressively withdrawn from direct provision, management, and delivery of education in the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong SEZ. Local governments, on the contrary, had become actively involved in funding schools. School personnel were also encouraged to generate their own earnings. There was a mushrooming of private schools in Guangdong. Statistics showed that in Guangzhou alone, there were 125

²⁵¹ Chiu, C.C.H. and Cai, H. (1996) Social status of occupations in Guangzhou, in S. MacPherson and J.Y.S. Cheng (Eds.) *Economic and Social Development in South China*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp.229-241.

²⁵² Zhong, X.Y. (Ed.) *Jiaoyu yu Shehui: Zhongqinnian jiaoyu lilun gongzuozhe yantaohui lunwenji* [Education and Society: A collection of conference for mid-aged and young teachers], Chengdu: Si Chuan Education Press, p.137.

²⁵³ Zheng, S., Jing, H.B. and Yang, G.K. (1997) cong daode shifan dao daode zhenghe: gaige kaifang yilai Guangdong shehui daode jiazhi guannian di yanbian yu qidi [From Moral deregulation to moral restructuring: Changes and Implications of Guangdong Social Moral Values since the adoption of economic and opening up policy], *Guangdong Shehui Kexue* [Guangdong Social Science], Vol. 2, p.63.

private schools of various kinds by the end of 1992. By 1996, the number of private schools had risen to 690. Mok and Chan (1996) explained the rise of private education in Guangdong with the changing concepts of Guangdong people towards education in the process of marketization. People were willing to put money aside for their children's education as they believed education to be an important dimension of social development. In addition, many of these parents regarded sending their children to private education as a means of gaining social status.²⁵⁴ However, the decentralization implied by no means that the CCP had relinquished its control over educational developments. The government had drafted laws and regulations to control the development.²⁵⁵

Educational provisions were also changing in face of the changing market needs. There was a rise of 'vocalionalization' in both secondary and higher education to meet the urgent need for more technical, managerial, and professional personnel in Guangdong. Statistics showed that between 1980 and 1991, enrolments increased by about four times in secondary specialized schools, by 3.4 times in skilled workers' schools, and by 12 times in secondary vocational schools. Comprehensive universities such as Sun Yat Sen University and Shenzhen University offered management and technology courses to students.

However, on the other hand, there was a prevailing belief that 'education is useless' in Guangdong in the context of rapid economic development. People found it easier to earn money quickly by engaging in business and seeking employment in the Pearl

²⁵⁴ Mok, K.H. and Chan, D. (1996) The Emergence of Private Education in the Pearl River Delta: implications for social development, in S. MacPherson and J.Y.S. Cheng (Eds.) *Economic and Social Development in South China*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp.242-251.

²⁵⁵ Mok, K.H. (1997) Retreat of the State: Marketization of Education in the Pearl River Delta, *Comparative Education Review*, 41(3), pp.268-275.

River Delta rather than pursuing further studies.²⁵⁶

2.4.4 Political impacts of economic reform in Guangdong

There was a weakening of state-owned enterprises and growth in non-state-owned enterprises in Guangdong in the 1980s. State enterprises accounted for almost two-thirds of the total provincial industrial production value in 1980 but their share was reduced to just over one-third by 1989. In contrast, the production value of the non-state sector grew from just one-third to almost two-thirds of the total provincial figure. The growth in the output value of private enterprises and joint ventures was also notable, with some two-fold and eight-fold increases respectively over the decade.

On the other hand, a comprehensive contract system of employment had developed even in state-owned enterprises. The proportion of labour employed through market mechanisms was as high as 85 percent by 1991 in cities and towns. By the early 1990s, over 50 percent of enterprises in Guangdong were managed according to the market situation rather than by administrative directives. Under the contract system, the wage of employees was linked directly to profit, and the welfare of staff and workers was tied to enterprise performance. The introduction of the contract system severely affected the pre-existing life-tenure system.²⁵⁷

These changes in the economic system gradually relaxed the state's monopoly of social resources and weakened the degree of state control over the society. Rapid economic development also led to individuals and enterprises having divergent

²⁵⁶ Hook, B. and Lee, W.O. (1996) Human Resources and the Impact of Reforms, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.134-142.

²⁵⁷ Hook, B. and Lee, W.O. (1996) Human Resources and the Impact of Reforms, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp.120-1.

interests and made people more driven by individual motives.²⁵⁸ The new entrepreneurs showed little or no interest in ideological matters. The workers were more concerned with wages and material goods. New patterns of identification, divorced from the old ideas of loyalty to ideology and the traditional Communist Party orthodoxy, were thus developed.²⁵⁹

Schoppa observed that governing bodies at the provincial, city, county, and township levels gained immense political and economic initiatives and became powerful in the economy at the expense of the central state bureaucracies.²⁶⁰ Lin demonstrated that a new “bottom-up” development mechanism was taking shape in Guangdong with the gradual demise of the centrally controlled planning system, in which initiatives were made primarily by local governments to solicit foreign and domestic capital, mobilize intensive land resources, and lead the local economy to enter the orbit of the international division of intensive and global competition.²⁶¹

Before 1990, Guangdong had enjoyed policy privileges and achieved rapid economic growth. By the early 1990s, the province relied on Beijing for only 2 percent of its investment capital, down from 80 percent in 1979.²⁶² Guangdong province had become increasingly financially independent from the centre and provincial officials

²⁵⁸ Wang, T. and Leung K.K. (2000) Interest Articulation between the Government and Private Enterprises: A Case Study of the Shenzhen special Economic Zone, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.57.

²⁵⁹ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, p.52.

²⁶⁰ Schoppa, R. K. (2002) *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p.390.

²⁶¹ Lin, G.C.S. (2003) An Emerging Global City Region? Economic and Social Integration between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta, in A.Y. So. (Ed.) *China's Developmental miracle: Origins, Transformations, and Challenges*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, p.102.

²⁶² Guldin, G.E. (2001) *What's a Peasant to do? Village becoming town in Southern China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, p.73.

attempted to liberalize Guangdong even further in 1989 by submitting a report to the central government arguing for reducing state control over the economy to that of a guiding role only. In 1993 the provincial leaders did not agree to meet the tax demands made by then Vice Premier Zhu Rongji until they had a face-to-face meeting with then President Jiang Zemin.²⁶³

In regard to the power flow between the central government and the provinces, power still flowed in a downward direction from the centre to the province. Each higher level ensured that the lower levels observed the directives sent to them.²⁶⁴ The central government also maintained its power through the appointment of all provincial leaders, and retained substantial coercive powers, controlling, for example, crack units of the People's Liberation Army and civilian security agencies, as well as considerable economic power such as the control of such scarce resources as petroleum, electric power and the money supply.²⁶⁵

The central-province tension was demonstrated in dealing with the rampant corruption, major smuggling cases and financial scandals that became increasingly serious in Guangdong province in the 1990s.²⁶⁶ In the late 1990s, Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji attempted to assert greater control of localities by setting quotas that local officials had to meet, from grain production to the numbers of corrupt officials who must be

²⁶³ Zhang, X.C.(2000) Guangdong and the challenges of the Twenty-first Century: The Legal Perspective, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.201.

²⁶⁴ Roberts, E. and Ng, W. (1996) Government and Politics, in B. Hook, (Ed.) *Guangdong: China's Promised Land*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, p.47

²⁶⁵ Schoppa, R. K. (2002) *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p.391.

²⁶⁶ Cheng, J.Y.S. (2000b) Guangdong's Challenge: Organizational Streaming, Economic Restructuring and Anti-corruption, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.20.

arrested.²⁶⁷ In 1999, Zhu Rongji openly urged the Guangdong authorities to seriously crack down on smuggling activities in the province. The provincial authorities felt the pressure from the centre and established a special task force, the Guangdong Smuggling Investigation Bureau (GSIB) on 8 January 1999 as a response. From August 1998 to January 1999, the Guangdong authorities dealt with 3,324 smuggling cases involving goods worth 2.18 billion *yuan*.²⁶⁸ On its own, the exposure of the smuggling racket in Zhanjiang (a seaport in southwest Guangdong) led to the arrest of more than 60 top-ranking cadres.²⁶⁹

2.5 Conclusion

In 1978, Guangdong, the southern gateway of China, became the first province to introduce a market economy in China. With the advantage of being located just next to Hong Kong, Guangdong created a “success story” of economic reform, with increasing GDP and improving living materials.

Guangdong nevertheless mirrored social transformation that emerged in China as a whole. There was a notable change of values orientation in the society. Individual effort and success were no longer taboo. Commitment to the party was weaker among students whilst materialistic culture and consumerism were on the rise. Guangdong also experienced some social problems such as crime and pollution.

However, Guangdong no longer exclusively enjoyed the special policies of the central government, as the market economy programme had increasingly been extended

²⁶⁷ Schoppa, R. K. (2002) *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p.391.

²⁶⁸ Gu, M.K. (2000) Legal Developments and New Challenges in Guangdong Province, J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.247.

²⁶⁹ Cheng, J.Y.S. (2000a) Introduction, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.2.

nationwide in China in recent years, and Guangdong faced keen competition from other provinces such as Shanghai.²⁷⁰ Yet even with central-provincial tensions, Guangdong continued the boom, with annual growth rates averaging 26 percent, catapulting the city into first place as the wealthiest and fastest-growing city in the nation.²⁷¹

Guangdong has long been viewed as a laboratory for testing various reform policies, and the political limits of such reform policies, as well as being a showcase of social and economic transformations triggered by the economic reform. The progressive attitude of cadres in Guangdong is always considered a key factor in the province's spectacular economic growth since 1979.²⁷² Fully recognizing the importance of education in fostering provincial economic growth, local leaders sought during the 1990s to make Guangdong a leading province in cultural and educational development.²⁷³ How could Guangdong secure the fruits of economic reform when facing such challenges as rising individualism, consumerism, and rising crime rate?

In a broader context, although the CCP still claims legitimacy on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, how could the communist ideology keep its predominance in the process of economic reform as China was no longer a closed society and was facing the so-called "crises of three faiths"?

In the following chapter, after an elaboration of Chinese philosophy on morality, there

²⁷⁰ Cheng, J.Y.S. (2000a) Introduction, in J.Y.S. Cheng (Ed.) *Guangdong in the Twenty-first Century*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p.2.

²⁷¹ Lam, W.W.L. (1998) Jiang, Zhu Unite in 'Power Pact' to Ward off Criticism, *South China Morning Post* (6 August, 1998).

²⁷² Cheng, J.Y.S. (1999) Local government's role in a transitional economy: the case of Guangdong, in X.W. Zang, (Ed.) *Introduction to China in the Reform Era*, New York: Nova Science, pp. 9-34.

²⁷³ Mok, K.H. (1997) Retreat of the State: Marketization of Education in the Pearl River Delta, *Comparative Education Review*, 41(3), p.274.

will be an outline of ideopolitical-moral education in China, as well as some of the tactical measures taken in Guangdong to overcome the challenges of ideopolitical-moral education ahead.

Chapter 3

Literature Review:

2. Chinese moral philosophy

3.1 Introduction

Chinese culture has its roots in morality that can be traced back to early Chinese philosophy which started as early as in the ancient Zhou period (6th - 3rd centuries B.C.), a period of intellectual growth concerning the creation of an ideal society. The Warring States' period (403-221 BC) following the intellectual Zhou period was a golden age for Chinese philosophy marked by the flourishing of different schools of thought. Among them, Confucianism has held a paramount position in the development of traditional Chinese culture. It has influenced the Chinese outlook on life, and set the patterns for living and standards of social value for more than two thousand years.²⁷⁴ The following paragraphs will briefly outline the main features of moral belief of Confucianism, its development since the Zhou period, and its adaptation to the recent century. There will also be an historical review of moral education in China. Particular attention will be paid to the difficulties encountered in moral education in the PRC.

3.2 Confucianism: moral-orientation

Confucianism originated from Confucius (551-479 BC) who taught a way of life in which morality occupied a predominant position. Living in a time of moral chaos, Confucius, with a personal goal to restore peace and orderliness to the province, hoped to change the world by teaching. His disciples recorded his teachings in the *Lunyu* (The *Analects*).²⁷⁵ The principles of Confucianism are contained in the canonical *Four Books* and *Five Classics*, handed down by Confucius and his

²⁷⁴ Wang, J.C.F. (1995) *Contemporary Chinese Politics: an Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, pp.1-3.

²⁷⁵ See, <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CHPHIL/CONF.HTM> [Accessed 24 March, 2007]

followers.²⁷⁶

The heart of Confucian teaching is 'morality'. The Confucian model of ideal human character is embodied in the unity of three virtues: "zhi" (wisdom), "ren" (benevolence), and "yong" (courage). Among these three values, "ren" (benevolence) forms the all-embracing theme of the teachings of Confucius.²⁷⁷ The character "ren", with the same pronunciation as the Chinese character for human being, consists of "the symbol for a person" and "the symbol for two" that represents "love," "humanity," and "human-heartedness." To a Confucian, *ren* is a supreme virtue representing innate human qualities at their best: "If the *junzi* (gentleman) forsakes benevolence, wherein can he make a name for himself? The gentleman never deserts benevolence, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal (The *Analects*, 4:5).²⁷⁸

To accomplish "ren," Confucius emphasizes: 'master oneself ('restrain one's desire') and observe propriety (*li*)' in one's speech, behaviours, and in what one sees and hears (The *Analects*, 12:1). Confucius thus emphasizes the concept of "self" (*xiuji*) and the thought of self-cultivation with reverence. Self-cultivation is the root and social conduct is the fruit, which can "bring peace and security to the people" (The *Analects*, 14:42).²⁷⁹ To Confucius, the *junzi* is a sociable but self-reliant moral person who

²⁷⁶ The *Wu Jin* (Five Classics), which originated before the time of Confucius, consist of the *Yi Jin* (Book of Changes), *Shu Jin* (Book of History), *Shi Jin* (Book of Poetry), *Li Ji* (Book of Rites), and *Chun Qiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals). The *Si Shu* (Four Books), compilations of the sayings of Confucius and Mencius and of commentaries by followers on their teachings, are the *Lunyü* (*Analects*), a collection of maxims by Confucius that form the basis of his moral and political philosophy; *Daxue* (The Great Learning) and *Zhongyong* (The Doctrine of the Mean), containing some of Confucius's philosophical utterances arranged systematically with comments and expositions by his disciples; and the *Mencius* (Book of Mencius), containing the teachings of Mencius, one of Confucius's great followers.

²⁷⁷ Liao, W.K. (2000) *The Individual and the Community: a historical analysis of the motivating factors of social conduct*, London: Routledge, p.159.

²⁷⁸ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.28-9.

²⁷⁹ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press,

practises self-reflection. They cultivate their innate moral attributes and distinguish themselves from the *xiaoren* (small man/ordinary people) by their moral excellence.²⁸⁰ In addition, morality not only focuses on just and right principles of interpersonal living but also requires one's commitment to them and the strength of will to put them into practice. A *junzi* was ready to give up his life in face of danger (The *Analects*, 15:9).

Confucius extends the personal ethic of *ren* to human relations, construes *ren* as relations between one person and another. *Ren* is manifested in “*yi*” (righteousness, justice), “*zhong*” (faithfulness to oneself and others, such as family and other institutions), and “*shu*”, or altruism, best expressed in the Confucian golden rule, “do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (The *Analects*, 12:2),²⁸¹ “*xin*” (faithfulness, keeping one's promise to others), and “*xiao*” (filial piety). A *junzi* should possess all these virtues, as he “has morality (righteousness) (*yi*) as his basic stuff, and by observing the rites (*li*) he puts it into practice, by being modest he gives it expression, and by being trustworthy (*xin*) in word he brings it to completion.” (The *Analects*, 15:18)²⁸²

The differentiation between righteousness (*yi*) and profit-making (*li*) is the basic tenet of traditional Confucianism. In Confucian thinking, righteousness is always regarded as superior to profits. A *junzi* regards righteousness as the substance of everything, “it is morality (righteousness) that is considered supreme” (*Lunyu* 17:23). Hence

pp.146-7.

²⁸⁰ Lo, L.N.K. and Man, S.W. (1996) Introduction: Nurturing the Moral Citizen of the Future, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Research and Endeavours in Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, pp.xi-xii.

²⁸¹ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.108-9.

²⁸² Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.152-3.

“righteousness” is regarded as the basic differentiation of *junzi* and *xiaoren*, “the *junzi* is versed in what is moral (righteous). The *xiaoren* is versed in what is profitable” (The *Analects*, 4:16).²⁸³ Confucius stood for “taking only when it was right for him to take” (The *Analects*, 14:13)²⁸⁴ requiring people to give first priority to “righteousness”, that is, to consider if the action they are going to take is correct or not. But if the action is not justified, no matter what riches and honour it would bring, it would be rejected. As the Master said, “wealth and rank attained through immoral means have as much to do with me as passing clouds” (The *Analects*, 7:16).²⁸⁵

Confucius treated man as a social being whose identity is determined by where he stands in relation to others in the web of social relations. Every member has a clearly defined role within this hierarchical social system. Confucius identified five sets of human relationships: ruler and subjects, father and sons, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and friends. Among these five sets of human relationships, three (father and sons, husband and wife, older and younger brothers) are related to the family, indicating Confucius’s emphasis on familial relationships between parents and children, between elder and younger brother, and between husband and wife.

In Confucius’s thinking, the family is the centre of its social system. The concept of *Xiao* (filial piety) has been the root of all virtues in Confucianism and was the primary duty of all Chinese (The *Analects*, 1:2). The written symbol for *Xiao* consists of the graph for old, supported by the graph for son placed underneath which represents *ren*. A filial son should obey his parents during their lifetime, take the best possible care of

²⁸³ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.32-3.

²⁸⁴ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.136-7.

²⁸⁵ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.60-1.

them as they grow older, and perform ritual sacrifices at their grave site or in the ancestral temple after their death. A filial son should also win prestige for the whole family, and most importantly, make sure that the family line would be continued (The *Analects*, 2:5). *Xiao* is regarded as the basis of the family organization, the central virtue of a good person, and the most powerful force operating to maintain the orderliness of society required by the state. Confucius believes that an act of filial piety was not only essential to family harmony, but also a necessary art of ruling a government. A harmonious family can lead to harmonious society and a peaceful state, and thus regards family virtues as the cornerstone of social order and world peace.²⁸⁶

Confucius believes that society is in chaos because standards have deteriorated and people are not living up to their highest ideals. Confucius reasons that if each individual will work more conscientiously to fulfil his role in society and is perfect in his behaviour, society as a whole will likewise be perfect. The core of Confucian teaching is the reestablishment of social order. Confucius' principal concern is with man and human relationships. To Confucius, society is characterized by a hierarchical relationship of different positions. His doctrine of "rectification of names" holds that "let a ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son" (*junjun chenchen fufu zizi*) (The *Analects*, 12:11).²⁸⁷ The five relationships (between ruler and subjects, between father and sons, between husband and wife, between older and younger brothers, and between friends) imply morals of reciprocal propriety which everybody must learn and practise throughout social life.

²⁸⁶ Yao, X.Z. (2000) *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 32-3.

²⁸⁷ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.112-3.

Confucianism affirms accepted values and norms of behaviour in primary social institutions and basic human relationships. Starting from individual and family, people acting rightly could reform and perfect the society. The blueprint of this process was described in “*The Great Learning*,”

*Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thought being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.*²⁸⁸

Politically, Confucius advocates a paternalistic government in which the sovereign is benevolent and honourable and the subjects are respectful and obedient. The ruler should cultivate moral perfection in order to set a good example to the people. Though demanding loyalty of the subjects to the ruler, Confucius emphasizes a reciprocal relationship instead of one-way loyalty between the ruler and his subjects: “the ruler should employ the services of his subjects in accordance with rites. A subject should serve his ruler by doing his utmost” (The *Analects*, 3:19).²⁸⁹ While stressing the commitment to family and society by an individual, Confucius’s thinking, however, denies blind subservience within the family or the nations.

Confucius also develops a concept of “grand unity” (*da tong*)²⁹⁰, an ideal world order. The “grand unity” emphasizes the “common good” and “good faith” with which people in the world would “not labour for their own profit” and “the source of all

²⁸⁸ The translation work refers to Legge, J. (tr.) (1957) *The Four Books: The Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, Confucian Analects, the Works of Mencius*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Press, p.3.

²⁸⁹ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.24-5.

²⁹⁰ Translation of “*da tong*” is borrowed from Yao, X.Z. (2000) *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.170.

greed was stopped”.²⁹¹ Confucianism emphasizes that “all within the four seas are brothers”(The *Analects*,12:5).²⁹²

Confucianism also maintains that people should regard the whole of nature, society and mankind as a systematic object of knowledge and should practise and recognize that man should comply with them first, understand them later, and then transform them in order to utilize them. Emphasizing the importance of harmonious relationship between man and nature, man and society, man and himself, Confucianism puts man’s self-cultivation in the paramount position and takes “moral cultivation” as a starting point to ruling a country and pacifying the whole world. Fairbank and Goldman (1998) conclude that Confucianism is a “mellow humanism”, taking man at the centre of the universe.²⁹³

Mencius (372-289BC) inherits and develops Confucius’s idea of ‘humanity’. He stresses that man has an innate feeling of ‘compassion’ (the beginning of benevolence), ‘the feeling of shame’ (the beginning of righteousness), ‘the feeling of modesty’ (propriety), ‘the feeling of right and wrong’ (wisdom) but nevertheless it does not mean that everyone is born a saint (*Mencius*, 3:6).²⁹⁴ These four principles are motives determining moral conduct when functioning from within; and are virtues of moral characters when habitually expressed to the outside world. Mencius interprets the idea of ‘righteousness’ (*yi*) as justice. He raises righteousness to the

²⁹¹ Li, X.B. (1998) Introduction: Social-Economic Transition and Cultural Reconstruction in China, in J. Zhang and X.B. Li (Eds.) *Social Transition in China*, Lanham: University Press of America, p.5.

²⁹² Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.110-1.

²⁹³ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.53.

²⁹⁴ Mencius (1999) *Mencius* (translated by Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z.), Hunan: Hunan People’s Press and Foreign Language press, pp.72-3. Note: translation works of *Mencius* in this paper are adopted from Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z., unless otherwise stated.

highest level of moral values and advocates the spirit of self-sacrifice in the course of righteousness.

Mencius extends the idea of “humanity” to the ruler. To see intrinsic morality being carried out throughout his country the ruler must be intrinsically good. A ruler’s political success largely depended on the degree of people’s support, “if you (Your Majesty) share your enjoyment with the people, you will be able to unify the whole world” (*Mencius*, 2:1).²⁹⁵ A benevolent government under a righteous ruler shares the pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow of the people and can therefore secure the loyalty and affection of the people. Mencius holds that the ultimate object of government is to exalt the moral personality of the people and argues that a monarch who is harmful to his country like Jie (the last ruler of the Xia dynasty) and Zhou (the last ruler of the Shang dynasty) should be replaced (*Mencius*, 2:8).²⁹⁶

3.2.1 Imperial Confucianism (Han Confucianism)

Though officially replaced by the Legalist school in the Qin dynasty, Confucianism became the official ideology of the Chinese state under Han Wu Di (140-87B.C.), who selected those proficient in the classics to be members of the civil administration.²⁹⁷

After Confucianism gained predominance over all other schools in the West Han dynasty, Confucian ethics gradually became a universal yardstick for behaviour and ideas, an orthodoxy that oriented conduct, thoughts and relationship. In the word of

²⁹⁵ Mencius (1999) *Mencius* (translated by Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z.), Hunan: Hunan People’s Press and Foreign Language press, pp.28-9.

²⁹⁶ Mencius (1999) *Mencius* (translated by Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z.), Hunan: Hunan People’s Press and Foreign Language press, pp.42-3.

²⁹⁷ Wang, J.C.F. (1995) *Contemporary Chinese Politics: an Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, p.4.

Fairbank and Goldman (1998), it was “Imperial Confucianism” which was different from the original teaching of Confucius.²⁹⁸ Dong Zhongshu (c179-104BC), a key Han Confucian scholar develops his theory of “great unification” which means that people all over the world will show their obedience to the reign of the emperor.

Dong preached the “three cardinal guides” (*san gang*) demanding “the ruler guides his subjects, the father guides his son, the husband guides his wife,” and the “five constant virtues” (*wu chang*) (charity, duty towards one’s neighbour, propriety, wisdom, and truth) as the essence of life and the bonds of society. In this way, Confucianism extended the boundaries of moral codes from individual matters to social and political areas, not only providing the state with an ideological format, but also equipping the authority with the standards to judge behaviour and thoughts.²⁹⁹

3.2.2 Neo-Confucianism (Song Confucianism)

Neo-Confucianism emerged in the Song dynasty (960-1279) and concerned the theories of the universe and the origin of human nature. Neo-Confucianism branched out into two schools of philosophy, the *li* (law) school and the *xing* (mind) school. The foremost exponent of the *li* school was Zhu Xi (1130-1200), an eminent thinker second only to Confucius and Mencius in prestige, who established a new philosophical foundation for Confucian teachings by organizing scholarly opinion into a cohesive system. Zhu identifies *li* in humankind with human nature as the underlying law of the myriad things which remains constant and indestructible. One can become a sage when one has investigated and comprehended the universal *li* or natural law inherent in all animate and inanimate objects. The essential attribute of *li*

²⁹⁸ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.62.

²⁹⁹ Yao, X.Z. (2000) *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 34.

is *ren* (benevolence) and the ultimate principle of the universe is thus ethical in character.

Opposed to the *li* (law) school is the *xing* (mind) school of Neo-Confucianism. The chief exponent of the *xing* school are Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1191) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529). Both Lu and Wang believe that the ultimate reality of the universe is not the ultimate supreme law but the mind. One's supreme effort should be to develop "the intuitive knowledge" of the mind, not through the study or investigation of natural law, but through intense thought and calm meditation. Self-retrospection is necessary and indispensable particularly for the reason that the nature is the embodiment of the mind and the mind is the embodiment of moral principles. Like Mencius, Wang believes that man is born with the ability to discriminate between good and evil. Genuine knowledge is conduct, and real knowledge includes practice. When free from the obscuration of selfish aims, the mind is the embodiment of the principles of Heaven.³⁰⁰ In short, both *li* and *xing* schools extended Confucian moralism throughout the universe or human mind.

3.2.3 Modern Neo-Confucianism (Confucianism in the contemporary China)

At the turn of the twentieth century, Confucianism was challenged and blamed for all the illness of China. It was seen as an obstacle to the Chinese people moving forward at a time when traditional China was in terminal dynastic decline as well as being under persistent attack by the powerful Western colonial powers. In the May fourth movement (1919) led by radical liberals such as Chen Duxiu (1879-1962), Li Daizhao (1889-1927), and Hu Shi (1891-1962), one of the slogans was "smashing Confucius' shop" (*dadao kongjia dian*). The movement aimed at establishing a new China of "science and democracy". Another group of intellectuals such as Gu Jiegang

³⁰⁰ Liao, W.K. (2000) *The Individual and the Community: A Historical Analysis of the Motivating Factors of Social Conduct*, London: Routledge, pp.259-260, 267-273.

(1893-1980) introduced a new fashion of bringing Confucian tradition into suspicion and studied the Confucian classics with critical eyes.

The negation of Confucianism by these radical intellectuals actually induced a strong reaction from other leading scholars, opened up a new age for Confucianism, and led to the birth of Modern New Confucian Learning (*xiandai xin ruxue*)³⁰¹ which reclaimed the value and spirit of the Confucian way of life in modern times. The pioneers of Modern Neo-Confucianism included Xiong Shili (1885-1968), Liang Shuming (1893-1988), and Feng Yulan (1895-1990). Xiong and Liang followed and developed Lu-Wang's teaching of Song Confucianism on the heart/mind, and combined it with western philosophies of life to create a "New Learning of the Heart/Mind" (*xin xinxue*); while Feng combined Zhu's Learning of Principle with western rational philosophies to form a "New Learning of Principles" (*xin lixue*).

Confucianism received other blows after the establishment of the PRC when it was condemned as the root of all China's "feudal evils".³⁰² Official rejection nearly made Confucianism vanish in the mainland, except when it was quoted as a counter-example of revolutionary spirit. The anti-Confucius campaign reached its climax during the Cultural Revolution (1967-77).

As Confucianism was denounced in the mainland, the platform of Modern Neo-Confucian learning moved to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the USA. On the first day of 1958, Tang Junyi (1909-1978), Mou Zongsan (1909-1995), Zhang Junmai

³⁰¹ "Modern Neo-Confucianism" (Modern New Confucianism) is the term adopted by Yao Xinzong [Yao, X.Z. (2000) *An Introduction to Confucianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.251] It was also called "New Confucianism", "Contemporary New Confucianism" and so forth.

³⁰² Song, X.L. (2003) *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The "Culture Craze" and New Confucianism*, in J. Makeham, (Ed.) *New Confucianism: a critical examination*, New York: Palgrave, p.86.

(1886-1969) and Xu Fuguan (1903–1982), published a document entitled “A Declaration of Chinese culture to the Scholars of the World” (*wei zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan*) to urge Western and Chinese scholars to understand Chinese culture. They stated that the core of Chinese culture was the Confucian Learning of the human heart/mind and nature (*xin xing*), and Confucian tradition could make a great contribution to the unity and harmony of the world (*tianxia yijia*). These scholars also propagated Confucianism by reorganizing Confucian institutions such as the Academy of New Asia, Hong Kong, and published a large number of articles and books. Their works emphasized the return to the true spirit of Confucian Learning and the adaptation of Confucian tradition to a new era.

The Modern Neo-Confucian movement continued with its third generation scholars such as Tu Weiming (1940-) and Yu Yingshi (1930-). They examine and re-examine the positive and negative effects of Confucianism in the contemporary era, adapt traditional values to modern life, and strive to establish healthy interaction between the Chinese tradition and other great traditions in the world.³⁰³ In recent years, it has become legitimized in mainstream discussions of tradition and westernization.

There are growing signs of revival of Confucianism in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution. Tu Weiming’s visit to Beijing in 1985 has been regarded as the beginning of “the return of New Confucianism to its homeland.”³⁰⁴ By the late 1980s, Confucius had become “the great thinker, educationist, statesman, philosopher, and

³⁰³ Yao, X.Z. (2000) *An Introduction to Confucianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.253-260.

³⁰⁴ Liang Y.S. (1998) Qiantu weibu di fenghuang: xin ruxue yu dangdai zhongguo [Uncertain Phoenix: New Confucianism and Contemporary China], in M.H. Li (Ed.) *Rujia sixiang zai xiandai dongya: zonglun pian* [Confucianism in Modern East Asia: Conclusion], Taipei: Planning Office of Chinese Literature and Philosophy Research Centre of the Academia Sinica, pp.108-110.

historian.” Academic research projects such as the Studies on Modern New Confucian Thought (*xindai xin rujia sichao yanjiu*) were funded under the national “seventh five-year plan” for the social sciences.

Official discourse on the study of Confucianism also changed. In 1987, for the first time in the history of the PRC an international symposium on Confucianism was held. Vice-Premier of the State Council, Gu Mu (1914-), addressed the conference and officially declared Confucianism to be an element in “the crystallization of national Chinese culture”. In October 1989, in a symposium on Confucianism celebrating the 2540th anniversary of the [putative] birth of Confucius, Gu Mu stressed that “Confucius and Confucian school have played a very positive role in Chinese history, and have exerted a deep influence upon East Asia”.³⁰⁵

3.3. Moral education in China: A historical review

As mentioned before, Chinese culture has long roots in morality. Moral education has been a core element of family, school, and social education in Chinese society regardless of changes in social and political systems. However, the emphases and the instruments used varied with time. The following paragraphs will give an account on the main features of moral education implemented in ancient China, Nationalist (GMD) China and communist China.

3.3.1 Confucian teaching in ancient China

Confucius viewed man as perfectible and educable and assured the value of education in shaping people’s thoughts and behaviour. Confucius said, “Men are close to one another by nature. They drift apart through behaviour that is constantly repeated.”

³⁰⁵ Song, X.L. (2003) *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The “Culture Craze” and New Confucianism*, in J. Makeham, (Ed.) *New Confucianism: a critical examination*, New York: Palgrave, pp.86-7.

(The *Analects*, 17:2).³⁰⁶ Though maintaining an innate human goodness, Mencius reminded us that human beings had only the embryo of goodness at birth but needed cultivation and growth; “when you seek you can get it, but when you let go you will lose it” (*Mencius*, 13:3).³⁰⁷ Humanity can be preserved by the preservation of a child’s original mind and moral sense, and by the development and nourishment of his innate moral ideas.³⁰⁸ In Confucian teaching, a harmonious society is formed when people understand the “correct” conduct demanded by hierarchical social relationships and act accordingly.³⁰⁹

Confucian teaching was implemented through formal *shishu* (ancient Chinese school) education. In *shishu*, students learnt from Confucian classics such as the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*. Confucius himself was a teacher for more than three thousand students. To Confucius, all people can attain sagehood by imitating the exemplary behaviour of sages. Mencius further stresses that men can be led in the right path through moral cultivation, not only through their own efforts at self-cultivation but also through emulating models.³¹⁰ In Confucian teachings, Emperor Yao (2337-2258 BC) and Emperor Shun (2258-2211 BC), legendary leaders of prehistoric China, were always extolled as the morally perfect sage-kings for their benevolence (*Mencius*, 13: 46).³¹¹

³⁰⁶ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.170-1.

³⁰⁷ Mencius (1999) *Mencius* (translated by Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z.), Hunan: Hunan People’s Press and Foreign Language press, pp.290-1.

³⁰⁸ Liao, W.K. (2000) *The Individual and the Community: A Historical Analysis of the Motivating Factors of Social Conduct*, London: Routledge, p.169.

³⁰⁹ Lieberthal, K. (2004) *Governing China: from revolution through reform*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, pp.7-8.

³¹⁰ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.52.

³¹¹ Mencius (1999) *Mencius* (translated by Zhao, Z.T., Zhang, W.T. and Zhou, D.Z.), Hunan: Hunan People’s Press and Foreign Language press, pp.314-5.

In China, family education had long played an equally important role with school education in moral cultivation. A well-known example is the mother of Mencius who broke the shuttle from the loom so as to teach young Mencius to work hard. When she knew her son was apt to act as the neighbouring people would do, she changed her residence three times on his account, and finally moved to a little cottage close by a public school which at once attracted Mencius to learn industriously. Mencius thus built up in his early years his personal character under the inspiring influence of his mother.

3.3.2 Secular Confucian teaching: from classic to rhyme text

Following the widespread use of *shishu* education, there was a rise of preparative literacy texts (*mengshu*) like the *Three Character Classic* and the *Thousand Character Essay* which helped to popularize Confucian thinking among children and provided children with Confucian exemplary deeds to emulate. The first of the famous “vulgar (secular) Confucian texts”³¹² is the *Thousand Character Essay* which was written in the South Dynasty (220-589). It provided children with knowledge of geography, and agriculture, as well as moral guidance with four-character rhymes. The *Thousand Character Essay* fosters such Confucian values as filial piety (“*xiao dang jie li*”), loyalty (“*zhong ze jin ming*”), and hardworking (“*cun yin shi jing*”).

The *Three Character Classic* was written in the Song dynasty (960-1279). The classic has been a very popular and influential children’s book on general knowledge including astronomy, geography, literature, history, literary acquisition and moral education. It has a total of 1,416 words, all in three-character rhymes, concerning filial piety, brotherhood and kinship through “five virtues (*wuchang*)” and “ten

³¹² Chen, L. (1995) *Mengxue yu shisu rujia lunli* [Primary Education and Vulgar Confucian Ethics in Ancient China], *Guoxue Yanjiu* [Studies in Sinology], Issue 3, pp.27-34.

obligations (*shiyi*)”, and loyalty and respect to the sovereign with “three bonds (*sangang*).”

The classic stresses the importance of education in child rearing. It inherits Mencius’s idea and maintains that men are by nature good. Their nature is the same but their habits become widely different. Only teaching can prevent human nature from deteriorating (*ren bu xue/ bu zhi yi*). The right way to teach is to attach the utmost importance to thoroughness. Through learning “*Four Books*”, “*The Six Classical Works*” and the works of ancient philosophers, one can enrich one’s knowledge, prepare oneself for governing the country, bring happiness to the populace, honour one’s parents and ancestors, become affluent and honour one’s descendants and make one’s name go down in history. The classic quotes Confucius and Su Qin who studied diligently as models of learning.

The lingering three-character rhymes made the classic an easily-memorized text for children. The classic was adopted in school and family by successive dynasties. The text was annotated, added and amended until the Qing dynasty. The classic has also attracted international attention and was included in the list for children’s moral education by the United Nation Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in October, 1990. This was described as a great boost for China as well as for mankind in general. In the same year, Singaporean Educational Press published the English-translation of the *Three Character Classic*.³¹³

3.3.3 Moral education in Nationalist (GMD) China

In 1911, the imperial Qing dynasty was overthrown by the Bourgeois Revolution

³¹³ Gao, Q.M. (1995) *Zhongguo xiaoxue sixiangpinde jiaoxueshi [A History of Ideomoral Education in Chinese Primary Schools]*, Jinan: Shandong Education Press, p.103.



which was led by Sun Yatsen in the 1911 revolution. The revolution not only ended the imperial dynastic political system which had lasted for over 2,000 years with the concept of a “democratic republic” but also brought about a modification of moral education from traditional Confucian teaching. The subsequent May Fourth Movement (1919) was not only an anti-imperialist protest but also an attempt to redefine China’s culture as a valid part of the modern world. Confucianism was branded as decadent and reactionary and lost its hold on the nation.

In 1923, an Outline of the New Curriculum, ‘Civics Education’, was issued. The course was strongly influenced by Western notions of democracy, which valued individual participation in social affairs and was concerned for social equality.

However, the ‘Civics Education’ course was replaced with ‘Party Duty’ which emphasised centralised politics, a military monarchy and obedient citizens in the name of nationalism, civil rights and people's livelihood in a Curriculum Criterion for Primary and Secondary Schools issued in August 1929, after the GMD took power in 1927 (Guomindang, 1934).³¹⁴ The curriculum was criticised for its authoritarianism and the ‘Civics Education’ course was reintroduced in 1932, with some amendments such as bringing up to date general knowledge of everyday law and morality, and adding military training lessons to reinforce the element of nationalism.

Moral education in the Nationalist regime was politicized as ‘a means to justify and reinforce the rule of Guomindang.’ The Civics course demanded that students be equipped with political, economic and military knowledge, and inspired to love their

³¹⁴ Guomindang's Central Ministry of Education (1934) *The First Educational Yearbook*, Beijing: Kaiming Publishing House.

country, develop the skills needed to serve society in wartime (the war with Japan in 1937) and become obedient to the party. Local history and geography were given priority in textbooks; material about war was added for the duration of the emergency.³¹⁵

3.3.4 Ideopolitical-moral education in “pre-reform China”³¹⁶

Politicization of moral education continued in the PRC regime. As mentioned previously, the term “moral education” in the PRC has not purely meant moral qualities but a mixture of moral, political and ideological qualities. Moral education is always closely associated with politics in China and is regarded essentially as a means of political socialisation, in transmitting ideological and political values not only to the students, but also to the populace at large.³¹⁷ Ruscoe suggests that revolutionary societies create new socialist man by means of two processes: mobilization and formation. Among them, the goals of formation are to be achieved in large measure through education.³¹⁸

3.3.4.1 Formal ideopolitical-moral education in schools

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the CCP sought total control of the population and made ideologically justified attempts at constructing politically directed societies through the Soviet ‘totalitarian’ moral education.³¹⁹ In the Maoist period, moral education was claimed to have “served the masses, upheld the dignity and independence of China against imperialist aggression and replaced feudal superstitions with scientific and historical truth”. The Central Ministry of Education

³¹⁵ Chen, Y.G. and Reid, I. (2002) Citizenship Education in Chinese schools: Retrospect and Prospect, *Research in Education*, (May 2002), No. 67, pp.60-1.

³¹⁶ Pre-reform China is also known as Maoist China (1949-1978).

³¹⁷ Lee, W.O. and Ho, C.H. (2005) Ideopolitical shifts and changes in moral education policy in China, *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(4) (December 2005), pp.417-435.

³¹⁸ Ruscoe, G. C. (2001) Moral Education in Revolutionary Society, *Theory into Practice*, 14(4), p.260.

³¹⁹ Heater, D. (2004) *A History of Education for Citizenship*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, p.152.

initiated a curricular reform that stressed: (1) reinforcement of political-ideological education; (2) the importance of productive labour; (3) development of specialized technical fields needed for national construction; (4) Marxism-Leninist thought and theory; (5) uniformity and centralization.³²⁰

The school is always an agent of political socialization.³²¹ Political education in China started in kindergarten. Mao viewed ideopolitical-moral education as the ultimate aim of schooling. When the CCP completed the nationalization of education in 1956, all private schools were converted into public schools under the leadership of the Ministry of Education of the State Council (China National Institute of Education Research, 1995). The central government exerted tight control over schools through centralized financing, provision and management of education³²² and the regulation of teaching materials and textbooks.³²³

In China, political study was enforced at all levels in the schools in order to impose officially held communist ideology. The curriculum contained a heavy emphasis on political and ideological value formation.³²⁴ Shortly after the founding of the PRC, a course of “Political Knowledge” (*zhengzhi changshi*) was modified from Guomindang’s Civic Education course. The course emphasized “five lovings” (“loving motherland”, “loving people”, “loving labour”, “loving sciences”, and

³²⁰ Meyer, J.F. (1998) A subtle and silent transformation: Moral Education in Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China, in W.K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, and Y. Tomoda (Eds.) *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West*, Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, p.120.

³²¹ Dawson, R. et al. (1977) *Political Socialization*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, pp.137-141.

³²² Mok, K.H. (2001) Education Policy Reform, in L. Wong and N. Flynn (Eds.) *The Market in Chinese Social Policy*, Houndmills, England: Palgrave, p.91.

³²³ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.362.

³²⁴ Wang, J.C.F. (1995) *Contemporary Chinese Politics: an Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, p.290.

“loving public assets”).³²⁵ Typically, “Political Knowledge” included courses on Marxist Philosophy, Political Economy, and the History of World Communist Movement.³²⁶

Political education was also disseminated through the teaching of usual subjects such as “language and literature” (*yuwen*), and mathematics. Texts for language and literature were politically-inclined, introducing Chinese civilization, the achievement of the CCP (*Lovely motherland [keai di zuguo]*) and models who helped establish the PRC such as Chang Yongfen (*Chang Yongfen*), and Li Shunda (*Labour model Li Shunda [Laodong mofan Li Shunda]*). Selection of texts was also influenced by political events. For example, language texts issued during the movement to Resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea (1950-3) like *an oath of a warrior (yige zhanshi di shiyan)* and *to the dearest uncle volunteer (xiangei qinaidi zhiyuanjun shushu)* stressed the love of PLA (People’s Liberation Army) and motherland among children.³²⁷

Besides the teaching of usual subjects, the Ministry of Education promulgated a set of “Rules of Conduct” for primary school and middle school students to disseminate communist morality, raise the political consciousness of the students, develop the spirit of collectivism, and cultivate good habits and character in students.³²⁸

Moral education was also implemented through Young Pioneer activities for students

³²⁵ Gao, Q.M. (1995) *Zhongguo xiaoxue sixiangpinde jiaoxueshi [A History of Ideomoral Education in Chinese Primary Schools]*, Jinan: Shandong Education Press, pp.360-2.

³²⁶ Lin, J. (1993) *Education in Post-Mao China*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, p.3.

³²⁷ Gao, Q.M. (1995) *Zhongguo xiaoxue sixiangpinde jiaoxueshi [A History of Ideomoral Education in Chinese Primary Schools]*, Jinan: Shandong Education Press, pp.360, 366.

³²⁸ Meyer, J.F. (1998) A subtle and silent transformation: Moral Education in Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China, in W.K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, and Y. Tomoda (Eds.) *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West*, Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, pp.120-1.

between the ages of 14 and 28. The obligations of League members included the following:

- (1) to advocate and carry out Party policy;
- (2) to keep revolutionary vigilance;
- (3) to closely link with the masses, be humble and learn from the people, and
- (4) be critical and self-critical.³²⁹

3.3.4.2 Mass campaigns

In China, the society was viewed as ‘a big classroom’ of political education where the state assumed the role of an educator who inculcated ‘correct’ (socialist) ideas among the masses through political campaigns, and recurring broad-based movements with the structure of mass organizations (Chapter 2). To uphold moral and social order, the CCP uncovered and removed victims who were of doubtful loyalty in a process of thought reform during the political campaigns.³³⁰ Land reform (1949-1953) was one of the campaigns against counter-revolutionaries in the 1950s. The campaign involved a process of public meetings, denunciations and arrests, sometimes followed by executions. The campaigns ferreted out a few GMD supporters who were trying to sabotage the new regime but terrorized millions of Chinese by labelling them GMD sympathizers in order to remove an alternative focus of loyalty to the regime. In Guangdong between October 1950 and August 1951, over 140,000 were arrested and 28,332 were executed.³³¹

The CCP attempted to create a new “socialist person” through ideological indoctrination. Traditional Confucianism was officially denied. Few Confucian classics were published, and only for criticism purposes. Official campaigns against

³²⁹ Lawrence, R. (2000) Education in China: Preparation for citizenship, *Asian Affairs*, 31(3) (October 2000), p.275.

³³⁰ Fairbank, J.K. and Goldman, M. (1998) *China: a new history*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp.350, 361.

³³¹ Lawrence, A. (1998) *China under communism*, London; New York: Routledge, p.13.

Confucianism were organized in the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially during the Cultural Revolution. The family system, much revered in the Confucian past as the central social institution, was also deemphasized.

Mass media played an important role in the propaganda for political campaigns. As Chang (1991) observed, “when the Chinese Communist Party launched a new policy, they accompanied it with a propaganda drive to help put the new policy across.”³³² Newspaper editorials, radio broadcasts, television, and public loudspeakers all carried the messages written by Mao and sent down from the Central Committee. Sometimes, groups of workers and students were organized to carry the campaign slogans in parades in the city streets so as show their support for the campaign.³³³

3.3.4.3 Slogans

A slogan is a short, cogent, memorable phrase or sentence that typically expresses a feeling, belief, values, or moral position. Slogans are always regarded as an effective means of inculcating values, even in Western countries.³³⁴ In the Maoist period, slogans were widely used, particularly when a political campaign was launched in order to express the official policies. For example, “to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, to protect the motherland [*Kangmei yuanchao baojia weiguo*]” during the movement to Resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea (1950-3), “*Learning from Lei Feng [xiang Lei Feng xuexi]*”(1963), “*both red and expert [youhong youzhuan]*” to stress the importance of fostering those who were ideologically correct but also had expertise in the 1960s, and “*to get rid of the ‘four olds’³³⁵ and build up the ‘four*

³³² Chang, J. (1991) *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, New York: Simon & Schuster, p.192.

³³³ Tsai, W.H. (2001) *Class Struggle and Deviant Labelling in Mao's China: becoming enemies of the people*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, pp. 117-8.

³³⁴ Kirschenbaum, H. (1995) *100 ways to enhance values and morality in schools and youth settings*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, pp.108-9.

³³⁵ The “four olds” are the old thought, old culture, old norms, and old habits, see Zheng, W.S. (2000) *Kouhao shidai [An era of slogan]*, Tianjin: Tianjin People's Press, p.92.

news³³⁶ [*po sijiu, lisixin*])” during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).³³⁷

3.3.4.4 Role models

From the 1950s onwards, the CCP promoted moral role models who were loyal and selfless, and had generally done an excellent job of carrying out the goals of communism in mass campaigns through the press and radio or other propaganda apparatus.³³⁸ Lei Feng was extensively used as a model soldier for his loyalty to Mao Zedong and the CCP. The CCP published his diary to show that he was diligent, hardworking, self-effacing, and willing to serve the people and the party. He stayed up late to wash his comrades’ socks and even sacrificed his life in carrying out his duty. The CCP launched a nation-wide “learning from Lei Feng” campaign to exemplify his devotion and contribution to the party after Mao’s calligraphy call for the nation to “learn from comrade Lei Feng” appeared on the front page of the *Renmin Ribao* (*People Daily*) on 5 March, 1963. Students throughout China in the early 1960s were exhorted to be “little Lei Fengs.” Competitions were held to see who could do the most socialist-style good deeds.³³⁹

Models were used extensively to address political needs in various periods in the history of socialist China. The models were integrated into the school curriculum and into the mandatory political self-study classes in offices and factories; they appeared on billboards and were heard over loudspeakers.³⁴⁰

³³⁶ The “four news” are the new thought, new culture, new norms, and new habits, see Zheng, W.S. (2000) *Kouhao shidai [An era of slogan]*, Tianjin: Tianjin People’s Press, p.92.

³³⁷ Slogans are quoted from Zheng, W.S. (2000) *Kouhao shidai [An era of slogan]*, Tianjin: Tianjin People’s Press, pp.8-11, 50-2, 92-4.

³³⁸ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.213-4.

³³⁹ Reed, G.G. (1996) The Multiple Dimensions of a Unidimensional Role Model: Lei Feng, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, pp.245-6.

³⁴⁰ Barrett, R.E. and Li, F. (1999) *Modern China*, Boston: McGraw-Hill College, pp.38-40.

3.3.4.5 Ideopolitical-moral education through children's literature

Children's literature published in the PRC was written to shape children's moral values and mould their characters. With strong political, moral, and ideological messages, children's literature became a weapon for exposing the evils of a sick society and fighting foreign invasion and to train loyal revolutionary fighters and hardworking revolutionary constructors.³⁴¹ Biographies of heroes were thus important resources to imprint moral standards onto the young minds in Maoist China. Children's literature made revolutionary models, such as Lei Feng, accessible to children. Most contemporary stories were written with explicit, didactic themes so that characters modelled desired personality traits: to do good things without letting other people know, not to expect reward for one's good deeds, and not to be daunted by hardship.³⁴²

3.3.5 Ideopolitical-moral education in "post-reform China"

China entered a new age of ideological development at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee held in 1978. The central government noticed the destruction of the Cultural Revolution and the need to respect knowledge and talents. The official strategic policy moved from politics to economic reconstruction.

Ideopolitical-moral education continued through school education. Independent timetabled courses of Ideology and Moral Character (*sixiang pinde ke*) for primary schools and Ideology and Politics (*sixiang zhengzhi ke*) for secondary schools³⁴³ were

³⁴¹ Bi, L.J. (2003) Capitalist Bears and Socialist Modernization: Chinese Children's Literature in the Post-Mao Periods, *Children's Literature in Education*, 34(1) (March 2003), p.58.

³⁴² Louie, B.Y.Y. (1996) Children's literature in the People's Republic of China, *The Reader Teacher*, 49(6), (March 1996), pp.494-5.

³⁴³ There is one weekly period in each grade for Ideology and Moral Character while two weekly periods for Ideology and Politics course, see <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/countries/countryDossier/TChina.pdf> [Accessed 18 December, 2005].

officially implemented in 1981 and 1992 respectively.³⁴⁴ The course on Ideology and Moral Character emphasized the education of “five lovings” and behaviour such as honesty, bravery, and working hard.³⁴⁵ For the course of Ideology and Politics, content areas included Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong’s Thought, political knowledge and legal education.³⁴⁶

The shift of national focus from class struggle to the Four Modernizations did not necessarily mean a removal of political campaigns from China. Mass campaigns continued to be launched, though milder in political tone. For example, the CCP launched “Five Stresses and the Four Beauties”³⁴⁷ in 1981 as a means of redeeming the destruction of moral education during the Cultural Revolution and upholding socialist and communist thought that met the needs of a new era and was a means of maintaining social order (CPC Central Committee 1982).

Nevertheless, the CCP made some adaptations in its propaganda work. Traditional revolutionary models such as Lei Feng were replaced by new models such as Zhang Haidi, who were heralded by the party as “new Lei Feng in the reform era”. Zhang was a paralyzed 28-year-old woman in 1983 from Shandong province. She was eager to pursue knowledge and ready to help others by contributing her share to serving the people with heart and soul. Her unique individuality was reflected in her love of people, her hope for the future, her attention to fashion, and her recreational

³⁴⁴ Liu, B. (1995) *Xiaoxue jiaoxue quanshu: sixiang pinde juan* [A collection of Primary Education: Ideology and Moral Character], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, p.3; Zhao, A.H. et al. (1998) (Eds.) *Zhengzhi jiaoyu xue* [Political Education], Beijing: Educational Science Press, pp.12-3.

³⁴⁵ Liu, B. (1995) *Xiaoxue jiaoxue quanshu: sixiang pinde juan* [A collection of Primary Education: Ideology and Moral Character], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, p.6.

³⁴⁶ Zhao, A.H. et al. (1998) (Eds.) *Zhengzhi jiaoyu xue* [Political Education], Beijing: Educational Science Press, pp.29-30.

³⁴⁷ The “five Stresses” are the stresses on decorum, manners, hygiene, discipline and morals. The “Four Beauties” are the beautification of the mind, language, behavior and the environment.

interests.³⁴⁸ In addition, the CCP absorbed and adapted the MTV as an effective propaganda channel for the party's policies in the 1990s. The communist government also sponsored national karaoke contests on traditional folk songs in 1994, to resist the influx of Hong Kong and Taiwan popular culture.³⁴⁹

Literature continued to play an important role in ideopolitical-moral education in the reform era but the emphasis shifted. Bi (2003) analyzed a children's book, *Stories for 365 Nights (365 Ye Gushi)*³⁵⁰ and found that 'studying hard for the modernization of the motherland' through science and technology had been given the top priority in moral education. In addition, the ideas of sharing, collectivism and team work were emphasized to educate the 'only child' in the family. In contrast, terms such as 'revolution', 'communism', and 'socialism' disappeared from the stories.³⁵¹

3.3.5.1 Challenges faced by ideopolitical-moral education

Rosen (1989) observed that ideopolitical-moral education in the post-Mao era had failed in "controlling the youth". This was an example of the inability of the CCP to persuade the students to leave the Square during the students' demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989³⁵². The following paragraphs will explore the challenges faced by ideopolitical-moral education in the reform era.

3.3.5.1.1 Irrelevance of communist ideology to the society

Numerous surveys conducted before the 1989 students' demonstrations had already

³⁴⁸ Zhang, M. (1999) From Lei Feng to Zhang Haidi: Changing images of model youth in the Post-Mao reform era, in R. Kluver and J.H. Powers (Eds.) *Civic discourse, civil society, and Chinese communities*, Stanford: Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp.111-123.

³⁴⁹ Liu, K. (2004) *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p.25.

³⁵⁰ Lu, B. (1986) (Ed.) *365 ye gushi [stories for 365 nights]*, Vol. 1, Shanghai: Shanghai Youth and Children Press.

³⁵¹ Bi, L.J. (2003) Capitalist Bears and Socialist Modernization: Chinese Children's Literature in the Post-Mao Period, *Children's Literature in Education*, 34(1) (March 2003), pp.57-73.

³⁵² Rosen, S. (1989) Editor's Introduction, *Chinese Education*, 22(3), p.3.

shown the difficulties of ideological and political education. There is a downward trend in the degree to which students are interested in political matters. A sample survey conducted by the Beijing's College Students' Ideological Condition Investigation Group reported that 23.1 percent of respondents held that they "did not necessarily have to foster socialist ideals". 22.7 percent of respondents regarded Marxism as only one of many disciplines and should be treated no differently from other disciplines. Yang et al. (1990), based on their investigation on college students in Beijing, reported that only 4.2 percent said that ideological and moral standards were crucial. Practice and practical training are core elements of ideopolitical-moral education in China. However, students considered it as "wasting time" to participate in the programme. Students further stressed China's economic backwardness. They doubted the CCP leadership and maintained that "the motherland is behind Taiwan". They also had little regard for the traditional concepts such as diligence and thrift. In contrast, they were in favour of democracy, as in the West.³⁵³

A sample survey from Zhejiang province also reported that politics were no longer a hot issue of general concern among university students. Only 20.5 percent of respondents indicated that they paid attention to radio or television news reports of the National People's Congress or Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

In contrast, doing business and making money became the new hot issue for students in the 1990s. A survey conducted in Shanxi province indicated the current big interest among university students was commerce. Those who could run business had the favourable attention of their peers. A study conducted in Shanghai and Shanxi

³⁵³ Yang, J.Y. et al.(1990) Exploring the Questions of College Students' Road of Growth, *Chinese Education*, 23(1), pp.10-19.

provinces reported that students were extremely concerned about job allocations after they graduated, and in choosing their professions, they were more and more concerned about their own “concrete” interests.³⁵⁴

A survey of middle school ideological and political workers in Beijing Municipality in 1987 illustrates a variety of difficulties of implementing ideological and political education in the middle schools. For example, the students had a great capacity for absorbing information; they were active in thinking and quick to change but lost in ideological awareness. Students were also blamed for placing too much emphasis on material benefits but lacking a vision of the revolution. Because their theory of ideological and political education did not calibrate with reality, students would not listen when they were being taught principles. Other causes leading to weak ideological and political education included the passive attitude of teachers towards their ideological and political work, insufficient support from their superiors, and uncooperative parents.³⁵⁵

Some authors argued that communist ideology was no longer relevant to Chinese society and no one truly believed it.³⁵⁶ Post-Mao political ideology was downplayed and treated only at face value. According to Li et al. (1989), the position that ideological and political work should occupy was questionable after the ideas of “taking class struggle as the key link” and “letting politics take command” had been criticised when the focus of the party’s work had shifted to the modernization. The status of ideopolitical-moral education had also been undermined by the chaos arising

³⁵⁴ Li, X.M. (1990) New Hot Issues for China’s University Students, *Chinese Education*, 23(1), pp.84-85.

³⁵⁵ Li, G, Ren, Y, and Yao, H.L. (1999) An Investigative Survey of Conditions among Middle School Ideological and Political Workers in Beijing, *Chinese Education*, 22(3), pp.99-103.

³⁵⁶ Li, C. (1997) *Rediscovering China: Dynamics and Dilemmas of Reform*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp.305-7.

from the Cultural Revolution. A mentality had formed in society that doing such work was merely promoting “the big lie”.³⁵⁷ Even post-Mao Chinese leaders no longer believed in the ideology but relied on pragmatic considerations and non-ideological resources for solutions to the problems they confronted.³⁵⁸

3.3.5.1.2 Inadequacy of ideopolitical-moral education in face of economic liberalization

As the market economy developed, more and more people internalized a new set of values, notably the acceptance of individual striving and market competition. Notions such as personal interest, material incentives, differential rewards, economic efficiency and market distribution were in the ascendant.³⁵⁹ In contrast, belief in communism was found to be declining among the people, especially the youth, as exemplified by the so-called Shekou Storm (*Shekou fengbao*) that began in February 1988 and lasted more than eight months. Shekou is an industrial district in the Shenzhen SEZ of Guangdong province. The “storm” started with a symposium on 13 January, 1988 held by the local branch of the Communist Youth Leagues (CYL) at Shekou with about 70 Shekou youths featuring “experts” on youth education from the Beijing-based China Research Centre for the Ideological Education of Youth. The discussion began with praise for the Party’s “correct” decisions on the policy of reform and opening-up by one of the speakers, Qu Xiao. Qu mentioned certain people had come to Shenzhen with the sole objective of tapping the wealth created by others and said they were only a small group of “gold diggers.” A young man then challenged, “What is wrong with gold diggers?” This stimulated a heated debate on ‘gold diggers’. While Qu talked about young people’s duty to the motherland, a

³⁵⁷ Li, Z.X. et al. (1989) The Current Conditions of those involved in Ideological and Political Education of College and University Students, and a Proposal, *Chinese Education*, 22(3), pp.20-1.

³⁵⁸ Zhang, W.W. (1996) *Ideology and Economic Reform under Deng Xiaoping 1978-1993*, London: Kegan Paul International, p.7.

³⁵⁹ Mok, K.H. (2001) Education Policy Reform, see L. Wong and N. Flynn (Eds.) *The Market in Chinese Social Policy*, Houndmills, England: Palgrave, p.91.

young man replied that the love for motherland should be in concrete activities rather than empty talk. Another speaker, Peng Qingyi, asked that young man in a threatening tone: "Dare you tell me your name?" The young man immediately presented his business card. Other participants laughed and said, "There is definitely no market for you people to come to propagandize."

The debate continued after the symposium. The speakers criticized "the wrong words of a few young men" in their report but the Shekou CYL committee defended themselves by saying that they had to respect the thoughts of the youths. On 1 February 1998, the local newspaper *Shekou Bulletin News* published the story. The "Shekou incident" immediately caught the attention of society. The two sides continued to debate in the following months. Of particular importance was that the *People's Daily* opened a special column for the discussion. Moreover, in January 1989, a collection of 109 letters and articles from newspapers nation-wide was published by the Chinese Press Publishing House. Throughout the whole heated discussion, opinions were diverse not only among discussants but also inside the Party's mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*.

The "storm" actually reflected the emergence of pluralistic interests and ideas along with the rapid progression of the market economy which challenged the format and content and even the legitimacy of the conventional political education of the CCP.³⁶⁰ It also indicated the youth in the SEZs, like Shekou, did not blindly follow the official indoctrination and bravely defended their own stand, for example, their ways of expressing love for the motherland.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Xu, L. (1995). The "Shekou Storm": Changes in the Mentality of Chinese Youth Prior to Tiananmen, *The China Quarterly*, (June 1995), Issue 42, pp. 541-572.

³⁶¹ Liu, J.L. (2003) *Qingshaonian jiazhi guan jiaoyu yanjiu* [Research on Adolescents Values

Mainland moral educators like Lu and Gao (2004) noticed the unpopularity of the course on Ideology and Moral Character in primary schools. It was the least welcomed subject.³⁶² Lu and Gao (2004) observed that the moral education curriculum was too far away from children's own lives and embodied 'top-down' values and rules. It hardly considered the inner logic of children's moral development, and thus was not helpful to students' learning. The course was undertaken in traditional ways, with teachers talking while students were reciting the textbooks from memory. Examination was used as a means of assessing and controlling students' learning. Students had to memorize the moral 'knowledge' in the texts, but the information memorized was not well understood and was too remote from everyday life. Thus the students were not interested in the texts.³⁶³

Some commentators attributed the inadequacies of ideopolitical-moral education to the passive attitude of schools. Schools were also criticized for relaxing political education, lowering their requirements for students' political standards, and trying to satisfy the wishes of the students.³⁶⁴

Guangdong moral educator Zhang Chenggan, one of the editorial board members of the 3,4,5 literature, also called for reform in ideopolitical-moral education³⁶⁵.

Education], Guangzhou: Guangdong Education Press, pp.58-9.

³⁶² Lu, J. and Gao, D.S. (2004) New directions in the moral education curriculum in Chinese primary schools, *Journal of Moral Education*, 33(4) (December 2004), p.495.

³⁶³ Lu, J. and Gao, D.S. (2004) New directions in the moral education curriculum in Chinese primary schools, *Journal of Moral Education*, 33(4) (December 2004), pp.496-7.

³⁶⁴ Yang, J.Y. et al.(1990) Exploring the Questions of College Students' Road of Growth, *Chinese Education*, 23(1), pp.22-23.

³⁶⁵ Zhang, C.G. (2003) Deyu gaige luzai hefang [What is the direction of moral education reform], in Ma, H. (Eds.) Chunhua Qiushi: Zhang Cehnggan yanshuo lunwen suibi ji [*Spring Flower and Autumn Fruit: A collection of Speech, Essay, and Articles by Zhang Chenggan*], Guangzhou: Alumni Association of Guangzhou municipal 16th Secondary School, pp. 41-54.

Guangdong education authorities had appreciated the problem and started a programme entitled “moral education engineering at different levels of schools, from kindergarten, primary school, middle school to higher school” (*Guangzhoushi xuexiao deyu xitong gongcheng*) in the Guangzhou municipality³⁶⁶.

3.4 Conclusion

Though Confucianism has been changed and modified throughout the Chinese history in order to adapt to varying social and political circumstances, its core tenets, nevertheless, include wisdom, benevolence, and bravery. It concerns not only self-cultivation of an individual but also harmony in interpersonal relationships, especially family relationships, and hierarchy in the society. Confucian philosophy has guided every aspect of the Chinese way of life, from personal and family relations among the public to political rule of the nation by the scholar-officials and the emperor.

Confucianism has long been recognized by the government for its advocacy that people show respect to parents, loyalty to government, and keeping one's place in society and thus achieving social order. Though it was officially denounced following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, there have been growing signs of revival of Confucianism in the mainland. In official discourse, Confucius and Confucianism are no longer feudal evils but representation of Chinese traditional thoughts. Will Confucianism play a more active role in moral education in the mainland while the official stand towards Confucianism is changing?

³⁶⁶ Guangzhou municipal education committee organization (Ed.) (1996) *Guangzhoushi xuexiao deyu xitong sheji fangan* (Proposal of Guangzhou municipal school moral education engineering), Guangzhou: Guangdong Higher Education Press, pp. 1-13.

On the other hand, moral education has long been emphasized in both school education and family education in China. In imperial dynasties, Confucian values were inculcated to children through the teachings of Confucian classic and secular moral texts. Since the Guomindang rule, moral education has become the core of the school curriculum in China. At the same time, moral education became increasingly politicized. In Maoist China, moral education was inseparable from political and ideological education which was implemented through school curriculum and political campaigns. Modelling was a traditional teaching strategy in ideopolitical-moral education. The CCP became increasingly dysfunctional and the society became increasingly pluralistic. With deepening marketization, ideopolitical-moral education was found to be unpopular among the students and regarded as 'ineffective' and 'inadequate' by many educators in China. The Guangdong provincial government had noticed the problem and made attempts to remedy it. To what extent did these social, economic and political backgrounds contribute to the rise and development of the 3,4,5 literature? Before answering the question, we will firstly look some relevant theories in regard to moral education in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Literature Review:

3. Theories of Moral Education

4.1 Introduction

Every society attempts to transmit to their members the community's preferred values and ethical ideals, though there has been considerable controversy in education and in society over the best way to achieve this goal.³⁶⁷ To provide a philosophical framework for further discussion on moral education conducted in China in this study, the following paragraphs will firstly give an account of the development of philosophical thoughts in regard to the contribution of moral education to the development of a society or an individual. Then two contrasting models of moral education, the Soviet moral/ideological education and moral education in the Western democracies will be briefly introduced to illustrate the actual practice of moral education developed from these thoughts. Finally there will be a discussion of the role of textbooks, texts and literature in moral education. Attention will be particularly paid to previous studies conducted in China.

4.2 Moral education as political socialization

Since Plato's (427-347 BC) *Republic* and Aristotle's (384-322 BC) *Politics*, which are widely regarded as the first systematic treaties on moral education, all systems of modern philosophy have devoted attention to moral education. Some philosophers contend that a political system can form its own political values and transmit its own political culture from one generation to the next through moral education.³⁶⁸ Aristotle argued that the whole subject of Ethics should be included within the larger frame of Politics as man is a social animal and Politics has to do with the social organizations

³⁶⁷ Kirschenbaum, H. (1995) *100 ways to enhance values and morality in schools and youth settings*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.5.

³⁶⁸ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.52.

of mankind.³⁶⁹ According to Plato, the aim of politics was to search for a just moral order. A system of political education (or “political socialization”), censorship and propaganda was thus designed to promote loyalty to the state and to give legitimacy to a regime.³⁷⁰

Early in the Enlightenment period, Georg Hegel (1770-1831) placed emphasis on social needs and responsibilities but subordinated individuality. He demanded that teachers promote moral education as a social duty. To Hegel, the individual and the school became subordinate to the community and the state.³⁷¹

In the twentieth century, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), in his *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*, stressed the importance of moral education in exerting social control in a population and creating a cohesive society. His theory of moral education emphasized the role of “cultivator of morality,” which was a set of duties and obligations that influenced the behaviour of individuals. To Durkheim, moral education, like all education, was primarily a social means to guarantee the survival of a civilized society.³⁷² It would take place through the discipline of the school, its use of rewards and punishments, the school environment, and subject teaching such as history and literature.³⁷³

³⁶⁹ Aristotle (1988) *The Politics* (translated by S. Everson), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.3-4.

³⁷⁰ Plato (2000) *The Republic* (translated by G. Tom), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-36.

³⁷¹ Elias, J.L. (1989) *Moral Education: Secular and Religious*, Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., p.19.

³⁷² Durkheim, E. (1973) *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (translated by Wilson, E.K. and Schnurer, H.), New York: The Free Press, pp.64-94.

³⁷³ Durkheim, E. (1973) *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (translated by Wilson, E.K. and Schnurer, H.), New York: The Free Press, pp.267-281.

Moral education is thus regarded as an active agent for political socialization³⁷⁴ while transmitting shared values and norms of (moral) behaviour to succeeding generations³⁷⁵ and is essential to the succession and continuity of a society. Nevertheless, the shared values and norms of a society may vary with time, as Rokeach mentions, “each succeeding generation employs different standards to guide their actions, attitude, judgements and ideologies.”³⁷⁶ Gow adds that “the permanence of any society depends upon the intelligence and moral values of its citizens and in the society’s ability to establish moral authority.”³⁷⁷

4.3 Contribution of moral education to individuals

Contrary to the emphasis on the acculturation of the young into society’s norms and values, some philosophers maintain that moral education should place primary emphasis on natural capacities of the individuals. In the period of the Enlightenment, John Locke (1632-1704) argued for discipline through understanding: “the great business of all is virtue and wisdom... teach him to get a mastery over his inclinations, and submit his appetite to reason.” (Locke, 1968, pp.313-4) Locke believed that virtue should be taught more by practical experience than by learning rules from a book.³⁷⁸

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), in his *Emile* (1956 edition) proposed a “natural education” wherein the spontaneous development of the child’s power is central to education. Concerning the individual upbringing, Rousseau argued for obedience to

³⁷⁴ Karabel, J. and Halsey, A. H. (1977) *Power and Ideology in Education*, New York: Oxford University Press.

³⁷⁵ McCluskey, N. G. (1958) *Public schools and Moral Education*, New York: Columbia University Press, p.83.

³⁷⁶ Rokeach, M. (1972) Conceptualizing the Role of Values in Education, in Phillips (Ed.) *Developing Value Construct in Schooling: Inquiry into Process and Product*, Ohio: ASCD-OASCD, p.7.

³⁷⁷ Gow, A.M. (1973) *Good Morals and Gentle Manners for Schools and Families*, New York: Wilson, Handle & Company, p.iv.

³⁷⁸ Elias, J.L. (1989) *Moral Education: Secular and Religious*, Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., pp.12-3; also see <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/locke/locke1/Book1a.html#Chapter%20I> [accessed 18 December, 2005]

things of natural order. Adolescents should develop morality through a study of history and society where they would discover the noble and ignoble passions of men and women. Teachers thus should not use preaching or drill methods in teaching adolescents.³⁷⁹

4.4 Balancing the freedoms and obedience

Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German philosopher, attempted to balance the needs of freedom and obedience in moral education. In his *Education*, Kant recognized the child's capacity for goodness but also stressed a moral training that would use discipline to educate children to use their powers of freedom wisely. Kant's programme called for submission and positive obedience in early childhood and the gradual introduction of freedom of action, accompanied by the teaching of definite rules. Kant suggested children would learn to balance freedom and obedience if they were taught moral maxims or practical rules for life in the home, school, and society. For Kant, the major goal of moral education is to teach young people to understand the meaning of duty and to realize that obedience is the product of a rational call of duty.³⁸⁰

4.5 Political socialization and nation-building

The importance of political socialization in nation-building and sustaining social stability is recognized not only by philosophers but also political leaders. Gabriel et al. (2006) note that governments aim to create and maintain a stable and peaceful community, and to foster a common identity in a nation by "teaching a common language, instilling common norms and values, creating common myths and

³⁷⁹ Rousseau, J.J. (1956) *Emile* (translated by Boyd, W.), New York: Teachers College Press, pp.11-29.

³⁸⁰ Kant, E. (1992) *Education* (translated by Churton, A.), London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., pp.83-121.

symbols”.³⁸¹ In achieving nation-building, political leaders also appeal to “the courage, wisdom, and magnanimity in the nation’s past”.³⁸² Stevens particularly emphasizes the importance of early experience of political socialization to development of political concepts in the later stage of growth, though limited by children’s abilities in literacy, language and thinking, as well as their length of concentration.³⁸³

Political socialization can be implemented through various agents such as families, schools, communications media, churches, and all the various political structures that develop, reinforce, and transform attitudes of political significance in the society.”³⁸⁴ Political socialization is not static but varies with time, especially political changes. As Sigel points out, political socialization, which is the transmission of norms, attitudes, and behaviour led by the political system, should be well-adapted to political changes. Sigel further explains that rapid political changes brought about disruption of old familial social patterns, ideological orientations, and economic conditions. Such change is always fraught with tension, and discomfort; and lack of equilibrium and will affect the system’s stability. Thus, a newly developed nation tries to quickly train or socialize its own people to internalize the norms of the new nation and thus assure its survival. Similarly, even an old and stable nation also strives to insure the loyalty and engagement of their members in the face of rapid political, technological, and social changes.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.4.

³⁸² Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.140.

³⁸³ Stevens, O. (1982) *Children Talking Politics*, Oxford: Martin Robertson, p.2.

³⁸⁴ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, pp.39, 46.

³⁸⁵ Sigel, R. (1970) Assumptions about the Learning of Political Values, in E.S. Greenberg (Ed.) *Political Socialization*, New York: Atherton Press, pp.20-1.

4.6 Moral education in the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc

Moral education always struggles between freedom and obedience, between autonomy and control, between the development of an individual or a state, and is always controversial. These struggles can be illustrated by the implementation of moral education in the former Soviet Union (as well as the Soviet bloc) and the Western democracies. The illustration is particularly important in understanding moral education in China, as it is largely borrowed from the Soviet model of education.

4.6.1 Soviet moral/ ideological education

The Soviet education began with the Russian Revolution of 1917 which swept away the old tsarist empire, state and social order and brought the Bolsheviks to power. The Bolsheviks considered education as the most important weapon in their struggle with the old order. Direction and total control of education was vested in the organs of the Communist Party. The Soviet moral/ideological education was built upon Union-wide control of curricula and organizations. All schools were established and controlled by the state. Textbooks, timetables and teaching methods were standard. Uniformity corresponded to the Communist Party's notion of social equality.³⁸⁶

Soviet education attempted to foster "a creator and a warrior in the interests of the proletariat".³⁸⁷ The rising generation was to be educated in communist ideology to secure their loyalty to the new order. All children were to be provided with food and textbooks free of charge. The Russian textbooks consisted of stories, poems, fables, and fairy tales. Selection of the readings was for the ethical and political values

³⁸⁶ Muckle, J. (2001) Education in Post-Communist Russia: Continuity and Crisis, in J. Muckle and W.J. Morgan (Eds.) *Post-school Education and the Transition from State Socialism*, Nottingham: Continuing Education Press, pp.3-4.

³⁸⁷ Bereday, G.Z.F. (1960) *The Changing Soviet School*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, p.62.

instilled: enthusiasm for great leaders of the past and present, glorification of hard work and sacrifice, love of native country. The textbooks taught the students to be clean, to love their families, to be honest, kind and helpful, and introduced students to the life of Lenin and the Soviet army, and to important events of the past and great achievements of the present.

Political and ethical education was an independent subject to instil political values from the first grade. National pride and patriotism were inculcated, enthusiasm was instilled for great leaders of the past and present, hard work and sacrifice were glorified. Labour was another subject in Soviet schools. Students were required to acquire simple skills in the use of fabrics, paper, cardboard, clay, and so forth. The children worked in the school garden and took care of animals.³⁸⁸

Soviet education required obedience from students. "Rules for Pupils" (Code of conduct) were issued in 1948 to establish laws of behaviour that could not be broken by any pupils of a Soviet school. The Rule required a student to "to strive with tenacity and perseverance to master knowledge, in order to become an educated and cultured citizen and to serve most fully the Soviet motherland", "to be diligent in study and punctual in attendance, never being late to classes", and "to obey without question the orders of school director and teachers" and so forth. Pupils who violated the rules were subject to punishment, and even expulsion from school. In 1972, Standard Rules for Pupils (for grade 1-3, 4-8, 9-10) were issued for specific groups of students. Adhering to the Rules was strictly observed even in the upper classes. Attention was paid to neatness and modest clothing. Loud clothing was

³⁸⁸ Kreusler, A.A. (1976) *Contemporary Education and Moral Upbringing in the Soviet Union*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, pp.12-30.

condemned.³⁸⁹

All children from the age of ten through fourteen belonged to the Pioneers. The Pioneer programme aimed at developing patriotism, love of work, and readiness to do useful work for home, school, and community among students through a variety of activities like games, sports, and nature hikes. The Soviet Union attempted to educate a new type of man, a loyal citizen who unquestionably carried out the orders of the Party, and one who was selfless and devoted to the cause of communism through youth organizations such as the Pioneers.³⁹⁰

Political education was also important in Soviet higher education. Applicants to higher institutions had to pass entrance examinations in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Successful applicants were made to take course work in ideological subjects such as Marxist-Leninist philosophy and political economy for the duration of their studies.³⁹¹

Besides school education through pedagogical teachings, the family was another training centre for “ideological awareness” (also called “communist morality”) in the Soviet society. To bolster familial collaboration with school, books and pamphlets were published to inform parents on how to develop love of work, and how to prepare the children for school, and so forth.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Kreusler, A.A. (1976) *Contemporary Education and Moral Upbringing in the Soviet Union*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, pp.102-124.

³⁹⁰ Kreusler, A.A. (1976) *Contemporary Education and Moral Upbringing in the Soviet Union*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, pp.158-172.

³⁹¹ Connelly, J. (2000a) *Captive university: the Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish higher education, 1945-1956*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, pp.28-30.

³⁹² Kreusler, A.A. (1976) *Contemporary Education and Moral Upbringing in the Soviet Union*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, pp.91-2.

The Soviet Union expanded the state socialist system to the states of Eastern Europe after the end of the World War II (1945) and initiated a “sovietization” of education in East Central European countries such as East Germany and Hungary. Sovietized curriculum of moral/political education was characterized by super-abundance of ideological elements with the aim of transmission and acceptance of an idealistic socialism and the official policies.³⁹³

4.6.2 Moral/social education in Western democracies

Political socialization is also emphasized in Western democracies. For example, in the United States, political socialization begins in children as young as age three or four, by inculcating respect for some public figures, notably the president. As their perceptions broaden and deepen with age, they learn about political parties, legislators, judges, and public policies.³⁹⁴

Nevertheless, strongly influenced by the ideas of Rousseau, moral education in western democracies aimed at forming a democratic society. Schools are thus asked to educate children in moral values essential to the maintenance of a democratic government.³⁹⁵ Traditionally schools in the United States have promoted such generally accepted moral values in Western civilization as honesty, integrity, and industry through stories, poems, or other type of literature.³⁹⁶

³⁹³ Connelly, J. (2000b) The Sovietization of Higher Education in the Czech Lands, East Germany, and Poland during the Stalinist Period, 1948-1954, in M. David-Fox, Michael and G. Peteri, (Eds.) *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, Transfer, and Transformations of the communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*, Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, p.141.

³⁹⁴ Ranney, A. (2006) Politics in the United States, in Gabriel A et al. (Eds.) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, pp.750-1.

³⁹⁵ Elias, J.L. (1989) *Moral Education: Secular and Religious*, Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., pp.13-4, 23.

³⁹⁶ Marnane, M.J. and Heinen, J.R.K. (1993) Fostering Moral Growth through Literature, *Clearing House*, 67(2), p.80.

Unlike moral/ideological education in the Soviet bloc, moral education in Western democracies emphasizes the moral development of an individual rather than passing through a set of values to the individual. John Dewey (1859 - 1952), an eminent American philosopher of education, drew on many of the ideas of Rousseau for his principles of naturalism and child-centeredness. His ethical theory stressed the importance of educational environment in the learning of students. Dewey held that education is ultimately social, communal, interactive and reciprocal and emphasized the interaction between the students and teacher in each educational experience. He believed that moral education has to reflect the individual's purpose of gaining full citizenship within the community, while maintaining the individual rights associated with democracy.³⁹⁷ Influenced by Dewey's progressive thoughts, moral educators in the United States from the 1960s to the 1970s were encouraged to help students clarify their own values, develop higher levels of moral reasoning, and learn the skills of moral analysis.³⁹⁸

Moral education in England, in a similar vein, aims to facilitate the individual's development of belief, values, attitudes, skills and behaviour, based on knowledge and understanding, and to promote critical appraisal of oneself, others and society.

Another noteworthy feature of moral education in Western democracies lies in the impact of religious institutions. The church has played a key role in the foundation of the Western democracies such as England, and continues to have great influence in moral education marked by the provision of state-aided denominational schools

³⁹⁷ Hunt, T. and Mullins, M.M. (2005) *Moral Education in America's Schools: The Continuing Challenge*, Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Publishing, pp. 154-8.

³⁹⁸ Kirschenbaum, H. (1995) *100 ways to enhance values and morality in schools and youth settings*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.5.

(Church of England, Roman Catholic and a few Methodist) with a stronger religious emphasis. Though traditionally influential in East European regimes too, the influence of religious institutions on moral education was greatly diminished by the state. Parental choice was largely neglected in centralized Soviet moral/ideological education. However, in Western democracies like England, the government adopted parental choice and involvement as a central principle of educational reform.³⁹⁹

Western democracies, nevertheless, like their Soviet counterparts, also implemented national education. Especially during the Cold War years, the curriculum of Western schools was obsessed with teaching anti-Communism as a left-wing aberration from democracy.⁴⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as Torney-Purta and Hahn point out, national patriotism received relatively little stress in school though pride in their nation's cultural heritage was transmitted to students in the West.⁴⁰¹

The differences between moral education in the Western democracies and the Soviet Union can be roughly summarized in Table 4.1

³⁹⁹ Taylor, M.J. (1996) Moral and Citizenship Education in England: Current Developments in Policy and Practice, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, pp.179-181

⁴⁰⁰ Farnen, R.F. (1996) Nationalism, Democracy, and Authority in North America and Europe since 1989: Lessons for Political Socialization and Civic Education, in R.F. Farnen et al. (Eds.) *Democracy, Socialization and Conflicting Loyalties in East and West*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, p.39.

⁴⁰¹ Torney-Purta, J. and Hahn, C.H. (1988) Values Education in the Western European Tradition, in W.K. Cummings et al. (Eds.) *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West*, Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press, p.53.

| | Western democracies | Former Soviet Union |
|---|---|--|
| Objective | Individual’s development | Political development |
| Values stressed | Values essential to maintaining a democratic government | Values essential to maintaining a socialist government |
| | Personal values such as integrity | Political values |
| | Reasoning | Obedience |
| Relative Weighting of values in education | Medium | High |
| Influences of religious institutions | High | Low |
| Parental choice | Emphasized | Neglected |

Table 4.1: Differences between moral education in Western democracies and former Soviet Union

In recent years, there has been a notable rise of character education which stresses the teaching of “core values” to students in public schools in the United States. Thomas Lickona, a leading developmental psychologist, strongly supported the new character education movement. Worried by the recent crisis of American youth culture, Lickona urged schools to mandate character education curricula in order to guide young people toward more appropriate behaviours and morally sound choices. In regard to the “core values” to be taught, Lickona (1993) pointed to those which promoted human rights and affirmed human dignity. He added that a “core value” has to be universally applicable for everyone everywhere in order to be truly reversible in an ethical sense. “Core values” not only justify civic responsibilities in a democracy but they would also be recognized by in other cultures as well.⁴⁰²

4.7 Moral education and textbook

As Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) point out, education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet. The school curriculum is not neutral knowledge but a result of

⁴⁰² Hunt, T. and Mullins, M.M. (2005) *Moral Education in America’s Schools: The Continuing Challenge*, Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Publishing, pp. 190-1.

complex power relations and struggles among identifiable classes, races, and so forth. The close linkage of education and power would become most visible at time of social upheaval, economic crisis and ideological crisis.⁴⁰³ Textbooks are thus ideologically-oriented and commonly regarded as an important element of the curriculum which provides students with an officially sanctioned, authorized version of human knowledge and culture. It transmits culture, reflects values,⁴⁰⁴ and represents “official knowledge” that signifies profound political, economic, and cultural relations.⁴⁰⁵

4.7.1 Previous studies of textbooks in China

Previous studies on textbooks in China have shown its politically-inclined nature. Martins (1975) compared elementary school textbooks in Taiwan and China and reported that the mainland government advocated a new socialist system and separation from the Confucian traditions. The primary emphasis on textbooks in China tends to be the larger community, for example, the group, team commune, and nation.⁴⁰⁶

Kwong (1985) found that language texts reflected the political culture of China. The heroes portrayed in the Chinese language textbooks of the 1970s revealed who was in power. In the early 1970s, Mao Zedong was the commander, flanked by Lin Biao and later the Gang of Four. Hua Guofeng was briefly the hero in the mid-1970s, and soon to be superseded by Deng Xiaoping. The primary language texts also reflected

⁴⁰³ Apple, M.W. and Christian-Smith L.K. (Eds.) (1991) *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York: Routledge, p.2.

⁴⁰⁴ Castel, S., Luke, A. and Luke, C. (Eds.) (1989) *Language, Authority and Criticism*, London: The Falmer Press, p.vii.

⁴⁰⁵ Apple, M.W. and Christian-Smith L.K. (Eds.) (1991) *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York: Routledge, p.3.

⁴⁰⁶ Martins, R. (1975) The Socialization of Children in China and in Taiwan: Analysis of Elementary School Textbooks, *The China Quarterly*, 62, pp. 242-262.

changes in Chinese political culture. The texts in the early 1970s were found to devote much of their efforts to inculcate in the young the right political attitudes in complying with the leaders' priorities in keeping China a socialist state and forestalling capitalists' and revisionists' subventions. Nevertheless, the language texts in the late 1970s reflected the leaders' expectations of modernizing the country, to catch up and even surpass the West in science and technology. The texts also communicated the leaders' goals as aspirations of the young and provided the young with rules and guidelines for behaviour.⁴⁰⁷

Yang (1982) compared elementary school Hong Kong readers with Chinese readers (used in Beijing and Guangdong elementary schools) in the 1979-1980 academic year and found that political themes contributed much to the difference between the two sets of textbooks. The content of the Chinese readers was politicized, reflecting political trends in China. In the Chinese readers, the "new" society was compared to the "old" society to cultivate devotion and allegiance to new China and the communist ideologies, such as collectivism, egalitarianism and selflessness.⁴⁰⁸

Lin (1991, 1993) analyzed school curricula before and after economic reform and revealed the emphasis of class struggle in textbooks issued during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Students were taught to hate the "class enemies" and to identify with and support "the working or proletarian class". The texts emphasized love and loyalty towards the CCP and its leaders such as Chairman Mao Zedong, who was claimed to be the "saviour" of the Chinese people and to embody absolute truth.

⁴⁰⁷ Kwong, J. (1985) Changing political culture and changing curriculum: an analysis of language textbooks in the People's Republic of China, *Comparative Education*, 21(2), pp.197-208.

⁴⁰⁸ Yang, S.H. (1982) *A content analysis of elementary school grammar readers in the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong*, Ed. D. dissertation, Harvard University, (UMI Dissertation Services).

Nevertheless, school texts in post-Mao China changed considerably. The texts focused on the development of desirable attitudes and behaviours toward both the communist authority and the general public. A good citizen in the texts was judged morally as well as politically by attitudes and behaviours toward communist authority and the government, in close relationship to each other. Lin (1993) found that moral education for primary school students had several focuses: (1) good manners, such as talking politely; (2) traditional Chinese values, such as respecting parents and elderly people, maintaining good relationships with neighbours, living frugal lives, and building and developing true friendships with others; (3) protection of the environment, such as loving animals.⁴⁰⁹

4.8 Moral education and literature

As illustrated, literature has been adopted as an instrument and tool of moral education in both Soviet Union and the Western democracies. Literature is always values laden and thus is always regarded as a useful instrument for moral education. Teaching values through literature has been a hallmark of moral education since the time of Aesop's Fables. Children can see the dangers of self-indulgence and the importance of staying the course from reading "the Hare and the Tortoise".⁴¹⁰ Recent popular fiction such as *Harry Potter* can also be used as a vehicle to promote children's moral development.⁴¹¹

Many writers have pointed to the function of literature in moral education. Park (1982)

⁴⁰⁹ Lin, J.(1993) *Education in Post-Mao China*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, pp.1-8; Lin, J. (1991) *The Red Guards' Path to Violence*, New York: Praeger.

⁴¹⁰ Wynne, E.A. and Ryan, K. (1997) *Reclaiming our schools: Teaching character, academics, and discipline*, Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill, p.156.

⁴¹¹ Binnendyk, L. and Schonert-Reichl, K.A. (2002) Harry Potter and Moral Development in Pre-adolescent Children, *Journal of Moral Education*, 33(2), p.200.

argues that literature can dramatize how people make choices, and act, and helps them to be aware of a larger human community, extending far into the past.⁴¹² Kilpatrick (1985) adds that literature such as stories, myths, poems, can nourish students' moral imagination and help them to "grow up with a deep and adequate vision of life".⁴¹³

Covaleskie (1992) suggests that the experience of the characters in literature provide children with useful stimuli for thought and dialogue. Children can internalize values, develop the desire to act in accordance to those values, and make wise choices through literature.⁴¹⁴ According to Louie, literature conveys cultural values, shapes moral and character development, sharpens students' thinking skills, expands their knowledge, and enhances their language use.⁴¹⁵

Lamme et al. (1992) insist that literature provides teachers and parents with a rich resource to enhance children's moral development. Children's literature exposes children to the world outside their immediate lives, provides the link between children's experience and the experience of others, and thus helps children begin to see things from other perspectives. Literature also offers children opportunities to practise the kinds of behaviour the adults would like to see children adopt in real life.⁴¹⁶ Literature provides students with an occasion for focused moral reflection and dialogue, and privileged insights into the moral journey of a life.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹² Parr, S.R. (1982) *The Moral of the Story*, New York: Teachers College Press, pp.18-9.

⁴¹³ Kilpatrick, W. K. (1985) *The Emperor's new clothes: The naked truth about Modern Psychology*, Westchester, IL: Goodnews Press, p.97.

⁴¹⁴ Covaleskie, J.F. (1992) Discipline and Morality: Beyond Rules and Consequences, *Education Forum*, 56(2), pp.173-83.

⁴¹⁵ Louie, B.Y.Y. (1996) Children's literature in the People's Republic of China, *The Reader Teacher*, 49(6), (March 1996), p.494.

⁴¹⁶ Lamme, L.L., Krogh, S.L., and Yachmetz, K. A. (1992) *Literature-based Moral Education: Children's Books and Activities for teaching Values, Responsibility, and Good Judgment in the Elementary School*, Phoenix: Arizona: Oryx Press, pp.12-13.

⁴¹⁷ Bohlin, K.E. (2005) *Teaching Character Education through Literature: awaking the moral imagination in secondary classrooms*, New York: RoutledgeFalmer, p.31.

Numerous researches had been conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of literature in enhancing children's moral growth. For example, Garrod and Bramble illustrated how Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning be applied to literature in the novel *Huckleberry Finn*.⁴¹⁸ Darling demonstrated the abilities of fables to awaken children's moral imagination, and introduce children to moral vocabularies and traditions in which they can actively participate, both individually and collectively.⁴¹⁹

4.8.1 Moral education and rhyming literature

Rhyme is one of the most popular natural mediums for children's literatures. Children's pleasure in nursery rhymes and singing games has long been observed and documented, and the modern child's knowledge of advertising jingles and pop songs demonstrates that children's love of rhyme is as widespread as ever.⁴²⁰

The power of rhyme comes from the effect produced by the sounds of a language. As Beard defines it, "rhyme" is an identity of sound in two or more words that extends from the last stressed vowels to the ends of the words (e.g. *milk* and *silk*). Rhyme is thus sometimes referred to as "end rhyme".⁴²¹ In poetry, rhyme is produced by matching or identical sounds in words or in the end sounds of lines of verse. Dramatic effects of rhymes can also be produced by repetition of words and phrases.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ Garrod, A. C. and Bramble, G. A. (1977) Moral Development and Literature, *Theory into Practice*, 16(2) (April 1977), pp.105-111.

⁴¹⁹ Darling, L.F. (2002) Moles, Porcupines, and Children's Moral Reasoning: Unexpected responses, *Early Years (Journal of International Research and Development)*, 22(2) (September 2002), pp.91-102.

⁴²⁰ Goswami, U. (1999) Rhyme in children's early reading, in R. Beard (Ed.) *Rhyme: Reading and Writing*. UK: Hodder & Stoughton, p.62.

⁴²¹ Beard, R. (1999) Introduction, in R. Beard (Ed.) *Rhyme: Reading and Writing*. UK: Hodder & Stoughton, pp.8-9.

⁴²² Whitehead, M. (1999) Nonsense, rhyme and word plays in young children, in R. Beard (Ed.) *Rhyme: Reading and Writing*. UK: Hodder & Stoughton, p.56-9.

From an early age, children make up rhymes and enjoy playing with words, particularly the kind of play which involves *repetition*. Whitehead reported young children's delight in rhymes and their cheeky playfulness with words. Much of the pleasure of babbling arises from the physical sensation of repeating the same sounds in the same parts of the mouth over and over again.⁴²³ Word-play in rhymes not only provides children with enjoyment and satisfaction but also helps to make communication more memorable.⁴²⁴

Rhymes also play an important role in moral education by fostering moral growth and promoting value clarification in children.⁴²⁵ Conroy (1999) argues that poems can transcend the limitations of clients' own experiences and resonate with them, enabling them to move beyond their particular state and to develop a personal ethical paradigm.⁴²⁶ Pedagogically, poetry can provide a ground upon which the individual can interpret and make sense of moral choice through the "transference" of the subject's own self into "a given complex of expressions".⁴²⁷

4.8.2 Previous studies of children's books in China

Several studies on children's books in China reported the emphasis on communist morality in Maoist era as well as the early reform era. In a study entitled "Motivational Patterns in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to the Chinese Case", McClelland revealed that motivational concerns of China have changed under

⁴²³ Whitehead, M. (1999) Nonsense, rhyme and word plays in young children, in R. Beard (Ed.) *Rhyme: Reading and Writing*, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, p.42.

⁴²⁴ Beard, R. (1999) Introduction, in R. Beard (Ed.) *Rhyme: Reading and Writing*. UK: Hodder & Stoughton, pp.12-3.

⁴²⁵ Marnane, M.J. and Heinen, J.R.K. (1993) Fostering Moral Growth through Literature, *Clearing House*, 67(2), p.80.

⁴²⁶ Conroy, F.C. (1999) Poetry and Human Growth, *Journal of Moral Education*, 28(4), p.500.

⁴²⁷ Truzzi, M. (1974) *Verstehen: Subjective Understanding in the Social Sciences*, Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, p.11.

Communist and Western influence in China.⁴²⁸

Ridley et al. observed that the readers in China were closely related to the official ideology of Chinese Communism.⁴²⁹ Blumenthal found that the contents of moral education in China placed emphasis on communist morality and devotion to the revolution as well as to the new society.⁴³⁰ Chang showed that children's picture storybooks were used after 1949 as a tool to transmit officially approved messages to readers.⁴³¹

4.9 Conclusion

Western democracies and the Soviet Camps are not only different in ideologies but also in practice of moral education. To what extent do these two contrasting modes of moral education affect moral education in China? Text books have widely been adopted as instruments for moral/political socialization in China and over the world. Did the rise of the 3,4,5 literature in China signal the emergence of other teaching materials such as para-government literature for the purpose of ideopolitical-moral education? In addition, previous studies of Chinese children's literature in moral education have placed greater emphasis on stories. What role did rhyming literature like the 3,4,5 literature play in ideopolitical-moral education? The following chapter will give an account of research methodology employed in this study in response to these research questions.

⁴²⁸ McClelland, D.C. (1963) Motivational Patterns in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to the Chinese case, *The Journal of Social Issues*, 19(1) (January 1963), p.15.

⁴²⁹ Ridley, C.P, Godwin, P.H.B. & Doolin, D.J. (1971) *The Making of a Model citizen in Communist China*, Stanford, California: Hoover Institution press, p.185

⁴³⁰ Blumenthal, E.P. (1976) *Models in Chinese Moral Education: Perspective from Children's Books* (Unpublished PhD. Dissertation), Michigan: University of Michigan, p.193

⁴³¹ Chang, P. H. (1979) Children Literature and Political Socialization, in G.C. Chiu and F.L.K. Hsu., (Eds.) *Moving a Mountain*, Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, pp.238-256.

Chapter 5

Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter firstly defines key concepts and outlines key considerations in research design in this study. Then there will be a comprehensive description of the research methodologies, research design, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the rationale for adopting such an approach for the study. This chapter also addresses the trustworthiness of the study.

5.2 Definitions of key concepts

Before discussing in detail the research methodology employed in this study, the following key concepts will be defined in order to assist the readers in understanding the researcher's interpretation and use of these terms in this study, and the choice of research methodology.

Values

There is no universal consensus on the definition of values. Kluckholn defines the term 'value' as:

"a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristics of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action".⁴³²

Rokeach defines values as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence,"⁴³³ whereas Halstead (1996) considers values as:

the principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances

⁴³² Kluckholn, C.K.M. (1951) Values and value orientations in the theory of action, quoted from Parsons, T. & Shil, E. (Eds.) *Toward a general theory of action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 388-433.

⁴³³ Rokeach, M. (1973) *The nature of human values*, New York: Free Press, p.5.

*which act as general guides to behaviour or as point of reference in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or action and which are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity.*⁴³⁴

Values serve as guiding principles in people's lives. They are not only connected to personal integrity and personal identity but also related to social development and act as an essential construct in the socialization process. They are presumed to encapsulate the aspirations of individuals and societies: they pertain to what is desirable, to engrained standards that determine future directions and justify past actions.⁴³⁵ Thus all societies have dominant as well as variant value orientations which are ranked in order of preference. In the Oxford English Dictionary, "value-orientation" is defined as "the direction given to a person's attitudes and thinking by their beliefs or standards".⁴³⁶ Mieth (1987) regards sources of value orientations as the constant basic human needs such as the need for personal relationship and social recognition. The living tradition of the historical experience is another source. Value orientations have always been predetermined by existing pre-suppositions and conditions in history and society.⁴³⁷

Consolidating various definitions of the term "values" and considering the nature of "values" in moral/political socialization, "values" in this study refer to:

the conceptions, principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or the evaluation of beliefs or

⁴³⁴ Halstead, J.M. (1996) Values and Values Education in Schools, in J.M. Halstead, and M.J. Taylor, (Eds.) *Values in Education and Education in Values*, London: The Falmer Press, p.5.

⁴³⁵ Braithwaite, V.A. and Scott, W.A. (1991) Values, in J.P. Robinson et al. (Eds.) *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes*, San Diego: Academic Press, p. 661.

⁴³⁶ http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50274674?query_type=word&queryword=value&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=4&search_id=jmAf-D7Oqod-590&hilit=50274674 [Accessed 6 January, 2006].

⁴³⁷ Mieth, D. (1987) Continuity and Change in Value-orientations, in Mieth, D. & Pohier, J. (Eds.) *Changing Values and Virtue*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, pp.47-59.

action, distinctive of an individual or characteristics of a group or the desirable conduct of a state.

This definition covers the continuum of values from personal values at one end, to social values in the middle, and political values at the other end. In particular, this definition highlights how the government exerted influence on the moral/political socialization of children through the moral education literature.

Ideology

Ideology has been defined as “ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power”.⁴³⁸ The framework of communist ideology is commonly classified by political scientists into two components: “fundamental” and “operative” (Seliger, 1976).⁴³⁹ The former refers to communist end-goal at the fundamental level, while the latter refers to practical ideas, policy preferences, and means of action at the operative level. The fundamental level refers to the body of fundamental principles or core components of the CCP’s ideology, such as Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought, the leadership of the Communist Party, the Socialist Road, and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. These are established as the “Four Cardinal principles”. The operative level designates sets of political ideas and theories put forward by political elites to guide, justify, and interpret their current tasks, immediate goals or policy goals, concrete policies, policy choice, and actions within a given historical context, such as the theories of “Socialist Market Economy,” and “Socialism with

⁴³⁸ Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: an introduction*, London: VERSO, p.1.

⁴³⁹ Seliger, M. (1976) *Ideology and Politics*, New York: The Free Press, p.109.

Chinese Characteristics”.⁴⁴⁰

Socialization

Socialization refers to the acquisition and acceptance of the ideas, beliefs, behaviours, roles, motives, and thought patterns of a particular culture.⁴⁴¹ “Political socialization” is defined as the process from which the young receive their political knowledge, opinion and behaviour. It is a process of the individual being integrated into the political groups and institutions of the society and acquiring valid political standards and values.⁴⁴²

Political education

Political education refers to the intentional efforts of the political authorities (or political elites, or the ruling class), in order to influence the political knowledge and values of the citizens. The final result of an effective political education is a control over political socialization processes going on within the system.⁴⁴³

Textbook and the set text

The term “textbook” is always associated with classroom teaching. Buckingham defined *textbook* as publications designed for classroom use, carefully prepared by ‘experts’, placed in the hands of the learner, and providing ‘a means of supplying indirect experience in large and well-organized amounts.’⁴⁴⁴ Marsden summarized the following features of *textbooks*:

⁴⁴⁰ Guo, S.J. (2000) *Post-Mao China: From Totalitarianism to Authoritarianism?* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, pp.37-8.

⁴⁴¹ Lin, J. (1993) *Education in Post-Mao China*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, p.1.

⁴⁴² Meyenberg, R. (1990) Political socialization of juveniles and political education in schools of the Federal Republic of Germany, in B. Claussen and H. Mueller (Eds.) *Political Socialization of the young in East and West*, Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, p.213.

⁴⁴³ Fratzak-Rudnicka, B. (1990) Formal political education in Poland: A case of incoherent political socialization, in B. Claussen and H. Mueller, Horst (Eds.) *Political socialization of the young in East and West*, Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, p.134.

⁴⁴⁴ Buckingham, B. R. (1960) Textbook, in C.W. Harris (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Educational Research*, New York: American Educational Research Association/ Macmillan, pp.1517-25.

- comprise a body of content;
- embody a range of pedagogic principles and processes; and
- reflect external and sometimes imposed sets of social purposes.⁴⁴⁵

Basically *textbook* is a subset of a broader term--- *teaching media* which can refer to basic texts, manuals, workbooks and exercise books.⁴⁴⁶ Teaching media can vary from a plain text to a novel. Nevertheless there is a difference between *textbook* and a text without pedagogic explication. Deighton distinguished *textbooks* from *handbooks*, which he suggested presented information without pedagogic explication.⁴⁴⁷ Stray further differentiated *textbooks* from *schoolbooks*, for the former is an authoritative pedagogic version of an area of knowledge, whilst the latter refers to books with appended notes to assist students' understanding of the knowledge but less closely tied to pedagogic sequences.⁴⁴⁸ A text used for a specific curriculum is thus not necessarily a textbook if it does not tell a teacher *how* to teach.

In short, *textbooks* are essentially based on a specific methodology and produced for use in instructional sequences. Based on a clear syllabus, *textbooks* provide teachers with a framework that ensures that pupils work their way through the syllabus by the end of the year. A text written for a specific curriculum but without suggestion on classroom instruction may be a *handbook*, *schoolbook*, or a *set text*, a plain text which specifies *what* must be studied, without saying anything about pedagogy or instruction process, for example, a piece of Chinese literature in the secondary Chinese language curriculum. The 3,4,5 literature itself is a plain text which does not inform teachers

⁴⁴⁵ Marsden, W.E. (2001) *The School Textbook: Geography, History and Social Studies*, London: Portland, p.8.

⁴⁴⁶ Johnsen, E.B. (1993) *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope: A Critical Survey of Literature and Research on Educational Texts*, Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, pp.23-5.

⁴⁴⁷ Deighton, L.C. (1971) Textbooks: Role in Education, in L.C. Deighton, (Ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Education*, (Vol.9), New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, pp.210-14.

⁴⁴⁸ Stray, C. (1994) Paradigms Regained: Towards a Historical Sociology of the Textbook, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 26(1), pp.1-29.

how to teach. Teachers can adopt a variety of teaching method at their own discretion. Hence the 3,4,5 literature is regarded as a *handbook*, *schoolbook*, or a *set text* rather than a *textbook*.

Para-government document

The 3,4,5 literature was published by Guangdong Educational Press and Guangdong People's Press. These two publication houses are subsidiary branches of the Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group which is actually one of the experimental units for national publication under the supervision and sponsorship of Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department. Neither Guangdong Education Press nor Guangdong People's Press are official government departments but have apparent governmental background and are thus categorized as "para-government publication houses." Publications issued by these para-government publication houses are therefore regarded as "para-government documents".

5.3 Questions arising from the Literature

This study has three specific focuses: the 3,4,5 literature, the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 movement, and the role it played in ideopolitical-moral education in the decade of strengthening economic reform (1992-2002) in China.

In regard to the 3,4,5 literature, this study attempts to examine what values/themes does the 3,4,5 literature contain? What are the differences between the values/themes contained in the *New Three Character Classic* and its emulations? What is the difference in content between the 3,4,5 literature and previous literature on moral education published in the early stage of economic reform, and subsequent literature (moral education documents published in the late 1990s)? The present study further investigates to what extent were the values/themes embedded in the 3,4,5 literature

relevant to political and social development in post-reform China?

Now we turn to the 3,4,5 movement. As mentioned, Confucianism had long been denounced by the CCP government but the *New Three Character Classic* surprisingly replicated the genre of a traditional Confucian classic and was disseminated with great governmental energy. So why did Guangdong provincial propaganda department initiate the publication and propagate it with such energy? How was the 3,4,5 literature written? Who were target readers of the 3,4,5 literature?

According to the prefaces of the 3,4,5 literature, a group of “experts” including academics and teachers were invited to respective editorial boards of the publication. What social group(s) was/were represented by these “experts”? What was/were the objective(s) of the “experts” in participating in the publication?

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the 3,4,5 literature was taught in schools. How was the 3,4,5 literature adopted in schools? What were students’ responses towards the literature?

The 3,4,5 movement started as a regional phenomenon in Guangdong but soon attracted numerous emulations in other provinces. Why were publishing houses in provinces other than Guangdong so keen to produce moral texts with three character rhymes in and around 1995? What was the role of the central government in the publication of the regional 3,4,5 literature?

This study also attempts to examine the role played by the 3,4,5 literature in ideopolitical-moral education in post-reform China. Why did it become prominent in

schools? Why has the 3,4,5 literature been less mentioned in official discourse of moral education in the late 1990s? What were the implications of the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 movement for ideopolitical-moral education in China?

Research questions raised in this study are summarized as follows in accordance with their focuses:

(1) The 3,4,5 literature

The first set of questions will be answered by content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature and other related ideopolitical-moral education literature:

- What values/themes does the 3,4,5 literature contain?
- To what extent were the values/themes embedded in the 3,4,5 literature relevant to political and social development in post-reform China?
- What are the differences in content between the 3,4,5 literature and previous literature, i.e. moral education documents published in the early stage of economic reform?
- What are the differences between the values/themes contained in the *New Three Character Classic* with its emulations?
- What are the differences between the values/themes contained in the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent literature in ideopolitical-moral education?

(2) The 3,4,5 movement

The following set of questions will be answered by interviews with key respondents. Emphasis will be on shedding light on their perceptions with the aim, initiation, development and the decline of the 3,4,5 literature. No attempt has been made to answer wider questions, such as “why were publishing houses in provinces other than Guangdong so keen to produce moral texts with three character rhymes in and around 1995?” In fact, the success of the 3,4,5 literature in Guangdong provides a sufficient answer to the questions. The questions addressed in the interviews are:

- Why did Guangdong provincial propaganda department initiate the publication of these para-government documents?
- How was the 3,4,5 literature written? Who participated in drafting the documents? What was the drafting process?
- What social groups were represented by the authors?
- What were the reasons for the authors to participate in the publication?
- Who were the target readers of the 3,4,5 literature?
- How was the 3,4,5 literature adopted in schools?

- What role did the central government play in the publication of the regional 3,4,5 literature?
- Why was the 3,4,5 literature less mentioned in official discourse of moral education in the late 1990s?

(3) Implications of the 3,4,5 literature and the 3,4,5 movement for ideopolitical-moral education in China

The third set of questions will be answered by analysis of government documents:

- What role did the 3,4,5 literature play in ideopolitical-moral education in post-reform China?
- What were the implications of the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 movement for ideopolitical-moral education in China?

5.4 Research design

Research methodology in this study was chosen for its capacity to address the research questions raised above. A triangular investigative framework, namely documentary analysis, content analysis, and interviews was designed to investigate components of the 3,4,5 literature and its related movement in moral education

Firstly, the method of content analysis was employed to identify distinctive values embedded in the literature. Other moral education texts involved in the 3,4,5 movement, and other selected moral education documents prior and subsequent to the 3,4,5 literature were also analyzed for comparison purposes.

Secondly, interviews were used to solicit further information for understanding the dynamic process of the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 literature in ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC as a moral education movement. The interviews involved both the producers and users of the 3,4,5 literature. As mentioned in the Literature Review, publication of the 3,4,5 literature was initiated by Guangdong provincial propaganda officials with the assistance of a group of “experts” who were assumed to have taken part in the production of the literature in repeated discussions during the production process. The officials and the authors (the “experts”) were thus the producers of the 3,4,5 literature.

The 3,4,5 literature was taught in schools. School teachers were thus significant informants to provide a perspective as users to share their views on the usefulness of the 3,4,5 literature. Teachers could also provide information about how students and parents responded to the literature. It was hoped that the interviewing of these stakeholders of the 3,4,5 literature could help reconstruct the entire story of the 3,4,5 movement.

Thirdly, the method of documentary analysis was employed to identify the conditions in the government’s policy on ideopolitical-moral education leading to the rise and the fall of the 3,4,5 literature (and other related rhyme literature) and to assess the implications of the 3,4,5 literature for the government in formulating its subsequent policies in ideopolitical-moral education; the 3,4,5 literature, like other ideopolitical-moral education activities, would have obtained approval from the government. The dynamic interaction between government policy, the producers and the users of the 3,4,5 literature is summarized in Figure 5.1

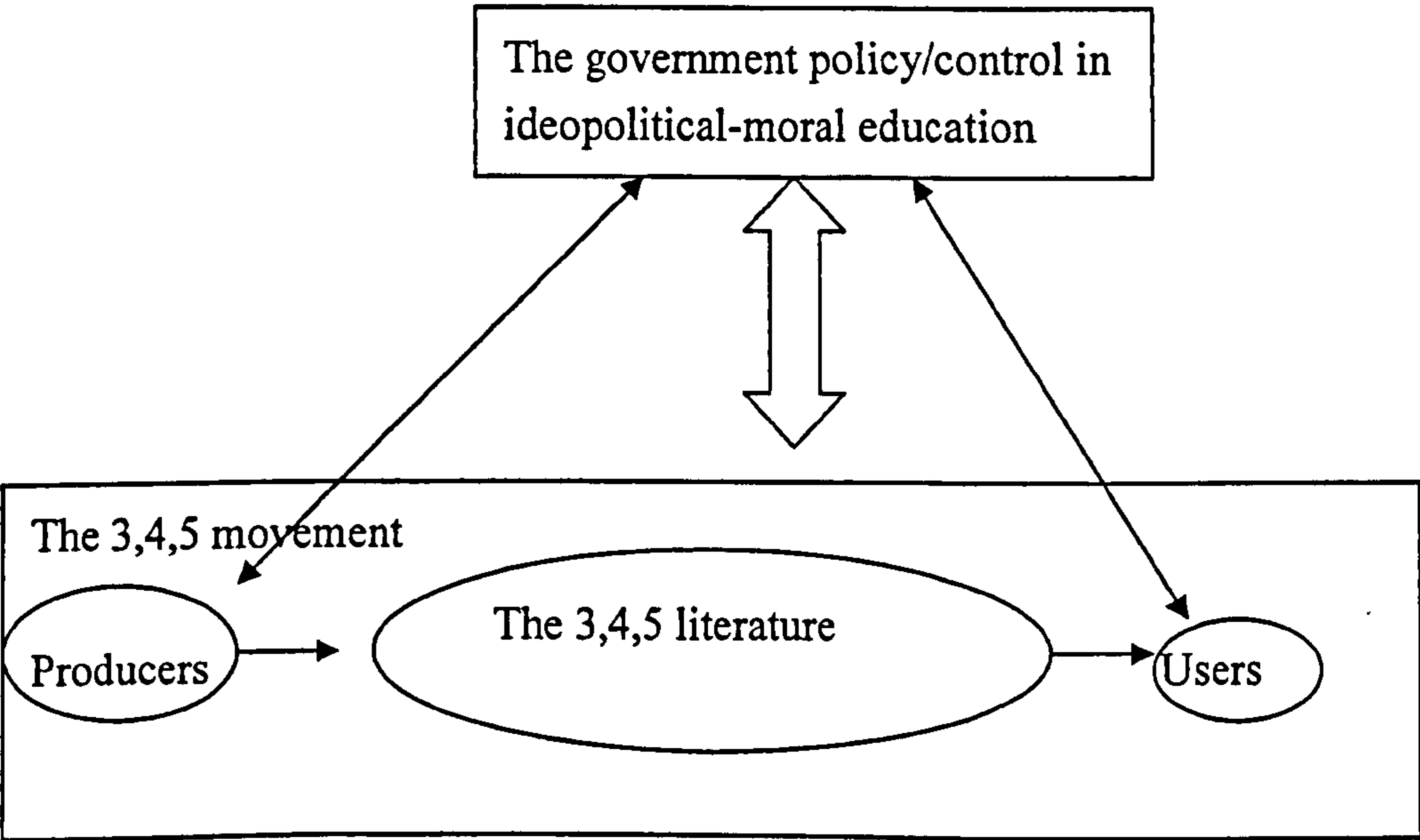


Figure 5.1 Dynamic interactions in the case of the 3,4,5 literature

Note: → one-way flow of influence
 ↔ two-way flow of influence

A two-way flow of influence is assumed between the government policy on ideopolitical-moral education and the 3,4,5 literature as the literature might in return affect the way the government formulated its subsequent policy on ideopolitical-moral education because of its popularity among the public. The same applied to the dual relationship between the government policy on ideopolitical-moral education and the producers and the users of the 3,4,5 literature.

5.5 Research Methodologies

5.5.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is a research method that is employed widely in various disciplines such as education, law and health care.⁴⁴⁹ This method has been adopted in value studies as early as in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, content analysis has widely been employed in previous value studies on Chinese textbooks (Martins 1975, Kwong 1985, Yang 1982, Lin 1991, 1993), though in varying degree.

The procedures used in content analysis vary from simple word-frequency counts to systematic analysis of the themes expressed in textbooks or literature. Through objective and systematic application of categorization rules, content analysis transforms communication contents, from spoken or written words, and from written texts such as fiction, non-fiction, folktales, newspaper editorials, speeches, advertisements, and lyric⁴⁵¹ to visual materials such as television programme,⁴⁵² into data that can be summarized and compared through systematic

⁴⁴⁹ Neuendorf, K.A. (2002) *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, Thousand Oaks: Sage publications, p.xv.

⁴⁵⁰ Bauer, M.B. (2000) Classical Content Analysis: A Review, in M.B. Bauer and G. Gaskell (Eds.) *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*. London: Sage Publications, p.132.

⁴⁵¹ Bernard, H.R., (1988) *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, U.S.A.: Sage Publication Inc., pp. 297-298.

⁴⁵² Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.178.

information-processing⁴⁵³ and thus builds up a body of knowledge. It generally involves the following procedures:

- 1) Theory and rationale: to decide what content should be examined, and why?
- 2) Conceptualization: to decide on the variables to be used in the study and to define them conceptually;
- 3) Operationalizations (measures): to decide the unit of data collection to be used;
- 4) Coding: to code the data by hand or by computer;
- 5) Tabulation and reporting.⁴⁵⁴

5.5.1.1 Data base of content analysis

In this study, the method of content analysis was employed to examine the values/themes embedded in the 3,4,5 literature and other relevant moral education literature and documents. First, there was a cross-sectional examination of value orientations in the three-character moral education literature produced in Guangdong (Editorial Committee, 1995) and in two other provinces: Beijing (Li, 1995)⁴⁵⁵ and Shanghai (Cai, 1995)⁴⁵⁶ in the mid-1990s.

Second, value orientations in the 3,4,5 literature were compared with moral documents published in different phases of the reform era, including moral documents produced in the early reform era, i.e. the 1980s (previous literature) and those produced in recent reform era, i.e. the 2000s (subsequent literature) in order to identify their distinctive pattern of value orientations. To achieve this goal, two previous ideopolitical-moral education documents produced by para-government publishers, Cai, et al. (1985)⁴⁵⁷ and Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986)⁴⁵⁸ were

⁴⁵³ Holsti, O.R. (1969) *Content Analysis for the social sciences and humanities*, Reading Ma: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, p.3

⁴⁵⁴ Neuendorf, K.A. (2002) *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, Thousand Oaks: Sage publications, pp.50-1.

⁴⁵⁵ Li, H.Q. (1995) *The New Three Character Classic [Xin Sanzijing]*, Beijing: Science Education Press.

⁴⁵⁶ Cai, F. (1995) *The Three Character Classic on Morality [Pinde Sanzijing]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press.

⁴⁵⁷ Cai, F. et al. (1985) *Sixiang Xiuyang Xiaocidian [Dictionary on Ideo-cultivation]*, Shanghai:

chosen. On the other hand, three documents subsequent to the 3,4,5 literature, namely the *Guangdong Maxims* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department 2002),⁴⁵⁹ PRC Ministry of Education (MOE) (1997),⁴⁶⁰ and PRC Ministry of Education (MOE) (2002),⁴⁶¹ were chosen for analysis. The former was produced by Guangdong propaganda department, the producer of the 3,4,5 literature, and thus represented the work of Guangdong provincial officials in ideopolitical-moral education in the 2000s while the latter two documents illustrated the curriculum reform in ideopolitical-moral education in the late 1990s. The data base for content analysis in this study is summarized in Table 5.1 (For detailed reference, see Appendix 4):

| Time of publication | Periodic comparison | Regional comparison |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| The 1980s | Cai, et al. (1985) | |
| | Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) | |
| The mid-1990s | The 3,4,5 literature (Guangdong) | The Shanghai version |
| | | The Beijing version |
| The late 1990s to the 2000s | The <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> | |
| | MOE (1997) | |
| | MOE (2002) | |

Table 5.1: Data base for content analysis in this study

5.5.1.2 Conceptualization (categorization)

Content analysis starts with categorization. The categories used in a content analysis

Shanghai Dictionary Press (hereafter the “Cai, et al. (1985)” in this thesis).

⁴⁵⁸ Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) *Jiaoyuxue Jiaoxue Cankaoshu: Deyulun Fengce [Teaching Reference Manual to Educational Studies: Moral Education]*, Beijing: People’s Education Press (hereafter the “Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986)” in this thesis).

⁴⁵⁹ Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department (2002) Guangdongsheng gongmin daode geyan (Guangdong provincial maxims on ethic building for citizens), in *Nanfang Daily*, April 23, 2002, p.A03.

⁴⁶⁰ PRC Ministry of Education (MOE) (1997) *Jiunian yiwujiaoyu xiaoxue sipinke ji zhongxue sixiangzhengzhi kecheng biao zhun [The Revised Nine-year Compulsory Primary Ideomoral and Secondary Ideopolitical Curriculum Standards]*, *Chinese Education Yearbook 2002*, Beijing: People’s Education Press (hereafter the “MOE(1997)” in this thesis).

⁴⁶¹ PRC Ministry of Education (MOE) (2002) *Pinde yu shehui kecheng biao zhun (shixing)[Morality and Society Curriculum Standards (Experimental Version)]*, Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press (hereafter the “MOE(2002)” in this thesis).

can be determined inductively, deductively, or by some combination of both.⁴⁶² In this study, a combination of deductive and inductive procedures was employed to generate themes for content analysis. In regard to the deductive categorization, the categories were generated by the review of (a) government documents on ideopolitical-moral education to illustrate the themes emphasized by the government (documentary analysis in later section), and (b) previous value studies of Chinese textbooks and children's books.

In regard to inductive categorization, the categories were generated by the researcher reading through the texts. In the pilot study, the researcher read through the 3,4,5 literature, the focal point of the present study, in order to add any item omitted after completing the deductive categorization.

5.5.1.3 Development of instrument for content analysis

Like any literature, the 3,4,5 literature is value laden for moral/political socialization. In this study, thematic analysis is used to analyze the contents of the 3,4,5 literature. The theme is a unit of analysis which includes (1) values that "act as general guides to behaviour" and so forth such as social values and personal values; and (2) informational concepts and terminologies which, though essentially neutral, inform and influence the attitudes, and behaviour of the readers. Yang's value study found that the Chinese readers were characterized by political themes in order to cultivate children's love and pride in China.⁴⁶³ From the pilot study with the *New Three Character Classic*, not only the political themes mentioned by Yang but also traditional themes (such as ancient literary themes) and national themes (such as

⁴⁶² Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.180.

⁴⁶³ Yang, S.H. (1982) *A content analysis of elementary school grammar readers in the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong*, Ed. D. dissertation, Harvard University, (UMI Dissertation Services).

Chinese geographical features) were found. There are in total six categories of theme identified in the instrument for content analysis, namely personal values, social values, global values, traditional themes, national themes, and political themes. The justification for these six themes is provided below.

(1) Personal values (individual-oriented values)

As mentioned, Confucius placed great emphasis on the cultivation of the virtues of benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, faithfulness and courage. Mencius further claimed that man was borne with a sense of compassion as the source of humanity (or benevolence), a sense of shame as the source of righteousness, a sense of respect as the source of propriety, and a sense of right and wrong as the source of wisdom (*Mencius*, VIA.6). ‘Propriety’ has long been emphasized in Confucian thinking. The pilot study revealed the prevalence of ‘civilized behaviour’ in the 3,4,5 literature.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, “righteousness” and “profit-mindedness” are traditionally dichotomized values, being mutually exclusive to one another. Confucius said, “The gentleman (*junzi*) is versed in what is moral (righteousness) (*yi*); the small man (ordinary people) (*xiaoren*) is versed in what is profitable (*li*).” (The *Analects*, 4.16)⁴⁶⁴ It is found that as marketization and commercialization increasingly deepened, the concepts of “righteousness” and “honesty” were stressed in economic relationships, to combat money worship, hedonism, and egoism.⁴⁶⁵

Confucian ethics regard self-cultivation as the basis of all virtues. “Self” values such as ‘self-determination’ and ‘self-discipline’ were also advocated in the 3,4,5 literature,

⁴⁶⁴ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, p.33.

⁴⁶⁵ Chen Y.Q. and Zhang Y.Y. (2002) Values and their Transformation, in K. Pohl and A.W. Müller (Eds.) *Chinese Ethics in a Global Context: Moral Bases of Contemporary Societies*, Leiden: Brill, p.99.

and thus categorized as one sub-theme of personal values.

(2) Social values (group-oriented values)

In Confucian teaching, self-cultivation is the starting point of human perfection but should be extended to the family, the society, and ultimately the rest of the world. In the Confucian tradition, man is a relational being. Group cohesiveness and social order are important in maintaining harmonious relations with one another in the society. Under the category of social values, there were sub-themes of ‘familial ethics’ (including ‘filial piety’), ‘occupational ethics’, and ‘devotion’.

Collectivism and group cohesiveness are not only emphasized in traditional Confucianism but also in communism. Hence, sub-themes were created such as ‘unity’, ‘law-abiding’ and ‘democracy’. However, the term ‘democracy’ in China does not imply ‘one person one vote’ as in the Western world.

New social values are also found in the 3,4,5 literature such as ‘take good care of public property’ and ‘environmental protection’.

(3) Global values

Traditional Confucianism also concerns harmonious relations of an individual with the world, and even the universe. Concern for global development such as scientific development, economy, and the world culture was also revealed from the pilot study for the content analysis, and is thus categorized as global values.

(4) Political themes

As mentioned, previous studies of values in textbooks and children’s books in the PRC showed great emphasis on political themes such as the communist ideology of collectivism. In this study, Political themes consisted of sub-themes such as ‘CCP

structure' and 'CCP priorities'.

(5) Traditional themes

The pilot study in this study revealed the mention of historical (pre-communist China) figures (such as emperors, military officers, and literati), historical achievements (i.e. in the fields of science, literary, and medicine) and historical events (for example, the wars against foreign tribes) in the *New Three Character Classic*. These historical figures and events were thus categorized as traditional themes in this study.

(6) National themes

The love of the motherland has long been emphasized by the CCP as one of the "Five Loves". One of the learning objectives of the Primary Ideology and Moral Character Education is to foster students' understanding of the motherland's long history, rich resources, beautiful landscapes as well as cultural traditions and achievements.⁴⁶⁶ National themes included patriotism (an appreciation of Chinese landscapes and nationhood), are included as one of the themes in this study.

Six categories of values/themes in this study are summarized as follows:

- a) Political themes: sub-themes include "CCP structure", "CCP priorities", "CCP ideology", "CCP slogans", "CCP leaders", "CCP models", and "PRC achievements";
- b) Personal values: sub-themes include "benevolence", "civilized behaviour", "hygiene", "righteousness", "simplicity", "self", "diligence" and "enthusiasm for learning";
- c) Social values: sub-themes include "filial piety", "familial love", "familial equality", "familial responsibility", "family education", "occupational ethics", "take good care of public property", "environmental protection", "concern for society", "devotion", "unity", "democracy" and "law-abiding";
- d) Traditional themes: sub-themes include "historical figures", "historical achievements", and "historical events";

⁴⁶⁶ Liu, Y.Z. and Cui, Z.S. (1985) *Xiaoxue Sixiang Pinde Jiaoyu Shouce [A Guide to Primary Ideology and Moral Character Education]*, Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, p.9.

- e) National themes: sub-themes include “geography”, “nationhood”, and “patriotism”;
- f) Global values: sub-theme is “concern for the world”. (Appendix 5)

5.5.1.4 Operationalizations (measures)

In content analysis, sampling may occur at any or all of the following levels: words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, books, writers, ideological stance, subject topic, or similar elements relevant to the context.⁴⁶⁷ To make valid inference from the texts, the complete texts of the materials selected were analyzed to avoid any error in statistical sampling. The sample represents the whole body of texts, thus achieving sampling validity.⁴⁶⁸

Comments and advice were also sought from experts to assure validity in categorization in this study. Experts including two supervisors of the present study and two colleagues of the researcher who were specialists in language teaching and moral education were consulted. The experts were also invited to comment on the appropriateness of the instrument for content analysis. The researcher also amended the instrument several times during the process of coding in order to make sure that the categories were mutually exclusive and independent.

5.5.1.5 Coding

Human coding rather than computer coding was chosen in this study to avoid the potential danger of ambiguity of value-laden Chinese language and misinterpretation of the texts.

One has to understand the distinctive lexical features of a Chinese character in order

⁴⁶⁷ Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.178.

⁴⁶⁸ Bauer, M.B. (2000) Classical Content Analysis: A Review, in M.B. Bauer and G. Gaskell (Eds.) *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*. London: Sage Publications, p.144.

to accurately interpret the text. In Chinese, there is juxtaposition formed by two (or more) component mononyms which may denote a metaphorical extension of the co-hyponyms.⁴⁶⁹ For example, “*gu rou*” [the *New Three Character Classic*, line 36] means “kindred” instead of the co-hyponyms “*gu*” (bone) and “*rou*” (flesh).

On the other hand, the position of two constituent mononyms may be reversed in a small number of synonymous or near-synonymous juxtapositions⁴⁷⁰ in Chinese. Sometimes the reversed form may be similar in meaning.⁴⁷¹ In Chinese, the term “*xin ku*” means “hardship”. In the *New Three Character Classic*, “*ku xin*” [line 38] is used instead of the commonly used juxtaposition “*xin ku*” for rhyming. Both forms “*ku xin*” and “*xin ku*” actually mean “hardship”. This distinctive lexical feature of Chinese poses difficulties for computer coding.

Besides, it is also noted that a small number of the Chinese poems or proverbs are borrowed in the 3,4,5 literature, for example, a Tang poem was adapted in the *New Three Character Classic* [lines 39-40],

Repay the sun of spring (parental love) (*bao chun hui*),
the little soul of grass waving (*cun cao xin*)

Political slogans or terminologies are also adopted in the literature, for example, “*men qian san bao*” (cleaning, keeping order, and planting in front of the door) (the *Four Character Song*, line 139) and “*ba hu*” (eight rules of good marriage demonstrated by the former CCP leader Zhou Enlai and his wife, Deng Yingchao) (the *Five Character*

⁴⁶⁹ Yip, P.C. (2000) *The Chinese Lexicon: a comprehensive survey*, London; New York: Routledge, pp.107-8.

⁴⁷⁰ According to Yip, P.C. (2000) *The Chinese Lexicon: a comprehensive survey*, London; New York: Routledge, p.93, “juxtaposition” means the combination of two mononyms of similar semantic orientation and syntactic category to form a disyllabic word.

⁴⁷¹ Yip, P.C. (2000) *The Chinese Lexicon: a comprehensive survey*, London; New York: Routledge, pp.99-100.

Rhyme, line 24). Political slogans and terminologies, often written in short form, pose some difficulties for computer coding.

The 3,4,5 literature is written in three-, four-, and five-character rhymes respectively. In this study, words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs were chosen as the units of content analysis. Coding of a sample from the *New Three Character Classic* is shown as follows to clarify the coding procedure: the *New Three Character Classic* consists of 424 three-character lines. Starting from the first line, “*ren zhi chu*” (Men at their birth), each verse was numbered 1, 2, 3 and so forth. Then the researcher coded all the verses with the instrument of content analysis. For example,

yu bu zhuo (If jade is not polished,)
bu cheng qi (it cannot become a thing of use.)
ren bu xue (If a man does not learn,)
bu zhi li (he cannot know rationality.) (lines 17-20, p.11)

Lines 19-20 explicitly explain the metaphor in lines 17-18 to illustrate the importance of ‘enthusiasm for learning’; hence the researcher tallied “one” occurrence on the theme ‘enthusiasm for learning’. The text was thus coded in accordance with value/themes expressed in it.

5.5.1.6 Reliability

To make valid inferences from the text, some measures were taken for reliability purposes. Reproducibility⁴⁷² or an inter-coders reliability check⁴⁷³ was adopted to ensure the consistency of coding between different coders of the same text in the same way. In this study, an expert on Chinese Language with rich knowledge of moral education in China was invited to take part in the inter-coder check on the whole text of *the New Three Character Classics*, the focal text of this study.

⁴⁷² Weber, R.P. (1990) *Basic Content Analysis*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, p.12.

⁴⁷³ Stemler, S. (2001) An overview of content analysis, *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(17), [online] available from <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17> [Accessed 29 December, 2005].

Inter-coder reliability was measured in the following way: the definitions of thematic categories were presented to two coders.⁴⁷⁴ Then each coder worked independently on the text and their results were correlated and the reliability calculated. It was found that there was 93.94 percent agreement between the two coders.⁴⁷⁵ The coding adopted for this study is justified and reflects the nature of the documents to be analyzed.

In addition, the author of a text is believed to have good knowledge and experience of his own writing. This leads to the second reliability check in the present study---authors' comments: the findings of the content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature were presented to the authors for comment to ensure that the findings generated for the content analysis were accurate interpretation of the literature. In the present study, all findings of content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature were agreed by the respective authors.⁴⁷⁶

One controversy concerning the use of content analysis is whether the analysis should be limited to manifest content (those elements that are physically present and countable) or extended to more latent content. In the latter case, the analysis is extended to an interpretative reading of the symbolism underlying the physical data.⁴⁷⁷ To avoid the dangers in directly inferring from latent symbolism, the

⁴⁷⁴ The two coders are the researcher and the expert on Chinese Language with rich knowledge of moral education in China. Both are Chinese and do not have problem reading and comprehending Chinese.

⁴⁷⁵ Reliability = No. of themes agreed – No. of themes disagreed/ Total no. of themes coded X 100%
Reliability for the classic = (231-14) /231 X 100% =93.94%.

⁴⁷⁶ For authors' comments, content analysis findings of the *New Three Character Classic*, *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* were commented on by author A, B, and C who were the authors of the literature respectively.

⁴⁷⁷ Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.176.

researcher included contextual data to document the researcher's interpretations.

5.5.2 Documentary analysis

The 3,4,5 literature were produced by the para-government Guangdong Education Press and Guangdong People Press with active participation of provincial officials in the editorial work. The publication of the 3,4,5 literature thus seemed to be a provincial ideopolitical-moral education work. However, subsequent versions of *New Three Character Classic* were written nearly simultaneously in different provinces of China in the mid-1990s. Did these emulations reflect the great influence of the Guangdong ideopolitical-moral literature or national policy in ideopolitical-moral education?

The method of documentary analysis was employed in this study to investigate the association between national policy in ideopolitical-moral education and the emergence and the decline of the 3,4,5 literature and their emulations. The findings of documentary analysis also provide the researcher with information about government priorities in ideopolitical-moral education for content analysis.

According to May (2001), documentary research is a useful means to enhance understanding in case studies by situating contemporary accounts within an historical context. Documents can provide information about the way in which events are constructed, and the reasons for them, as well as providing materials upon which to base further research investigations. Sources for documentary research can be as wide as official statistics, photographs, texts and visual data. Among them, government documents include records, for example, political speeches, administrative and

government committee records and reports.⁴⁷⁸ In this study, government documents on ideopolitical-moral education are used as source for analysis.

Lee (2001) observed that the CCP education documents were presented in systematic and cautious ways. He investigated the shifts of government emphases in moral education in China by examining government documents on moral education from 1978 to 1996.⁴⁷⁹

Though this study focuses on the development of ideopolitical-moral education in China from 1992 to 2002, a period of strengthening reform, government documents issued earlier, i.e. the 1990s, were also included in the data base of documentary analysis as it would take time to convert the governmental priorities and emphases into practice in schools. In this study, a total of 20 government directives on ideopolitical-moral education issued by the education authorities in China, namely the CCP Central Committee, Ministry of Education (MOE), or State Education Commission (SEC) were selected for analysis (Appendix 6).

Thematic analysis was employed to identify official emphases revealed by frequency counts in government directives in the ideopolitical-moral education texts analyzed. According to Lee (1996), the expression of moral education policies in the PRC was always problem-oriented and the CCP's education documents started with a statement of the problem and then suggested solutions.⁴⁸⁰ The problems perceived by the CCP

⁴⁷⁸ May, T. (2001) *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*, Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.175, 179.

⁴⁷⁹ Lee, W.O. (2001) Moral Education Policy in China: The Struggle between Liberal and Transitional Approaches, in M. Bray and W.O. Lee (Eds.) *Education and Political Transition: Themes and Experiences in East Asia*, Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 201-219.

⁴⁸⁰ Lee, W.O. (1996) Changing Ideopolitical Emphases in Moral Education in China: An Analysis of

and the suggested solutions are thus the main themes for analysis. Documentary analysis examined the following themes:

- (1) nature of ideopolitical-moral education: guiding principles and ingredients of ideopolitical-moral education;
- (2) aims of ideopolitical-moral education: problems to be addressed in ideopolitical-moral education;
- (3) difficulties perceived by the government in the implementation of ideopolitical-moral education;
- (4) solutions suggested by the government in regard to ideopolitical-moral education: teaching content, teaching strategy, and teaching resources.

5.5.3 Interviews

The method of interviewing enables the researcher to understand the meaning of the informants' actions by putting their behaviour in context, though the limits on our understanding of others make it impossible to understand another person perfectly.⁴⁸¹

To reconstruct the story of the 3,4,5 literature and reveal the underlying meaning of the 3,4,5 movement, stakeholders who became involved in the movement were interviewed. It was hoped that the informants' reconstruction of his or her experience during the interview would help the researcher to develop an accurate understanding of the process of 3,4,5 movement, including tensions between different participants within the process.

5.5.3.1 Design of the interviews

The word "interviewing" covers a wide range of practices. There are tightly structured, survey interviews with preset, standardized, and closed questions. At the other end of the continuum are open-ended, apparently unstructured friendly conversations. Located somewhere between the two extremes of structured and unstructured

the CCP Central Committee Documents, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 16(1), p.118.

⁴⁸¹ Irving, S. (1998) *Interview as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York: Teachers College Press, pp.3-4

interviews structure is the semi-structured interview.⁴⁸² A semi-structured interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics but the interviewers are expected to probe far beyond the answers to the prepared and standardized questions in order to approach the world from the informant's perspective.⁴⁸³

In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as they allow the researcher on one hand to understand the process of the 3,4,5 movement and its meaning from the informant's perspective but on the other hand to ask follow-up questions arising from the replies and/or from his own content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature and documentary analysis of government directives in the public domain.

5.5.3.2 Validity

The human interviewer is the sole instrument of the in-depth interviews. Validity is thus important in interview research to minimize any distortion arising from the interviewer's role in the interview. To ensure validity, Seidman (1998) suggests an internal consistency check on participants' comments by interviewing participants over the course of 1 to 3 weeks to account for idiosyncratic days. The researcher can also interview a number of participants so as to connect their experiences and check the comments as a means of triangulation.⁴⁸⁴

However, it is not always possible for the researcher to interview the informants frequently. The number of participants in the interview is also limited in some

⁴⁸² Irving, S. (1998) *Interview as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York: Teachers College Press, p.9

⁴⁸³ Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.33.

⁴⁸⁴ Irving, S. (1998) *Interview as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York: Teachers College Press, pp.16-7

circumstances. To solve these difficulties, Dolbeare and Schuman (1982) designed a series of three separate interviews with each participant to enable the interviewer to plumb the participant's experience and to place it in context. The first interview establishes the context of the participants' experience. The second interview allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. The third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning the experience holds for them. The three interviews have different focuses:

Interview One: Focused life history

The interviewer puts the participants' experience in context by asking him to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time.

Interview Two: The Details of Experience

The purpose of the second interview is to concentrate on the concrete details of the participants' present experience in the topic of the study.

Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning

In the third interview, participants are asked to reflect on the meaning of their experience. The question of "meaning" addresses the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life. The question may be phrased, "Given what you have said about your life before you became a mentor teacher and given what you have said about your work now, how do you understand mentoring in your life? What sense does it make to you?"⁴⁸⁵

This study modifies Dolbeare and Schuman's (1982) design of interview into a three-tiered single interview for validity purposes. The interview consisted of three phases of questions concerning the "life history" of the informants, their "3,4,5 experience" and their "reflection on the 3,4,5 literature" respectively in order to cover in one interview the three areas of focuses that Dolbeare and Schuman (1982) suggested. Take the interview for the authors of the 3,4,5 literature as example, the informants were firstly asked about their "life history" on ideopolitical-moral

⁴⁸⁵ Irving, S. (1998) *Interview as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York: Teachers College Press, pp.11-2.

education. The researcher attempted to put the informants' experience of ideopolitical-moral education in context up to the present time by this "warm-up" exercise. Then the interview shifted to the informants' "3,4,5 experience", i.e. their story of participating in the writing team of the 3,4,5 literature. Finally, the interview turned to the informants' "3,4,5 reflection", i.e. their evaluation of the 3,4,5 literature (reflection on its meaning). The Interview schedule designed is in Appendix 7.

In addition, as many categories of informants as possible were invited to attend the interview as the 3,4,5 literature was produced by specific editorial boards composed of government propaganda officials, academics, and teachers, and the literature had been taught in schools by teachers. The four categories of informants---school teachers, government officials (policy makers) on ideopolitical-moral education, academics in ideopolitical-moral education, and authors of the 3,4,5 literature were invited to attend interview to reconstruct a story of the 3,4,5 literature and its related movement.

Selection of informants was based on their specialties and participation in the 3,4,5 movement as well as their availability. All informants were recruited by the researcher, and his local supervisor, Professor Lee Wing On and his colleagues in the mainland.

5.5.3.3 Safety measures

Apart from measures taken for validity purposes, this study also adopted the following preventive measures to protect personal safety of the informants in consideration of the potential sensitivity of discussion of ideopolitical-moral education in China.

All informants participated on a voluntary basis. Before the interviews, all informants

were given details about the study and shown the main questions to be asked. All of them signed a Consent Form to confirm their understanding of the nature of the present study, their willingness to participate, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Nevertheless, none of them withdrew from the interview. On the contrary, they became increasingly enthusiastic and all the interviews lasted much longer than the agreed length of interview. It appears from this that the informants did not consider the topic of this study politically sensitive.

Interview research should indicate whether or not participants' names will be used in the study, whether any other names will be used, or whether pseudonyms will be substituted.⁴⁸⁶ In this study, the purpose of interview was clearly explained to the informants and they were told that the findings of the interview would be included in the thesis. The informants were assured of anonymity: their names and backgrounds would not be disclosed in the thesis. Nevertheless, the informants could choose if they wanted to have their names shown in the *List of Acknowledgements*. It was hoped that the anonymity measure could on one hand protect the safety of our informants while on the other hand making them more comfortable and willing to speak. All informants chose to have their names included in the *List of Acknowledgements*, showing their confidence that taking part in the interviews would not put their personal safety at risk.

The interviews were arranged at a time and place of the informants' choice in order to avoid any worry or concern about the implications and consequences of the interviews and to reduce interference by normal activities as far as possible. According to the

⁴⁸⁶ Irving, S. (1998) *Interview as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York: Teachers College Press, p.51.

choice of the informants, all interviews were conducted in Guangdong province.

The interview questions were open-ended. To assure security for the informants, the interviews were not audio-taped. Permission to take notes during the interview was sought from each informant before the interview in order to encourage them to feel safe to talk in the interview. If the researcher had at any stage been refused permission to take notes, he would immediately have offered to terminate the interview, to leave any notes already made with the informant, and undertake not to make any use of information provided by the informant. Nevertheless, permission to take notes during the interview was granted by all informants.

After the interviews, the researcher sent each informant a draft of sections of the thesis in which he had made use of the materials provided by him/her. Each informant was then free to request any changes. This ensured that confidentiality had been fully maintained to his/her satisfaction.

5.5.3.4 Facilitating measures

The present study took a number of measures to facilitate the informants' recall of their experience of participation of the 3,4,5 movement. To ensure accuracy of the information flow during the interview, the informants were shown a summary of the interview notes and asked if there were any misinterpretation. The interview record could thus be amended as far as possible.

The interview began with core guiding questions and the informants were invited to say as much as he/she liked about the relevant topics. Every interview was planned to take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The informants were encouraged to continue to

talk beyond the time limits. On the other hand, whenever the informants found it difficult to speak, the researcher asked prompting questions in order to keep the interview progressing smoothly and lead the informants to think more thoroughly about the topic. In fact, the informants were so engaged that the interviews generally overran the planned time limit.

5.5.3.5 Focus Group Meeting

In addition to individual interviews, a focus group meeting was organized to provide a triangulation check on the interview findings. Six participants joined the focus group meeting in the present study. Procedures for inviting participants and protecting their anonymity were the same as those for the informants. All of them signed the Consent Form and no one withdrew from the meeting. To serve as a validity check, discussion themes were the same as those in the interview. The participants shared their viewpoints on the background leading to the 3,4,5 literature, its application to moral education, and its subsequent development.

5.6 Trustworthiness of the present study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested triangulation, thick description and confirmability as a trustworthiness check in qualitative research.⁴⁸⁷ Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen (1993) stress that triangulation lends credibility to the findings by incorporating multiple sources of data, methods, investigators, or theories.⁴⁸⁸

In the present study, research data were collected from three sources of information, namely content analysis, documentary analysis, and interview. Each research method had its own objectives but also formed a base for triangulation which validated the

⁴⁸⁷ Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

⁴⁸⁸ Erlandson, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. and Allen, S.D. (1993) *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: A Guide to Methods*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

data collected and enhanced the research trustworthiness of this study through the comparisons of research results from three sources of information. In addition to triangulation, the present study took numerous quotes from the documents analysed to provide examples of the variables being analysed.

The trustworthiness of the study was also established by its confirmability. Since the government documents in moral education were published and readily accessible, it was assumed that future researchers could use these sources to replicate the study and confirm the findings.

5.7 Conclusion

In this study, research data were collected from both quantitative (content analyses) and qualitative (interviewing and documentary analysis) methodologies to develop an understanding of the unique content characteristics of the 3,4,5 literature, and their emergence and development in the context of ideopolitical-moral education in China. This chapter has provided a comprehensive description of the research methodologies used in this study and discussed the importance of using a mix of qualitative analysis to interpret the data collected from the interview and quantitative analyses to analyse the data collected from content analysis and documentary analysis. In addition, this chapter has discussed the data collection procedures and instruments employed in this study. This chapter has also addressed the trustworthiness of the study through the use of triangulation, thick description and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The following three chapters, Chapter 6 to 8, will present the findings of the study. Chapter 9 will discuss the results in details followed by a summary, conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 10.

Chapter 6

Findings from Content Analysis of Moral Education Texts

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature and other relevant moral education literature and documents will be presented. The presentation will begin with content features of the 3,4,5 literature, the central moral education texts in this study. Then there will be a comparison of the features of the 3,4,5 literature with (1) new three-character classics published in other provinces than Guangdong, i.e. Beijing and Shanghai; (2) previous moral education documents and (3) subsequent moral education documents. The analysis aimed to answer the research questions being raised and provide a profile of value orientations that the Chinese leadership was attempting to inculcate in their citizens at different stage of economic reform and opening up in China.

6.2. The *New Three Character Classic*⁴⁸⁹

Table 6.1 illustrates the relative percentage with which the selected themes/values are embedded in the *New Three Character Classic*:

| Themes/values | Number of occurrence | Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Traditional themes | 76 | 32.90 |
| Personal values | 51 | 22.08 |
| Social values | 48 | 20.78 |
| National themes | 29 | 12.55 |
| Political themes | 21 | 9.09 |
| Global values | 6 | 2.60 |
| Total | 231 | 100.00 |

Table 6.1: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *New Three Character Classic*

In terms of the occurrence of themes/values, the *New Three Character Classic* apparently places the greatest emphasis on traditional themes (76 occurrences/32.90%). Personal values (51 occurrences/22.08%) and social values (48

⁴⁸⁹ Editorial Committee of the *New Three Character Classic* (Ed.) (1995) *Xin Sanzijing* [The New Three Character Classic], Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.

occurrences/20.78%) rank second and third respectively, occupying more than 20 percent of the total number of occurrence. National themes came fourth (29 occurrences/12.55%). Political themes only play a minor role (21 occurrences/9.09%) while global values (6 occurrences/2.60%) obtained the smallest frequency of occurrence.

| (N:231) | Political themes (N:21) | Personal values (N:51) | Social values (N:48) | Traditional themes (N:76) | National Themes (N:29) | Global values (N:6) |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| | CCP models(8) | Righteousness (12) | Filial Piety (11) | Historical Figures (42) | Geography (13) | Concern for the world (6) |
| | CCP leaders(5) | Civilized behaviour(10) | Unity (9) | Historical achievement (19) | Patriotism (13) | |
| | CCP slogans (4) | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Concern for society (6) | Historical events (15) | Nations (3) | |
| | CCP priorities (3) | Benevolence (7) | Familial Love (5) | | | |
| | CCP ideology (1) | Self (6) | Familial Education (4) | | | |
| | | Hygiene (3) | Law-abiding (3) | | | |
| | | Diligence (2) | Occupational ethics (3) | | | |
| | | Simplicity (1) | Devotion (3) | | | |
| | | | Democracy (1) | | | |
| | | | Take good care of public property (1) | | | |
| | | | Environmental Protection (1) | | | |
| | | | Familial Responsibility (1) | | | |
| Percentage | 9.09 | 22.08 | 20.78 | 32.90 | 12.55 | 2.60 |

Table 6.2: Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the *New Three Character Classic*

Analysis of sub-themes in each category of themes/values further reveals official emphases in political socialization of the citizens (Table 6.2). In the category of traditional themes, over half of the occurrences (42 occurrences) are historical figures, including ancient emperors, military officers, literary figures and scholars. The *New Three Character Classic* highlights the glorious side of China through the mention of historical figures and their achievements in order to foster national sentiment among the readers. In mathematics, there is the discovery of circumference ratio by Zu Chongzhi (429-500). In medicine, there are surgery skills of Hua Tuo (145-208) (lines 337-8) and the writing of *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu*) by Li Shizhen (1518-1593) (lines 341 - 342). In textiles, there is the invention of spinning machine by Huang Daopo (1245-1306) (lines 339-340).⁴⁹⁰ Also mentioned are ancient Chinese schools of thought such as Confucianism, Maoism, and Taoism in the Warring States' period (403-221 BC) (lines 274-280), four inventions in ancient China: the compass, paper and printing technology, gunpowder, and fireworks (lines 321 - 332), and literary works (such as four classical novels of Chinese literature⁴⁹¹ (lines 305-312). In modernized China, moral models are no longer revolutionary heroes but people with excellent scholarly achievements.

Besides scholarly figures, the *New Three Character Classic* also mentions 4 emperors such as Qin Shi Huang Di, Han Wu Di, Tang Tai Zong and Qing Kangxi. It is interesting to note that all emperors mentioned came from powerful dynasties in Chinese history. They had distinguished achievement in either unifying or expanding the Chinese territory.

⁴⁹⁰ The life history of Huang Daopo refers to <http://www.deqing.gd.cn/ggl/xxtp.htm> [Accessed 20 December, 2005].

⁴⁹¹ The four classical novels of Chinese literature include *Sanguo yanyi* [*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*] (1330), *Xiyouji* [*The Journey to the West*] (1590), *Shuihuchuan* [*Outlaws of the Marsh*] (1573?) and *Hongloumeng* [*Dream of the Red Chamber*] (1792), see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Classical_Novels [Accessed 20 December, 2005].

In contrast, the majority of marshals quoted in the *New Three Character Classic* came from politically weak periods in Chinese history, for example, Yue Fei (1103-1142) and Wen Tianxiang (1236-1283) in the Song dynasty, and Lin Zexu (1785-1850) and Deng Shichang (1849-1894) in the late-Qing who sacrificed their life in protecting the motherland from foreign invasions. Zheng Chenggong (1624-1662) even recovered Taiwan from the hands of the Dutch (lines 209-216). The mention of the moral integrity of these historical figures aimed to foster patriotism among the readers.

15 “historical events” are mentioned in the *New Three Character Classic*. One of them was the Opium War (1839-42, 1856-60) which was regarded as “the beginning of a series of humiliations at the hands of the Western powers” in contemporary Chinese history.⁴⁹² Nevertheless, the *New Three Character Classic* does not emphasize the “humiliating” defeat of the war but the bravery of Lin Zexu (1785-1850), the Imperial Commissioner at Canton who destroyed imported opium in 1839, and the Chinese people who resisted foreign invasion in San Yuan Lane (Guangzhou) with pride,

In the past hundred years, (*jin bai nian*)
the big powers made strong attacks; (*lie qiang qi*)
They burnt the palace; (*shao yuan ming*)
and grabbed our land. (*ge wo di*)
Our soldiers with determination, (*wo zhi shi*)
smote the table and rose to their feet; (*pai an qi*)
They resisted invasion, (*fan qin lue*)
and wiped out national humiliation. (*xue guo chi*)
Lin Zexu, (*Lin ze xu*)
destroyed opium; (*hui ya pian*)
In San Yuan lane, (*San yuan li*)

⁴⁹² Buoye, T. (2002) Introduction, T. Buoye et al. (Eds.) *China: Adapting the past, Confronting the Future*, Michigan: The University of Michigan, p.12.

the people fought with blood. (*min xue zhan*)

Invaded the enemy's battleships, (*chong di lian*)

[one was] Deng Shichang. (*Deng Shichang*) (lines 221-234)

The author of the *New Three Character Classic* upheld the patriotic acts of those national heroes and ordinary people during these "historical events".

Personal values are the second most frequently included themes/values in the *New Three Character Classic*. "Righteousness" is the most frequently included personal value (12 occurrences). The *New Three Character Classic* describes "greed" as the root of evils with the story of Yang Zhen (?-124) who refused the temptation of gold ("*ju shou jin*"), and concludes that only the uncorrupted ones (morally clean persons) will be admired by the people (*lian jie zhe/shi tong qin*) (lines 163-4). The call for "righteousness" on one hand reflects the tension between "righteousness" and "profit" in the process of marketization, but on the other hand shows the authorities' recognition of the problem of corruption in post-reform China.

The *New Three Character Classic* also upholds "civilized behaviour" (10 occurrences) because (1) "manners" is one of the Chinese traditions; and (2) "manners" is important to national prosperity. It says,

Our China, (*wo zhong hua*)

is a nation of politeness and etiquette; (*li yi bang*)

is concerned with civilization, (*jiang wen ming*)

and prosperous national development. (*guo yun chang*) (lines 185-8)

It also emphasizes the importance of learning etiquette in improving interpersonal relationships ("*lun ren ji/ying zhi li*") (lines 177-8).

"Enthusiasm for learning" is another theme of the *New Three Character Classic* (10 occurrences). There are stories of Su Qin who "*pricked his thigh with an awl*" (to

keep on studying hard) (*zhui ci gu*) (lines 75-6), Che Yin (333?-401?) who read books by the light of bagged fireflies while Sun Kang read under the reflected light of snow (lines 101-2). Those stories of ancient models who aimed high despite poverty are probably intended to be inspirational to (spoiled) young children who have enjoyed much better learning conditions. The emphasis on “enthusiasm for learning” indicates the official concern for children’s learning in the modernization of China.

Social values rank third in the *New Three Character Classic*. It places particular emphasis on familial ethics, such as “filial piety” (11 occurrences). The story of the ancient model Huang Xiang (56 ? — 106) who warmed his father's bed with his body in severely cold weather (lines 25-8) were included. The *New Three Character Classic* further calls for readers to participate actively in household chores such as washing bowls (“*xi wan kuai*”) and sweeping the doorway (“*sao men ting*”) (lines 49-52). The *New Three Character Classic* also emphasizes “familial love” (5 occurrences) and “family education” (4 occurrences). The advocacy of familial ethics seems to be an official response to the increasingly weakening familial bond in the PRC during and before the economic reform.

“Unity” (9 occurrences) is the second most frequently included social value. Students are reminded to respect teachers and seniors (“*jing shi chang*”) (line 90). The *New Three Character Classic* also upholds the value of “devotion” with the stories of communist models Lei Feng (1940-1962) (lines 129-132) to respond to growing individualism in Guangdong province.

National themes rank fourth in the *New Three Character Classic* (29 occurrences/ 12.55%). “Patriotism” (13 occurrences) is emphasized through the stories of patriotic

heroes who protected the nation against foreign invasions. The *New Three Character Classic* also highlights distinctive Chinese geographical features (13 occurrences) such as “*wu yue*” (five sacred mountains),⁴⁹³ Huang He (Yellow river), Chang Jiang, Zhu Jiang and Hei Long Jiang, as well as great constructions like the Great Wall and canals. Also mentioned is the ancient Silk Road which connected China with the West (lines 373-388). The *New Three Character Classic* stresses that China is a unified nation (3 occurrences). It maintains that 56 nations in China “are in one family” (*gong yi jia*) (lines 404-6).

Hand in hand, (*tong xie shou*)

we build up China. (*jian zhong hua*) (lines 407-8)

The message of “national cohesion” is clear. The *New Three Character Classic* further reiterates the beauty of Taiwan and its closeness to the mainland,

Counting treasure islands, (*shu bao dao*)

Taiwan comes first; (*shou tai wan*)

Connected to the mainland, (*lian da lu*)

Closely related (*qing xiang guan*)(lines 389-392).

The stress on the close relationship with Taiwan indicates the authorities’ concern for national cohesion, especially when the sovereignty of Hong Kong and Macau would be returned to China soon after the *New Three Character Classic* was written.⁴⁹⁴

Surprisingly, political themes come fifth in the *New Three Character Classic* (21 occurrences). Most of them are “CCP models” (8 occurrences). It is interesting to note that “good models” for young children (lines 361-366) comprised only 2 revolutionary figures: Lei Feng and Jiao Yulu (1922-1964), but 6 party members with distinguished achievement, including left-wing writers Guo Moruo (1892-1978) and Shen Yanbing (1915-1986) (lines 317-8), mathematician Hua Luogeng (1910-1985),

⁴⁹³ The five sacred mountains include Tai Shan in Shantung, Heng Shan in Hunan, Hua Shan in Shenxi, Heng Shan in Hepei, and Sung Shan in Henan.

⁴⁹⁴ The sovereign of Hong Kong and Macau had been returned to China in 1997 and 1999 respectively.

economist Sun Yefang (1908-1983), scientist Qian Xuesen (1911-) and geologist Li Siguang (1889-1971). The larger number of the CCP models with academic achievement than revolutionary models reflect the official stress on academic pursuit in the process of modernization.

Also mentioned are key “CCP leaders” such as Mao Zedong (1893-1976), Zhou Enlai (1898 -1976) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), though the frequency is low. “CCP slogans” are mentioned four times. All are slogans that emerged in the reform era, for example, the “five stresses, four beauties” and the “four haves.”⁴⁹⁵ “CCP priorities” are mentioned 3 times, including the establishment of the PRC (lines 255-6) and Deng’s implementation of economic reform (lines 257-262). The low percentage of political themes in the *New Three Character Classic* might be seen as the government’s effort to avoid overloading young children with distant political figures and slogans. The leadership seems to have recognized that the best way to instil political values in young children is not to overload them with abstract political concepts but to start with socio-cultural values.

Lastly, the *New Three Character Classic* also consists of global values (6 occurrences). All are scientific advances such as splitting atoms (“*lie yuan zi*”), investigating genes (“*tan ji yin*”), computers (“*ji suan ji*”) and travel in space (“*you tai kong*”) (lines 347-356). Though the number of global values is small, their importance should not be ignored as it illustrates the official concern for scientific advancement in the world. The *New Three Character Classic* encourages young children to “*observe the changes in the world*” (“*guan feng yun/ kan shi jie*”) (lines 413-414) and “*work hard together*” (*qi nu li*) (line 424) for “strengthening China

⁴⁹⁵ The “Four haves” are people with ideals, morality, culture, and discipline.

(*zhen zhong hua*) (line 424). It stresses the importance of developing global outlook for the modernization of China.

In summary, the *New Three Character Classic* contains the following messages:

(1) Patriotism

The *New Three Character Classic* encourages patriotism illustrated by its inclusion of ancient emperors, and marshals who made a contribution in unifying, expanding or safeguarding the Chinese territory from foreign invasions.

In addition, the *New Three Character Classic* elaborates the achievements of ancient Chinese scholarly figures to highlight the greatness of the Chinese civilization. It also introduces Chinese geographical features and the unified nation. It on one hand indicates the greatness and beauty of the Chinese territory while on the other hand it stresses the importance of national cohesion, especially the linkage of Taiwan with the mainland (lines 389-392). The advocacy of traditional themes in the *New Three Character Classic* has thus political significance in boosting the sense of national cohesion, though not necessarily in an anti-foreign way.

In traditional Confucian teaching, *ren* is the beginning of human virtues. Man should expand his *ren* to all human relations, and to the state. The *New Three Character Classic* also calls for the readers to expand their personal values and social values to the state. For example, one can make the nation prosper through learning,

A high level of culture, (*wen hua gao*)
 adds wings to the tiger; (*hu tian yi*)
 For wealth and strength, (*qiu fu qiang*)
 fight for the day. (*zheng zhao xi*)(lines 369-372).

With regard to civilized behaviour, the *New Three Character Classic* says,

Our China, (*wo zhong hua*)
 is a nation of politeness and etiquette; (*li yi bang*)
 is concerned with civilization, (*jiang wen ming*)
 and prosperous national development. (*guo yun chang*) (lines 185-8)

For “filial piety”, the *New Three Character Classic* appeals to the readers to expand their familial love to the love of motherland,

Home loves me, (*jia ai wo*)
 I love home; (*wo ai jia*)
 Promote this thought, (*tui ci xin*)
 to love China. (*ai zhong hua*) (lines 53-56).

The *New Three Character Classic* ends with the remark,

Strengthening China, (*zhen zhong hua*)
 [we] work hard together. (*qi nu li*)(lines 423-4)

Suffice to say that the *New Three Character Classic* upholds the value of patriotism by advocating Confucian ethics.

(2) Moral qualities to satisfy the needs of modernization

The *New Three Character Classic* demands “the new generation” to be ambitious (*yong pan deng*) to climb to higher level (*shang ceng lou*) (lines 365-368) in “a new age” (*xin shi dai*) (lines 65). To help establish a civilized and wealthier China, the “new generation” is expected to learn a variety of qualities from model scholars, including such models as Che Yin and Sun Kang who demonstrated their “enthusiasm for learning” despite poor conditions. Children are encouraged to study diligently different subject areas of literature, geography, science and technology. In addition, learning should not be confined to academic subjects, but should cover a wider scope of physical education, arts and manners (lines 21-4, 77-84). Children should not “emphasize one thing at the expense of another” (*quan fa zhan/ mo pian fei*) (lines 95-6).

The *New Three Character Classic* emphasizes how children should behave in schools

(lines 57-108) or in the family (lines 21-56). In schools, children should respect teachers, maintain friendship with schoolmates, and be eager to learn. In the family, children are expected to be filial, and to maintain good relationships with brothers and sisters. Children should be righteous, courageous, law-abiding, patriotic, and show concern for the society. Good children should thus be self-disciplined, thrifty, with good manners and civilized behaviours.

(3) Global outlook

Content analysis reveals that the *New Three Character Classic*, though insisting on resisting foreign invasions, asserts the openness of China to the outside world and emphasizes the importance of absorbing advanced foreign scientific knowledge, such as computers,

Technology of today (*jin ke ji*)

is fast-developed and specialized. (*gao jian jing*) (lines 345-6)

In the face of global challenges, the *New Three Character Classic* concludes:

observe the changes (*guan feng yun*)

in the world; (*kan shi jie*)

Progress will bring prosperity, (*jin ze chang*)

backwardness will lead to loss. (*tui ze bai*) (lines 413-6)

To conclude, the *New Three Character Classic* consists primarily of traditional themes with small number of political themes. It attempts to cultivate values such as patriotism, diligence, and righteousness in young children by using the genre of an old Confucian classic and stories of ancient historical figures to address problems arising in the era of economic reform and opening up. The strategy of following the example of heroic models is still employed but the role models quoted are no longer confined to loyal party cadres but people with moral integrity.

6.3 The *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*⁴⁹⁶

| Themes/values | Number of occurrence | Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Social values | 41 | 49.40 |
| Personal values | 32 | 38.55 |
| National themes | 6 | 7.23 |
| Political themes | 4 | 4.82 |
| Traditional themes | 0 | 0 |
| Global values | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 83 | 100.00 |

Table 6.3: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *Four Character Song*

Living up to its title, nearly half of the themes/values identified (41 occurrences/ 49.40%) in the *Four Character Song* are social values (Table 6.3). Personal values are the second most frequently included values in the Song (32 occurrences/38.55%). Social values and personal values together occupy about 90 percent of total occurrence of themes/values.

On the other hand, the occurrence of both “national themes” (6 occurrences/7.23%) and “political themes” (4 occurrences/ 4.82%) are low. There are no “traditional themes” or “global values” in the *Four Character Song*.

Let’s turn to the analysis of sub-themes (Table 6.4),

⁴⁹⁶ Editorial Committee of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Ed.) (1996) *Shehui Gongde Sizige* [The *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*], Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.

| N=83 | Political theme (N:4) | Personal Values(N:32) | Social Values(N:41) | Traditional themes (N:0) | National themes (N:6) | Global Values (N:0) |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | CCP priorities (3) | Self (9) | Environmental Protection (12) | | Patriotism (6) | |
| | CCP slogan (1) | Civilized behaviour (6) | Unity (8) | | | |
| | | Righteousness (6) | Law-abiding (8) | | | |
| | | Benevolence (4) | Take good care of public property (5) | | | |
| | | Simplicity (3) | Devotion (5) | | | |
| | | Enthusiasm for learning (2) | Familial Love (1) | | | |
| | | Hygiene (2) | Filial Piety (1) | | | |
| | | | Occupational ethics (1) | | | |
| Percentage | 4.82 | 38.55 | 49.40 | 0 | 7.23 | 0 |

Table 6.4: Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the *Four Character Song*

In the category of social values, the *Four Character Song* places the greatest emphasis on “environmental protection” (12 occurrences). It reminds people to treasure the scarce natural resources as “resources will be exhausted once used” (*hui bu zai sheng*) (line 156). It pays particular attention to water and air pollution, two recent examples of alarming environmental degradation in Guangdong, by saying,

Clean air, (*kong qi qing xin*)
is essential to longevity, (*yi shou yan nian*)
do not pollute the water, (*mo wu bi shui*)
do not pollute the sky, (*mo ran lan tian*) (lines 161-164)

The *Four Character Song* further suggests lawful disposal of polluted water and air (lines 165-166) and the benefits of environmental protection,

Protecting the environment, (*bao hu huan jing*)
is a contribution to the contemporary era. (*gong zai dang dai*)

It benefits the next generations, (*zao fu zi sun*)
and lasts for a thousand years. (*li zai qian zai*) (lines 149-152)

The *Four Character Song* also stresses the value of “unity” (8 occurrences). Readers are reminded to be considerate of others whenever they are walking on the road (“it is better to give three inches, rather than rushing to gain a second” (*ning rang san fen/ mo zheng yi miao*) (lines 55-6)) or watching television or a movie at home (“one should be considerate of the neighbours” (*ying shi yu le/gu ji si lin*) (lines 57-8). People should be more empathetic to one another in daily life.

“Law-abiding” (8 occurrences) is another main theme of the *Four Character Song*. Daily examples of “law-abiding” include following traffic rules, “crossing the road at green lights; stopping at red lights” (*lu guo hong ting*) (line 53) and rules of waste disposal, “polluted water and air/are disposed of according to laws” (*fei shui fei qi/ yi fa zhi li*) (lines 165-6). It holds that being “law-abiding” can maintain social stability and prosperity.

In regard to personal values, the second largest batch of themes/values (32 occurrences/ 38.55%), the most frequently advocated personal values are “self” values (9 occurrences). For example, “self-discipline” can help people to resist seduction from gambling and prostitution (lines 117-120),

Lust will lead to bad consequence, (*huang shi huo shui*)
gambling is a deep hole, (*du ruo shen yuan*)
Loving oneself, (*jie shen zi ai*)
having righteous conduct and proper behaviours. (*pin zheng xing duan*).

The *Four Character Song* is also concerned with “civilized behaviour” (6 occurrences). People should be mindful of their manners and language,

Words of good, (*liang yan yi ju*)
 warm people for three winters, (*san dong yi nuan*)
 Bad words, (*e yu shang ren*)
 chill people even in June. (*liu yue you han*) (lines 29-32)

The calls for “civilized behaviour” reflect a deterioration of interpersonal communication despite improving material living standards in the era of economic reform. The emphasis on good language and manners is in line with the previous (1985) mass campaign of “Five Stresses, Four Beauties”.

There are 6 occurrences of national themes in the *Four Character Song*. All are “patriotism.” People are reminded to “do their duty to the motherland” (*bao xiao zu guo*) as there is a famous Chinese saying, “the rise and fall of the nation/is the concern of every citizen, (*guo jia xing wang/ pi fu you ze*) (lines 177-9). The *Four Character Song* also stresses the protection of “cultural goods and ancient sites” as they are “historical cultural relics of the ancestors” (lines 97-100).

Lastly, the *Four Character Song* contains only a few political themes (4 occurrences). The majority of them are CCP priorities such as *family planning*, *menqian sanbao*,⁴⁹⁷ and CCP slogans such as “*Five Loves*.”⁴⁹⁸

6.4 The *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*⁴⁹⁹

Table 6.5 shows the relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *Five Character Rhyme*. Like the *Four Character Song*, social values play a major role in the *Five Character Rhyme* (55 occurrences/58.51%). Personal values rank the second

⁴⁹⁷ “*menqian sanbao*”: A law which stipulated the organizations and units responsible for orderliness, hygiene, and making a greenbelt in the vicinity of their buildings, see, <http://www.yfzs.gov.cn/gb/info/LawData/difang/FuJian/2003-04/01/1010436516.html> [Accessed 15 October, 2005].

⁴⁹⁸ The “five loves” are the love of the motherland, the people, labour, science, and socialism, see Editorial Committee of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Ed.) (1996) *Shehui Gongde Sizige* [The *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*], Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press, p.102.

⁴⁹⁹ Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996) *Jiating Meide Wuziyao* [The *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*], Guangdong: Guangdong People’s Press.

(32 occurrences/ 35.16%). Adding social values and personal values together occupies 92.55 percent of total occurrences of themes/values embedded in the *Five Character Rhyme*.

| Themes/values | Number of occurrence | Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Social values | 55 | 58.51 |
| Personal values | 32 | 34.04 |
| Political themes | 3 | 3.19 |
| Traditional themes | 2 | 2.13 |
| National themes | 2 | 2.13 |
| Global values | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 94 | 100.00 |

Table 6.5: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *Five Character Rhyme*

The *Five Character Rhyme* contains only a few “political themes” (3 occurrences/ 3.19%), “traditional values” (2 occurrences/2.13%) and “national values” (2 occurrences/ 2.13%). No “global values” are found.

| N=94 | Political themes (N:3) | Personal Values(N:32) | Social Values(N:55) | Traditional themes (N:2) | National themes (N:2) | Global Values (N:0) |
|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | CCP leaders (2) | Self (10) | Familial Love (26) | Historical figures(2) | Patriotism (2) | |
| | CCP priorities (1) | Enthusiasm for learning (6) | Familial Education (12) | | | |
| | | Simplicity (6) | Filial Piety (4) | | | |
| | | Hygiene (4) | Familial Equality (4) | | | |
| | | Civilized behaviour (3) | Familial Responsibility (3) | | | |
| | | Righteousness (3) | Unity (3) | | | |
| | | Benevolence (1) | Law-abiding (2) | | | |
| | | | Devotion (1) | | | |
| Percentage | 3.19 | 34.04 | 58.51 | 2.13 | 2.13 | 0 |

Table 6.6: Frequency and distribution of themes/values in the *Five Character Rhyme*

An analysis of sub-themes (Table 6.6) shows that the content of the *Five Character Rhyme* echoes its name as it has a clear focus on family ethics. 49 out of 55 occurrences (89.09%) of social values are related to the family: “familial love” (26 occurrences), “family education” (12 occurrences), “filial piety” (4 occurrences), “familial equality” (4 occurrences), “familial responsibility (3 occurrences).

The *Five Character Rhyme* calls for mutual love between husband and wife (lines 21-40), father and son (lines 53-56, 85-88), brother and sister (lines 93-6), and between in-laws (lines 97-100). The *Five Character Rhyme* further quotes the story of Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao to illustrate 8 “mutual” principles of maintaining the marriage relationship⁵⁰⁰ (lines 23-4).

In addition, the *Five Character Rhyme* outlines some features of “familial education.” Parents are encouraged to build up friendly relationship with their children and act as their models. Nevertheless an authoritarian parental style is discouraged (lines 69-72),

Parents are teachers and friends, (*fu mu wei shi you*)
 children deeply benefit, (*er nu shen shou yi*)
 Example is better than precept, (*shen jiao zhong yan jiao*)
 correct oneself before one corrects others. (*zheng ren xian zheng ji*)

Personal values are also emphasized in the *Five Character Rhyme*. “Self” values are the most frequently advocated personal values (10 occurrences). The *Five Character Rhyme* stresses the importance of “self-determination”, “*jiao er xu li zhi*” (teaching children to have determination) (line 62), “*pin kun bu yi zhi*” (do not change your mind even during poverty) (line 127). The readers are advised to be “self-disciplined”,

⁵⁰⁰ Eight “mutual” principles in regard to marriage are “mutual respect”, “mutual love”, “mutual learning from each other”, “mutual encouragement”, “mutual help”, “mutual courtesy”, “mutual understanding”, and “mutual comfort”. See Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996) *Jiating Meide Wuziyao [The Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics]*, Guangdong: Guangdong People’s Press, p.3

“*wu yi shi mo zhan*” (do not get involved in those harmful things) (line 130).

The *Five Character Rhyme* also reminds readers to study hard. For example, people should read good books (“*you yi shu chang du*”) (line 129). The *Five Character Rhyme* stresses the importance of “simplicity” and “thrift” by saying,

it is easy to go from frugality to luxury, (*cong jian ru she yi*)
 but it is difficult to go from luxury to frugality, (*you she ru jian nan*)
 Recall the poorer days when you are wealthy, (*feng shi yi qian ri*)
 remember the cold winter during the warm spring. (*chun nuan ji dong han*)

(lines 121-4)

These references warn against luxury and moneyism in marriage arising from rocketing marketization. The *Five Character Rhyme* further warns against extravagance in the wedding ceremony:

If you marry into a rich family and squander money, (*pan bi luan hui huo*)
 love and finance will both be hurt. (*qing cai liang ju shang*)(lines 15-6).

The *Five Character Rhyme* only mentions political themes three times (3.30%). Two are CCP leaders Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao in order to highlight the rule of marriage---Eight “mutual” principles (*bahu*). The other is national policy: “family planning”.

Two traditional figures, Mencius’ mother and Chu Long (an official of Qi state in the Warring States period) are quoted to elaborate the implementation of family education. The mother of Mencius moved house three times and broke the shuttle from the loom (*san qian duan ji zhu*) in order to teach Mencius to study diligently. In addition, the legend of *Chu Long* (“*shuo tai hou*”) who persuaded the mother of the emperor (265BC) to help the emperor to develop a correct life outlook rather than spoil him (lines 77-80).⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰¹ Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996) *Jiating Meide Wuziyao* [*The Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*], Guangdong: Guangdong People’s Press, p.48.

National values are mentioned 2 times in the *Five Character Rhyme*. Both are the advocate of “patriotism” which stresses the importance of nation over family. It says,

Loyalty [to the country] and fidelity [to the family] cannot exist together, (*zhong xiao ruo nan quan*)
so the country should have the priority. (*dang yi guo wei xian*) (lines 151-2)

6.5 Content features of the 3,4,5 literature

6.5.1 Themes/values

| Book/Values | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>The New Three Character Classic</i> | Traditional themes (32.90%) | Personal Values (22.08%) | Social Values (20.78%) | National themes (12.55%) | Political themes (9.09%) | Global Values (2.60%) |
| <i>The Four Character Song</i> | Social Values (49.40%) | Personal Values (38.55%) | National themes (7.23%) | Political themes (4.82%) | --- | --- |
| <i>The Five Character Rhyme</i> | Social Values (58.51%) | Personal Values (34.04%) | Political themes (3.19%) | National themes (2.13%) | Traditional themes (2.13%) | --- |

Table 6.7: Rank Order of Frequency of the 3,4,5 literature

The major difference between the *New Three Character Classic* and its subsequent *Song* and *Rhyme* is that the latter two publications have relatively low percentage of traditional and national themes. In contrast, these two publications placed much greater emphases on social and personal values (Table 6.7). Political themes only play a minor role in all the 3,4,5 literature.

The predominance of traditional themes in the *New Three Character Classic* can be explained by its association with patriotic education whilst the subsequent *Song* and *Rhyme* mainly deal with current social problems. For example, the *Four Character Song* is concerned with the proper relationships of an individual toward others, the society, the state, and the nature. The social problems mentioned in the *Four Character Song* are summarized in Table 6.8:

| Relationship | Problems mentioned |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Relationships between individuals | foul language, uncivilized behaviour, self-indulgence, selfishness, lack of warmth in interpersonal relationship |
| Individual-society relationships | Dropping things from a height, not observing the traffic rules, being inconsiderate to the neighbours, destroying gardens and public sites, stealing public property, living in luxury and spending extravagantly, taking drugs, lust, gambling, smoking in public area, dumping and throwing rubbish, posting bills in undesignated places, spitting on the floor |
| Individual-nature relationships | Polluted sky, water and air |
| Individual-state relationships | Ignorance of family planning |

Table 6.8: Social problems mentioned in the *Four Character Song*

The majority of the problems mentioned in the *Four Character Song* are related to the rising living standards brought by economic reform: people can live in luxury and spend extravagantly when they have higher income, people can drop things from a height when they live in high-rise buildings, people can disturb others by “noise and nuisance” because they possess their own television sets and hi-fi. Traffic jams are common in Guangdong today as more and more people possess their own cars. Today, living pace in Guangdong is so fast that people are impatient to wait for traffic light to turn “green”. It is not uncommon to find people walking dangerously among vehicles. To strengthen interpersonal relationships in Guangdong, the *Four Character Song* quotes the golden rule “*all for one and one for all*” as people’s behavioural guide.

On the other hand, good manners are often ignored when money has become a measurement of success in the process of economic reform. The principle of “righteousness” is challenged by personal “greedy desire.” Some people even make money through destroying “gardens and public sites”, “gambling”, “lust”, or

“robbery.” Some social problems arising in the economic reform in Guangdong mentioned in the *Four Character Song* have already been discussed in the Literature Review chapter and the Song tried to suggest solutions.

The *Five Character Rhyme* also focuses on social issues. It identifies certain family-related problems (Table 6.9) and offers solutions to them.

| Area | Problems |
|---------------------------|---|
| Marriage | Extravagant wedding ceremony, marry with close relatives, early marriage, |
| Parent-child relationship | Discriminating against daughter, spoil son, blame children too harshly |
| Familial ethos | Luxury, being resentful during poverty but conceited at times of wealth, deceiving the poor with wealth, getting involved in those harmful things, superstition |

Table 6.9: Familial problems mentioned in the *Five Character Rhyme*

Family problems arising in the process of marketization identified by the *Five Character Rhyme* include extravagant wedding ceremony, being conceited at times of wealth, and deceiving the poor with wealth. These are most likely due to the wide rich-poor disparity in post-reform China. Discriminating against daughters and spoiling sons are also common since the adoption of the “single child policy” in 1979. Other problems such as marriage with close relatives, early marriage, and superstition are common, even in urban areas.

In response to the above problems, the *Five Character Rhyme* insists on “marry according to law” (*yi fa di liang yuan*) (line 19). People should observe national policy (on family planning) (line 42). It also stresses harmonious marriage relationships by quoting the example of the CCP leaders Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao (lines 23-4). The *Five Character Rhyme* further demands friendly

parent-child relationships in the family, “*fu mu wei shi you*” (line 69). Parents should set an example to their children, “example is better than precept” (*shen jiao zhong yan jiao*) (line 71). The Rhyme notices the importance of family education,

- Teach with emphasis on heart and soul, (*you dao zhong xin ling*)
- Be understanding and rational, (*tong qing you da li*)
- Do not criticize them too harshly, (*ze guo wu tai zhong*)
- Persuade gently and appropriately. (*quan shan yi de ti*) (lines 73-6)

It should be noticed that the suggestions made by the *Five Character Rhyme* might be seen as contradictory to the traditional Confucian teachings. For example, traditional parent-child relationships are hierarchical and top-down but the Five Character Rhyme advocates friendly and fair (not hierarchical) parent-child relationship.

6.5.2 Sub-themes

Social values and personal values are found to be prevalent in the 345 literature, except the particular concern for traditional and national themes in the *New Three Character Classic*. Table 6.10 illustrates the respective focus of social values in each publication of the 3,4,5 literature.

| Social Values | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | <i>The Four Character Song</i> | <i>The Five Character Rhyme</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Filial Piety (11) | Environmental Protection (12) | Familial Love (26) |
| 2 | Unity (9) | Unity (8) | Familial Education (12) |
| 3 | Concern for society (6) | Law-abiding (8) | Filial Piety/ Familial Equality (4) |

Table 6.10: Top three “Social Values” in the 3,4,5 literature

It is found that the *Four Character Song* and the *Five Character Rhyme* have clear focuses of concern: the former stresses such social ethics as “environmental protection”, “unity”, and “law-abiding” behaviour while the latter emphasizes family ethics, for example, “familial love”, “familial education”, and “filial piety”. On the

other hand, the *New Three Character Classic* pays attention to both family and society. It particularly stresses the “concern for society”.

Now we turn to “personal values”,

| Personal Values | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | <i>The Four Character Song</i> | <i>The Five Character Rhyme</i> |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Righteousness (12) | Self (9) | Self (10) |
| 2 | Civilized behaviour (10) | Civilized behaviour (6) | Simplicity (6) |
| 3 | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Righteousness (6) | Enthusiasm for learning (6) |

Table 6.11: Top three “Personal Values” in the 3,4,5 literature

It is found that “righteousness”, “civilized behaviour”, “enthusiasm for learning”, and “self” are the four most popular personal values in the 3,4,5 literature, which indicate the official stresses in post-reform China. The emphasis on “righteousness” is a response to the prevalent “profit-making” in the society as the marketization deepens. The stress on “civilized behaviour” can be explained by the deterioration in manners during the economic reform. The emphasis on “self” is apparently related to the increase of spoiled (single) children, whereas the stress on “enthusiasm for learning” reflects a social demand on young children. They should learn diligently to prepare themselves for the modernization. Another personal value emphasized is “simplicity” which is believed to be a response to the luxury arising in post-reform China.

The difference between the literature can be explained by their writing objectives. The *New Three Character Classic* concerns more the all-round development of young children at a time of rapid marketization and pays special attention to the contribution of young children to the national modernization. On the other hand, the *Four Character Song* mainly deals with social ethics, thus paying more attention to values

in relation to social well-being, “environmental protection”, “unity”, and being “law-abiding”. Similarly the *Five Character Rhyme* focuses on family ethics. In echoing the book name, the top three “social values” are related to the family.

On the other hand, the texts have their respective reader groups. The *New Three Character Classic* was mainly written for young children and thus stresses that children should show “filial piety” at home, “unity” at school and in the society, and “concern for society”. The *Four Character Song* was targeted mainly at adults and appeals to them to observe “environmental protection”, “unity”, and to be “law-abiding”. The *Five Character Rhyme* concerns both children and adults. It emphasizes two contrasting angles: parents (the adults) should observe “familial love”, and “familial education”, whereas children should show “filial piety”.

6.5.3 Way of Expression

It is found that the 345 literature employs different methods of expression to disseminate their messages. The *New Three Character Classic* quotes a lot of “historical figures” with achievement in different fields as models for young children to imitate.

On the other hand, Chinese maxims are directly quoted in the text, including,

What you don’t want to be done to you, (*ji suo bu yu*)
do not do to others. (*wu shi yu ren*) (lines 15-6)

Be stern to discipline oneself, (*yan yu lu ji*)
be easy when treating others. (*kuan yu dai ren*) (lines 19-20)

All for one, (*ren ren wei wo*)
one for all. (*wo wei ren ren*) (lines 23-4)

Words of good, (*liang yan yi ju*)
warm people for three winters, (*san dong yi nuan*)
Words of bad, (*e yu shang ren*)
chill people even in June. (*liu yue you han*) (lines 29-32)

The wide application of Chinese maxims in the *Four Character Song* can partly be attributed to the structure of the text, a four-character rhyme, as some Chinese maxims are written in four-character sentences. In addition, Chinese maxims are always value laden. Some Chinese maxims have indeed a long history and are familiar to the people. They can not only disseminate a moral message but also enhance the popularity of the *Four Character Song* among the public. However, Chinese maxims might be a bit abstract and difficult for young children, especially to those with lower language standards and would thus bar young children from understanding the *Four Character Song*.

6.5.4 Reader groups

Analyses of the content features and ways of expression hint that the 3,4,5 literature might have different targeted reader groups. The *New Three Character Classic* seems to be targeted at young children. The *Four Character Song* is more adult-oriented judged by its content, for example, taking drugs, “family planning”, “menqian sanbao” and “lust” are more relevant to the adults. The Song also explains the benefits of protecting the environment from the adult viewpoints, for example, to “benefit the next generations”, and lead to “longevity.” All these content areas are far from the children’s world.

Textual analysis of the *Five Character Rhyme* shows that the text is targeted at both the adults and children. Firstly the theme “marriage” concerns the choice of spouse, the time to get married, the attitude towards marriage, and the concept of family

planning which are more suitable for adults than children. The *Five Character Rhyme* also places great emphasis on how parents teach children (36 sentences/69.2%) and family harmony among family members (8 sentences/15.4%). Nevertheless, children should not be ruled out as targeted readers; the rhyme is also concerned with children's behaviour. It reminds children to repay their parents for their kindness. The Rhyme seems to target the general public (children and adults).

Nevertheless Guangdong children cannot be totally isolated from the adult world. They live in the same context and observe the same things. Children should also be concerned with such problems as pollution. To develop deeper and more accurate understanding of the current social problems can facilitate their adaptation into the society. Hence the inclusion of adult-oriented problems does not necessarily limit the targeted readers of the Song to the adults.

6.6 Comparing Guangdong, Shanghai and Beijing versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

As mentioned earlier, the Beijing and Shanghai versions of the *New Three Character Classics* were published shortly after the publication of the Guangdong version of the *New Three Character Classic* in 1995, thus forming the “heat” of the new three-character classic. Content analysis of the Guangdong version of the *New Three Character Classic* has already shown that the text placed greater emphasis on traditional themes, personal values and social values over political themes. Traditional and national themes are included to foster patriotic education among young children. How about the other versions of the *New Three Character Classic*?

Table 6.12 shows the relative percentage with which the themes/values are embedded in the three versions of the *New Three Character Classic* under investigation. It is

interesting to note that both Guangdong and Beijing versions of the *New Three Character Classic* placed the greatest emphasis on traditional themes. Even the Shanghai version, with a clear focus on morality shown in its title as “the *New Three Character Classics in Morality*”, contains quite a large number of traditional themes (51 occurrences/23.83%) and “national themes” (16 occurrences/7.48%). It is clear that both traditional themes and national themes play an important role in moral education literature published across the provinces in the mid-1990s. The advocacy of traditional themes and national themes in moral education literature published in the mid-1990s is worthy of further examination.

| Themes/values | Occurrence (percentage) in Guangdong version | Occurrence (percentage) in Beijing version | Occurrence (percentage) in Shanghai version |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| Political themes | 21 (9.09) | 13 (7.83) | 10 (4.67) |
| Personal values | 51 (22.08) | 44 (26.51) | 80 (37.38) |
| Social values | 48 (20.78) | 26 (15.66) | 57 (26.64) |
| Traditional themes | 76 (32.90) | 48 (28.92) | 51 (23.83) |
| National themes | 29 (12.55) | 29 (17.50) | 16 (7.48) |
| Global values | 6 (2.60) | 6 (3.58) | 0 (0) |
| Total | 231 (100.00) | 166 (100.00) | 214 (100.00) |

Table 6.12: Percentage of themes/values embedded in the *New Three Character Classics*

Table 6.13 shows the rank order of themes/values embedded in the three versions and the prevalence of traditional themes in these three publications.

| Book/themes/values | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Guangdong version | Traditional themes (32.90%) | Personal Values (22.08%) | Social Values (20.78%) | National themes (12.55%) | Political themes (9.09%) | Global Values (2.60%) |
| Beijing version | Traditional themes (28.92%) | Personal Values (26.51%) | National themes (17.50%) | Social Values (15.66%) | Political themes (7.83%) | Global Values (3.58%) |
| Shanghai version | Personal Values (37.38%) | Social Values (26.64%) | Traditional themes (23.83%) | National themes (7.44%) | Political themes (4.67%) | --- |

Table 6.13: Rank order of values in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

A closer sub-theme examination reveals that three versions of new three character classics published in the mid-1990s display quite similar distribution of themes.

6.6.1 Traditional themes

In regard to the largest category of themes/values in three versions of the *New Three Character Classic* under investigation, the majority are “historical figures” which acted as moral models to readers, followed by “historical achievements” which glorify the Chinese history and foster nationalist sentiment among readers (Table 6.14).

| Traditional themes | Guangdong version | Beijing version | Shanghai version |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Historical figures (42) | Historical figures (26) | Historical figures (50) |
| 2 | Historical achievement (19) | Historical events (21) | Historical achievement (1) |
| 3 | Historical events (15) | Historical achievement (1) | |

Table 6.14: Traditional themes in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

Role models are employed in all three versions of the *New Three Character Classic* to disseminate moral messages. It is interesting to note that 22 models are commonly used in all three versions of the *New Three Character Classic* and can thus be grouped as “national models”. On the other hand, the Guangdong and Beijing versions have a larger number of common models (42/68.85%) than the Shanghai version (26/41.94%)⁵⁰² (Appendix 8).

6.6.2 National themes

Sub-themes of national themes also reveal the similarity of the Beijing version to the Guangdong version. According to Table 6.15, the most frequent sub-theme in national themes is “geography”, followed by “patriotism” and “nation”. Chinese geographical features are mentioned to foster national pride among readers. Different sub-themes in the Shanghai version can be explained as the text was mainly written for a regional

⁵⁰² Guangdong version employs 61 models in total.

audience to cultivate a variety of virtues among readers.

| National themes | Guangdong version | Beijing version | Shanghai version |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | Geography(13) | Geography(14) | Patriotism (13) |
| 2 | Patriotism (13) | Patriotism (11) | Nations (2) |
| 3 | Nations (3) | Nations (4) | Geography(1) |

Table 6.15: National themes in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

6.6.3 Personal values

Personal values play a major role in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics* following traditional themes. An examination of sub-themes shows the relative percentage of “righteousness”, “enthusiasm for learning”, “civilized behaviour”, and “self” are high across three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*, though the priorities of each publication varied (Table 6.16).

| Personal Values | Guangdong version | Beijing version | Shanghai version |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Righteousness (12) | Enthusiasm for learning (23) | Righteousness (26) |
| 2 | Civilized behaviour(10) | Righteousness (6) | Civilized behaviour (15) |
| 3 | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Self (5) | Self (12) |

Table 6.16: Personal values in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

6.6.4 Social values

| Social Values | Guangdong version | Beijing version | Shanghai version |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Filial Piety (11) | Unity (9) | Devotion (19) |
| 2 | Unity (9) | Devotion (7) | Unity (14) |
| 3 | Concern for society (6) | Filial Piety (5) | Filial Piety (12) |

Table 6.17: Social values in three versions of the *New Three Character Classics*

Table 6.17 illustrates the emphasis on “unity”, “filial piety”, “devotion”, and “concern for society” from the relative percentage of social values in the three classics.

The above analysis shows that para-government documents published in Guangdong (a SEZ on the southern coast), Shanghai (a commercial centre with long history and

the political base of the then CCP leaders Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji), and Beijing (capital and a political centre of China) in the mid-1990s unanimously place great emphasis on traditional themes, social values, and personal values rather than political themes. It seems that political themes had lost their importance in para-government moral texts published in the mid-1990s, a period of rapid economic reform. In contrast, traditional and national themes play a major role in moral education texts.

In addition, Guangdong and Beijing versions of the *New Three Character Classics* display quite similar themes/values distribution, though published in two distant provinces, with a slight time lag. The consensus of value orientations in both publications should not be viewed as an accidental matter but should be seen as a broader national policy on ideopolitical-moral education which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

6.7 Comparing the *New Three Character Classic* with previous government documents in ideopolitical-moral education

Content analysis on the *New Three Character Classic* illustrate that the text contains only a low percentage of political themes. However, content analysis of two randomly chosen previous para-government documents in ideopolitical-moral education, Cai, et al. (1985)⁵⁰³ and Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986)⁵⁰⁴ reveals a totally different picture. The former is a dictionary while the latter is a teachers' manual in ideopolitical-moral education. Both documents were published by para-government publication houses in the 1980s, the earlier period of economic reform and opening up. Table 6.18 illustrates the relative percentage of six themes/values embedded in the

⁵⁰³ Cai F. et al. (1985) *Sixiang Xiuyang Xiaocidian [Dictionary on Ideo-cultivation]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press

⁵⁰⁴ Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) *Jiaoyuxue Jiaoxue Cankaoshu: Deyulun Fengce [Teaching Reference Manual to Educational Studies: Moral Education]*, Beijing: People's Education Press.

New Three Character Classic and the previous documents.

| Themes/values | Total occurrence (percentage) in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | Total occurrence (percentage) in Cai, et al. (1985) | Total occurrence (percentage) in Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Political themes | 21 (9.09) | 358 (54.49) | 44 (46.31) |
| Personal values | 51 (22.08) | 201(30.59) | 30 (31.58) |
| Social values | 48 (20.78) | 73 (11.11) | 12 (12.63) |
| Traditional themes | 76 (32.90) | 9 (1.37) | 0 (0) |
| National themes | 29 (12.55) | 16 (2.34) | 9 (9.47) |
| Global values | 6 (2.60) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| Total | 231 (100.00) | 657 (100.00) | 95 (100.00) |

Table 6.18: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *New Three Character Classic* and previous documents

It is found that political themes play a major role and occupy more than 40 percent of the total occurrence of themes/values in both previous documents under investigation. In Cai, et al. (1985), more than half of messages are political themes (358 occurrences /54.49%). The most frequent political themes are “CCP ideology” (251 occurrences) with which the dictionary explains the vocabulary. “CCP leaders” rank second (56 occurrences). Mao Zedong (14 occurrences) is the most frequently cited CCP leader. *The Selected Work of Mao Zedong* is always quoted for reference. Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) shows similar values distribution as Cai, et al. (1985), though with a much lower total number of occurrences. Political themes occupy nearly half of the text (44 occurrences/ 46.31%). Apparently, political elements were still heavy soon after the adoption of the economic reform and opening up policy. However, there is a sharp decrease in political themes in the *New Three Character Classic* (9.09%) in the mid-1990s, thus showing a clear de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education in the era of economic reform.

In contrast, there is a notable increase of traditional and national themes in para-government literature produced in the mid-1990s. Traditional themes occupy 32.9 percent of the total occurrence in the *New Three Character Classic* but it occupied only 1.37 percent in Cai, et al. (1985) and was even absent in Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986). In regard to national themes, this category of themes occupies 12.55 percent of the total occurrence in the *New Three Character Classic*. The number of national themes is smaller in previous para-government document: 9.47 percent in Cai, et al. (1985) and 2.34 percent in Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986). The increase of traditional and national themes in the para-government moral education document reflected a shift of official emphasis in moral education. In the period of rapid marketization, traditional themes and national themes are employed by para-government literature to foster patriotism among readers.

Table 6.18 shows that the *New Three Character Classic* (22.08 percent) contains a lower percentage of personal values than its previous documents (30.59 percent in Cai, et al. 1985 and 31.58 percent in Nanjing Normal University et al. 1986). Table 6.19 further shows inconsistency in sub-theme of personal values in these three documents. “Self” values and “diligence” were stressed in previous documents but were omitted in the top three sub-themes of personal values in the *New Three Character Classic*. In contrast, the emphases on “righteousness”, “civilized behaviour” and “enthusiasm for learning” seemed to be greater in the *New Three Character Classic*.

| Personal Values | The <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | Cai, et al. (1985) | Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Righteousness (12) | Righteousness (46) | Diligence (13) |
| 2 | Civilized behaviour(10) | Self (43) | Civilized behaviour (9) |
| 3 | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Enthusiasm for learning (35) | Self (3) |

Table 6.19: Top “Personal Values” in *New Three Character Classic* and the previous documents

For social values, the *New Three Character Classic* contains 20.78 percent against 11.11 percent in Cai, et al. (1985) and 12.63 percent in Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986). Sub-theme analysis shows that the leadership placed greater emphasis on family ethics (such as “filial piety”) and “concern for society” in the mid-1990s (Table 6.20).

| Social Values | The <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | Cai, et al. (1985) | Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) |
|---------------|--|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Filial Piety (11) | Devotion (27) | Law-abiding (5) |
| 2 | Unity (9) | Unity (22) | Unity (3) |
| 3 | Concern for society (6) | Law-abiding (10) | Devotion (2) |

Table 6.20: Top “Social Values” in the *New Three Character Classic* and its previous documents

To conclude, a contrast is found between the *New Three Character Classic* and documents published earlier in the opening up period in terms of themes/values occurrences. The previous documents consist mainly of political themes, with a few traditional themes and national themes. In addition, most national themes embedded are “patriotic”. By the 1990s, the importance of political themes has declined while traditional themes, national themes, social values, and personal values have become increasingly important.

On the other hand, sub-theme analysis of personal values and social values embedded in the *New Three Character Classic* and previous documents reveals that the overall concerns of the leadership for personal values basically remain unchanged but its concern for social values has expanded to include the family.

6.8 Comparing the *New Three Character Classic* with subsequent documents on ideopolitical-moral education that emerged in the late 1990s

Content analysis in this study has already shown that political values were downgraded in para-government ideopolitical-moral documents published in the mid-1990s when rapid economic expansion was taking place, thus providing a clear picture of de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education in China. But what was the picture in the late 1990s? To answer this question, three documents on ideopolitical-moral education published in the late 1990s: *Guangdong Provincial Maxims on ethic building for citizens* (the *Guangdong Maxims*)⁵⁰⁵, the *Curriculum Outline for Primary Moral Character and Junior Secondary Ideopolitical Studies* (MOE (1997))⁵⁰⁶ and the *Curriculum Outline for Moral Character and Society* (MOE 2002)⁵⁰⁷ were analyzed.

Of these three documents, the *Guangdong Maxims* was produced by Guangdong propaganda department. It can be regarded as a provincial response to the national *Implementation Outline on Ethic Building for Citizens* (2001) and recent provincial emphasis on ideopolitical-moral education. Other documents analyzed are two recently issued documents which indicate the current developments in the national curriculum of ideopolitical-moral education.

⁵⁰⁵ *Guangdong Provincial Maxims on ethic building for citizens*, *Nanfeng Ribao*, 23.4.2002.

⁵⁰⁶ Ministry of Education (1997) *Xiaoxue sixiangpindeke he chuzhong sixiangzhengzhike kecheng biao zhun* [The Curriculum Outline of Primary Moral Character and Junior Secondary Ideology-Political Studies], Beijing: People's Education Press.

⁵⁰⁷ Ministry of Education (2002) *Pinde yu shehui kecheng biao zhun* [The Curriculum Outline of Moral Character and Society], Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press.

6.8.1 The *Guangdong Maxims*

Content analysis of the *Guangdong Maxims* (Table 6.21) shows that the newly published provincial ideopolitical-moral education literature has basically two categories of values: personal values and social values. No political themes, traditional themes or global values are found in the *Guangdong Maxims*. It shows a shift in political climate as traditional themes are no longer prevalent in recently published ideopolitical-moral education texts. Concentrating on personal and social values, it shows greater de-politicization when compared with the *New Three Character Classic* published in the mid-1990s.

| Themes/values | Total occurrence (percentage) in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | Total occurrence (percentage) in the <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Political themes | 21 (9.09) | 0 (0) |
| Personal values | 51 (22.08) | 41(47.13) |
| Social values | 48 (20.78) | 45 (51.72) |
| Traditional themes | 76 (32.90) | 0 (0) |
| National themes | 29 (12.55) | 1 (1.15) |
| Global values | 6 (2.60) | 0 (0) |
| Total | 231 (100.00) | 87 (100.00) |

Table 6.21: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *New Three Character Classic* and the *Guangdong Maxims*

The *Guangdong Maxims* is presented in five chapters, namely “Me and myself”, “Me and my family”, “Me and others”, “Me and the society”, and “Me and nature”. Content analysis reveals that the *Guangdong Maxims* consists predominantly of personal values (41 occurrences/47.13%) and social values (45 occurrences/51.72%). Sub-theme analysis (Table 6.22) shows that the recently published provincial para-government moral education texts are still concerned with “civilized behaviour” of their readers. It is interesting that “benevolence” is included in the top-three themes/values of the government texts, indicating that the government has paid

greater attention to psychological well-being in ideopolitical-moral education in recent years.

| Personal Values | The <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | The <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Righteousness (12) | Self (11) |
| 2 | Civilized behaviour(10) | Benevolence (8) |
| 3 | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Civilized behaviour(7) |

Table 6.22: Top three “Personal Values” in the *New Three Character Classic* and the *Guangdong Maxims*

In regard to “social values”, Table 6.23 illustrates that the *Guangdong Maxims* concentrates more on family ethics than the *New Three Character Classic*, thus showing the continuous concern of provincial leadership for the well-being of the family. In addition, the *Guangdong Maxims* stresses the value of “unity” for the strengthening of interpersonal relationship.

| Social Values | The <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | The <i>Guangdong Maxims</i> |
|---------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Filial Piety (11) | Unity (8) |
| 2 | Unity (9) | Familial education (8) |
| 3 | Concern for society (6) | Filial piety(7) |

Table 6.23: Top three “social values” in the *New Three Character Classic* and the *Guangdong Maxims*

Special attention should be paid to the form of expression in the *Guangdong Maxims*. Some maxims are quoted in their original form. For example, “Good will be rewarded with good, and evil with evil,”(*shanyoushanbao, eyouebao*) (maxim 37) is a traditional idiom. “What you don’t want to be done to you, do not do to others.” (*jisuobuyu, wushiyauren*) (maxim 29) comes from *Lunyu* (15: 25). Another maxim “don’t get conceited in victory or disheartened in defeat,” (*shengbujiao, baibunei*) (maxim 12) is borrowed from an ancient classic *Shangjunshu*⁵⁰⁸ while “the rise and fall of the nation is the concern of every citizen” (*tianxiaxingwang, pifuyouze*)

⁵⁰⁸ See, <http://140.111.34.46/cgi-bin/dict/GetContent.cgi?Database=dict&DocNum=125251&GraphicWord=yes&QueryString=勝不驕，敗不餒> [Accessed 5 January, 2006].

(maxim 40) is a famous saying from Gu Yanwu (1613-1682).⁵⁰⁹

The direct quotation of moral maxims rather than reproducing them for political purposes indicates the government's emphasis on folklore maxims in ideopolitical-moral education. This is an official gesture to show respect to traditional culture and greater de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education.

6.8.2 Moral education curricula developed in the late 1990s

Content analysis of two curriculum outlines published in the late 1990s indicates the current ideopolitical-moral education curricula have also placed great emphasis on social values and personal values (Table 6.24). In the MOE (1997), nearly half of the total values are personal values (45 occurrences/47.37%). Social values rank second (38 occurrences /40.00%). The relative weighting of personal values and social values are reversed in the MOE (2002) as the outline places the greatest emphasis on social values (41 occurrences /45.56%). Political themes and traditional themes are less than 10 percent in both curricula. In contrast, national themes and global values occupy 10 percent or more in the MOE (2002). This might be related to the specific focus of the curriculum---the society.

⁵⁰⁹ See, <http://140.111.34.46/cgi-bin/dict/GetContent.cgi?Database=dict&DocNum=42240&GraphicWord=yes&QueryString=天下興亡，匹夫有責> [Accessed 5 January, 2006].

| Themes/values | Total occurrence (percentage) in the <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | Total occurrence (percentage) in MOE (1997) | Total occurrence (percentage) in MOE (2002) |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Political themes | 21 (9.09) | 6 (6.32) | 4 (4.44) |
| Personal values | 51 (22.08) | 45(47.37) | 23 (25.56) |
| Social values | 48 (20.78) | 38 (40.00) | 41 (45.56) |
| Traditional themes | 76 (32.90) | 0 (0) | 1 (1.11) |
| National themes | 29 (12.55) | 5 (5.26) | 12 (13.33) |
| Global values | 6 (2.60) | 1 (1.05) | 9 (10.00) |
| Total | 231 (100.00) | 95 (100.00) | 90 (100.00) |

Table 6.24: Relative percentage of themes/values embedded in the *New Three Character Classic* and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education

Table 6.25 shows the close association of the *New Three Character Classic* with the more recently developed ideopolitical-moral education curricula. Sub-themes of personal values in the curricula are actually the sub-themes in the *New Three Character Classic*, namely “righteousness”, “civilized behaviour”, and “enthusiasm for learning”. Besides, “self” is also emphasized in two ideopolitical-moral education curricula.

| Personal Values | <i>The New Three Character Classic</i> | MOE(1997) | MOE(2002) |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Righteousness (12) | Righteousness (8) | Self (7) |
| 2 | Civilized behaviour(10) | Enthusiasm for learning (7)/Self (7) | Righteousness (4) |
| 3 | Enthusiasm for learning (10) | Civilized behaviour(7) | Enthusiasm for learning (3) |

Table 6.25: Top three “Personal Values” in the *New Three Character Classic* and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education

In the category of social values, an analysis of sub-themes reveals that the newly developed curricula are elaborated from the *New Three Character Classic*: “filial piety”, “unity” and “concern for society”. The outline pays special attention to

“concern for society” (13 occurrences), covering different aspects of society such as transport. Besides, sub-themes such as “devotion” “law-abiding” and “environmental protection” are also given emphasis in the more recent ideopolitical-moral curricula.

| Social Values | <i>The New Three Character Classic</i> | MOE(1997) | MOE(2002) |
|---------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Filial Piety (11) | Unity (12) | Concern for society (13) |
| 2 | Unity (9) | Filial Piety (5) | Unity (11) |
| 3 | Concern for society (6) | Law-abiding (5)/ Devotion (5) | Filial Piety (3)/ Environmental protection (3)/ Devotion (3)/ Law-abiding (3) |

Table 6.26: Top three “Social Values” in the *New Three Character Classic* and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education

National themes did not play a major role in the MOE (1997) (5 occurrences). Nevertheless, in the MOE (2002), there is a rise in national values (12 occurrences). Sub-themes analysis shows that the rise of national themes is mainly due to the constant calls for “patriotism” (7 occurrences). It indicates that “patriotism” is still the concern of the leadership as the economic reform deepened.

| National themes | <i>The New Three Character Classic</i> | MOE(1997) | MOE(2002) |
|-----------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Geography(13) | Patriotism (2) | Patriotism (7) |
| 2 | Patriotism (13) | Nations (2) | Geography(3) |
| 3 | Nations (3) | Geography(1) | Nations (2) |

Table 6.27: Top three “National themes” in the *New Three Character Classic* and more recent curricula in ideopolitical-moral education

6.9 Conclusion

6.9.1 Patriotic education in the mid-1990s

Content analysis reveals that the *New Three Character Classic* contains predominantly traditional and national themes. It fosters patriotic sentiment among

young children through the mentioning of traditional themes such as “historical figures”, “historical events” and “historical achievements”. “Historical figures” served as role models for children.

The case of the *New Three Character Classic* is not alone. It is found that traditional and national themes are also prevalent in Beijing and Shanghai versions of the *New Three Character Classic*. A high percentage of traditional and national themes characterize “*New Three Character Classic*” published in the mid-1990s. “*New Three Character Classic*” seems to be a synonym for texts for patriotic education.

6.9.2 De-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education

Since the establishment of the PRC, ideopolitical-moral education in China was the same as political education. Content analysis of para-government documents published in the mid-1980s supports the political-orientation in ideopolitical-moral education in China despite the adoption of the open and reform policy.

The situation had to a certain extent changed in the mid-1990s as the reform programme went deeper. Content analysis of three rhyming classics published in Guangdong, Beijing and Shanghai in 1995 indicated the de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education was not confined to Guangdong. Political themes are almost unmentioned in the three rhyming classics analyzed. Thus de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education may be associated with relevant national policy rather than a regional phenomenon. Political themes were less frequently mentioned in all para-government moral documents published in the 1990s under investigation. At the same time, traditional themes were strongly advocated in different versions of the *New Three Character Classics*. Comparing the *New Three Character Classic* with

previous moral education documents illustrates a de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education as economic reform in China gathered momentum. De-politicization is found to continue when subsequent documents to the 3,4,5 literature are analyzed. Political themes occupy 5 percent of total number of occurrences at maximum. De-politicization is also reflected in the newly developed ideopolitical-moral education curricula.

6.9.3 Moral qualities

Besides patriotism, the *New Three Character Classic* is also concerned with the personal moral growth of children. It emphasizes the values of “righteousness”, “civilized behaviour” and “enthusiasm for learning”. Also emphasized are “social values” such as “unity” and “filial piety”. Children should be filial at home and get along well with others in the society. They are advised to work hand in hand to help contribute to the modernization of China.

The *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme*, subsequent publications to the *New Three Character Classic*, are found to move away from patriotism and focus on social ethics and family ethics respectively. In regard to social values, the two texts stress the themes of “environmental protection”, “unity” and being “law-abiding”. For family ethics, the importance of “familial love” and “familial education” is reiterated. The themes embedded in these two publications seem to be responsive to social problems arising in the process of marketization such as environmental degradation, declining morality, distancing of interpersonal relationship, and family crisis.

Content analysis of moral education documents published in the late 1990s reveals that the significance of traditional themes decreased subsequently. In contrast,

personal values and social values became the most prominent twin values in official ideopolitical-moral education documents.

6.9.4 Shifting focuses in moral orientations

Table 6.28 reveals the relative importance of different themes/values in different periods based on the findings from content analysis of moral education documents published in different periods. It is clear that political themes played a major role in ideopolitical-moral education in the 1980s; traditional themes had become the dominant feature of ideopolitical-moral education by the mid-1990s, whereas personal and social values were increasing in the late 1990s.

| Book/Values | Political Values | Personal Values | Social Values | Traditional Values | National Values | Global Values |
|---|------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Cai, Feng et al. (1985) | 1---54.49 | 2---30.59 | 3---11.11 | 5---1.37 | 4---2.34 | 0 |
| Nanjing Normal University et al. (1986) | 1---46.31 | 2---31.58 | 3---12.63 | 0 | 4---9.47 | 0 |
| <i>New Three Character Classic</i> (1995) | 5---9.09 | 2---22.08 | 3---20.78 | 1---32.90 | 4---12.55 | 6---2.60 |
| <i>Four Character Song</i> (1996) | 4---4.88 | 2---37.80 | 1---50.00 | 0 | 3---7.32 | 0 |
| <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> (1996) | 3---3.19 | 2---34.04 | 1---58.51 | 4---2.13 | 4---2.13 | 0 |
| <i>Shanghai version</i> (1995) | 5---4.67 | 1---37.38 | 2---26.64 | 3---23.83 | 4---7.48 | 0 |
| <i>Beijing version</i> (1995) | 5---7.83 | 2---26.51 | 4---15.66 | 1---28.92 | 3---17.50 | 6---3.58 |
| MOE (1997) | 3---6.32 | 1---47.37 | 2---40.00 | 0 | 4---5.26 | 5---1.05 |
| Guangdong Maxims (2002) | 0 | 2---45.28 | 1---52.83 | 0 | 3---1.89 | 0 |
| MOE (2002) | 5---4.44 | 2---25.56 | 1---45.56 | 6---1.11 | 3---13.33 | 4---10.00 |

Table 6.28: Values distribution of the documents analyzed in the present study

Note for Table 6.28: take “1---54.49” for example:

1: frequency rank of values with reference to their occurrences tallied in the document

54.49: percentage of these particular values

Value orientations in the government moral texts have shifted from political values, to traditional values, and to personal values and social values, as shown in Figure 6.1:

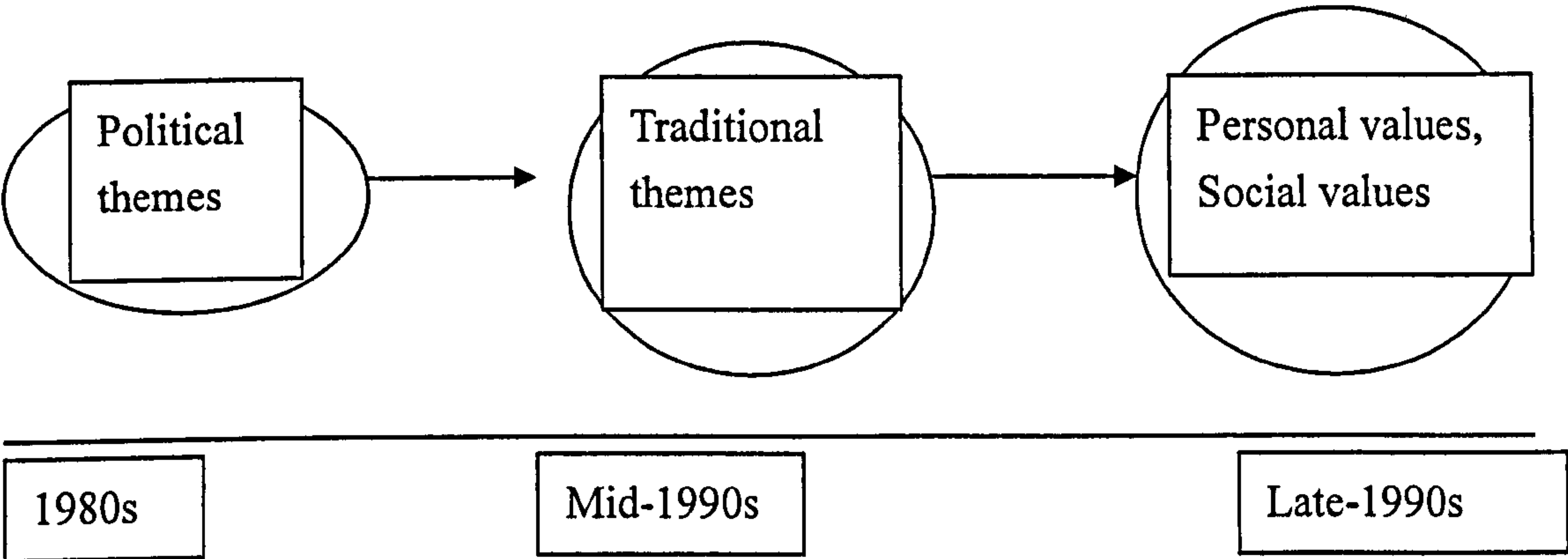


Figure 6.1: Shift in value orientations of moral texts

6.9.5 Prevalence of sub-themes in moral education texts

| Themes/values | Documents in the 1980s | 3,4,5 literature (mid-1990s) | <i>New Three Character classics</i> (mid-1990s) | Documents in the late 1990s |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Political | CCP structure | | | |
| | | CCP priorities | | |
| | CCP ideology | | | |
| | CCP slogan | | | |
| | CCP leaders | | | |
| | | | CCP models | |
| Personal | | Benevolence | Benevolence | Benevolence |
| | Civilized behaviour | Civilized behaviour | Civilized behaviour | Civilized behaviour |
| | Righteousness | Righteousness | Righteousness | Righteousness |
| | Self | Self | Self | Self |
| | Simplicity | Simplicity | Simplicity | Simplicity |
| | Enthusiasm for learning | Enthusiasm for learning | Enthusiasm for learning | Enthusiasm for learning |
| | Diligence | | Diligence | Diligence |
| | | Hygiene | | Hygiene |
| Social | | Filial Piety | Filial Piety | Filial Piety |
| | | Familial love | Familial loves | |
| | | | Familial Education | Familial Education |
| | | | | Familial Responsibility |
| | Take good care of public property | | | Take good care of public property |
| | Environmental Protection | | | Environmental Protection |
| | Law-abiding | Law-abiding | | Law-abiding |
| | Devotion | Devotion | Devotion | Devotion |
| | Unity | Unity | Unity | Unity |
| Traditional | | | Historical figures | |
| | | | Historical achievements | |
| | | | Geography | |
| | | | Nations | |
| National | Patriotism | Patriotism | Patriotism | Patriotism |

Table 6.29: Common categories of values in moral texts analyzed

Content analysis in this study not only identified the dominant themes/values in the moral education literature analyzed but also the sub-themes that were prevalent across

the document analyzed within a particular period. The findings are summarized in Table 6.29.

Political themes played a major role in the para-government ideopolitical-moral education documents published in the 1980s. Sub-themes like “CCP leaders” were frequently mentioned in moral education documents. However, when political themes lost their importance in the later periods, only “CCP priorities” and “CCP models” are found to be common values in moral texts published in the mid-1990s. There are no common political themes in moral education texts in the late 1990s, reflecting a de-politicization since the early 1990s as the opening programme accelerated.

On the other hand, traditional themes are typically prevalent in different versions of the *New Three Character classics* published in 1995. “Historical figures”, “historical achievements”, “geography” and “nations” are all common sub-themes in the *Three Character Classics*.

Personal values are found to be prevalent in different periods. Values such as “civilized behaviour”, “righteousness”, “self”, “simplicity” and “enthusiasm for learning” are common in moral texts published in different periods, though their percentage varied.

It is also noticed that different social values are more prevalent than others in different periods in addition to “devotion” and “unity” which are frequently mentioned in government documents published in each period. The importance of family ethics such as “filial piety” and “familial education” has increased since 1995. Values like “environmental protection” and “take good care of public property” were mentioned

in the 1980s but were not common in 1995. Nevertheless these values are reiterated in the documents published in the late 1990s.

Content analysis identifies 8 core values in the moral texts analyzed which are advocated in different periods regardless of stages of social transformation and reflect the official emphases in ideopolitical-moral education. These are summarized in Table 6.30:

| Category of values | Core values |
|--------------------|---|
| Personal values | Civilized behaviour, righteousness, self, simplicity, enthusiasm for learning |
| Social values | Devotion, unity |
| National values | Patriotism |

Table 6.30: Core values in the moral education texts analyzed

6.9.6 Significance of the findings from the content analysis

The content analysis is important for the present study for showing the value orientations of moral texts published in recent decade in the PRC. The 3,4,5 literature, a series of moral texts produced in Guangdong have their own specific foci: the *New Three Character Classic* emphasizes traditional themes while the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* and the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* emphasize social values.

On the other hand, content analysis reveals similar values distribution among different versions of the *New Three Character Classic* published in the mid-1990s, especially the Beijing and Guangdong versions which stress traditional themes and have almost the same values distribution. Thus the emergence of the *New Three Character Classic* should not be viewed as a single regional phenomenon. Its emergence should be seen within the scope of national policy.

Content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature and its subsequent literature hint at the prevalence of personal and social values that have become twin core values in the ideopolitical-moral education documents published in the late 1990s. Content analysis illustrates a clear route of de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education in China in the era of reform, with evidence that the shifts in value orientations in moral texts emerged in different periods and different provinces. It also indicates that China is undergoing a transformation of ideopolitical-moral education over time, and with the depth of reform. What is/are the factor(s) leading to this transformation? The next chapter will continue the discussion with the findings from documentary analysis.

The indicators developed to measure value orientations in moral education texts prove to be useful in investigating prevalent values in moral texts under study. The instrument can be used for investigating values in textbooks or literature in further research on ideopolitical-moral education in China, or elsewhere.

Chapter 7

Findings from Documentary Analysis

7.1 Introduction

In this study, 20 government directives on ideopolitical-moral education issued by the CCP Central Committee, Ministry of Education (MOE), or State Education Commission (SEC) from 1990 to 2002 (Appendix 6) were chosen for documentary analysis, aiming to investigate the government's emphases in ideopolitical-moral education during the said period, and the significance of national policy in ideopolitical-moral education for the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 literature.

The following sections will firstly present the findings from the thematic analysis of the government directives in ideopolitical-moral education and then highlight the favourable conditions leading to the emergence and development of the 3,4,5 literature.

7.2 Government's emphases in ideopolitical-moral education

7.2.1 Guiding principles

Documentary analysis on government directives issued from 1990 to 2002 shows that ideopolitical-moral education in China is still implemented with explicit political principles, though China has entered an era of growing economic reform. Out of 20 government directives analyzed, 15 directives (75%) mentioned the guiding principles of ideopolitical-moral education.

Table 7.1 shows that Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought were regarded as guiding principles of ideopolitical-moral education in China before 1993. Since 1993, Deng Xiaoping's theory of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has been upheld as the guiding principle in ideopolitical-moral education. The addition of "socialism with Chinese characteristics," for ideopolitical-moral education in the government directives, reflects power shifts in political leadership as Deng reaffirmed the line of

economic reform in the CCP Central Committee Politburo in 1992.⁵¹⁰ As ideological principles are essential to maintain the CCP’s legitimacy, it is unusual to remove them from the guiding principles of moral education. Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong’s thought and Deng Xiaoping’s “socialism with Chinese characteristics” were regarded as the guiding principles of the directives issued in the 1990s. From 2000 onwards, the speech of Jiang Zemin on the notion ‘Three Represents’⁵¹¹ has been acknowledged as one of the guiding principles in ideopolitical-moral education (CCP 2000, CCP 2001, MOE 2001).

| Documents | Marxism-Leninism | Collectivism | Mao’s thought | Deng | Jiang |
|------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|------|-------|
| SEC(1991b) | X | | | | |
| SEC(1992) | | X | | | |
| SEC(1993a) | X | | X | | |
| SEC(1993b) | | | | X | |
| MOE(1994) | | | | X | |
| SEC(1995a) | X | | X | X | |
| SEC(1995b) | | | | X | |
| SEC(1995c) | X | | X | X | |
| CCP(1996) | X | | X | X | |
| SEC(1997) | X | | X | X | |
| SEC(1998) | X | | | X | |
| CCP(1999) | X | | X | X | |
| CCP(2000) | X | | X | X | X |
| CCP(2001) | | | | | X |
| MOE(2001) | | | | | X |

Table 7.1: Guiding principles of ideopolitical-moral education

7.2.2 Composition of “moral education”

As shown in the Literature Review, the term for “moral education” in China was actually “ideopolitical-moral education” which consisted of ideology, politics and

⁵¹⁰ Mackerras, C. (2001) *The New Cambridge Handbook of Contemporary China*, Cambridge, [England]: Cambridge University Press, p.46..
⁵¹¹ ‘The Three Represents’ denotes that the CCP would represent development trend of the advanced productive forces, the orientation of advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China. See, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/20010625/422678.htm> [Accessed 20 Januray 2007].

morality. Documentary analysis in this study reveals that 4 documents out of 20 government directives analyzed included ideology, politics and morality as basic ingredients of “moral education”.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that “psychological qualities” were officially included in government documents in ideopolitical-moral education in the mid-1990s (SEC, 1995a, p.891; SEC, 1998, p.963) (Table 7.2). As mentioned, moral education in China is inseparable from politics and ideology. The inclusion of “psychological qualities” in ideologically-oriented moral education is a significant marker of the broadening content of ideopolitical-moral education and the relative lessening of ideology and politics in ideopolitical-moral education. This can be seen as a sign of de-politicization.

| | Ideology | Politics | Moral quality | Psychological quality |
|------------|----------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| SEC(1990) | X | X | X | |
| SEC(1995a) | X | X | X | X |
| SEC(1995c) | X | X | X | |
| SEC(1998) | X | X | X | X |

Table 7.2: Ingredients of ideopolitical-moral education

7.2.3 Objectives

Table 7.3 shows that the government directives issued in the early 1990s, particularly in the aftermath of the 1989 student demonstrations, always blamed the Western “bourgeois liberalization” and “peaceful evolution” (SEC 1990, SEC 1991b, SEC 1993b). Ideopolitical-moral education was regarded by the government as a means to resist the influences of outside culture.

The tone of the government changed in the mid-1990s. The government called for expansion of the openness. It wanted to absorb “outstanding” aspects of foreign

culture but reject foreign “rubbish” or “hostile” culture on ideopolitical-moral education (CCP, 1996). The government maintained the importance of ideopolitical-moral education in the face of global competition with the deepening of economic reform (SEC, 1997, p.2544).

At the same time, the government increasingly urged the solving of socio-political problems arising from the process of marketization by ideopolitical-moral education. Problems mentioned in the government directives included rising doubts about socialism among the public (CCP 1996), “moral deregulation” (CCP 1996, CCP 2001), “money worshipping”, “individualism”, and “hedonism” (SEC 1990, SEC 1992, SEC 1993b, MOE 1994, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996, CCP 2000, CCP 2001, MOE 2001).

| | To resist bourgeois evolution | To resist peaceful (hostile) culture | To resist foreign challenge | To face global socialism | To deal with people's puzzling about | To deal with moral deregulation | To deal with money worshipping, individualism, and hedonism | To deal with problems related with the economic reform |
|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| SEC(1990) | X | X | | | | | X | |
| SEC(1991b) | | X | | | | | | |
| SEC(1992) | | | | | | | X | |
| SEC(1993b) | X | | | | | | X | X |
| MOE(1994) | | | | | | | X | X |
| SEC(1995c) | | | | | | | X | |
| CCP(1996) | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| SEC(1997) | | | | X | | | | |
| CCP(1999) | | | X | | | | | X |
| CCP(2000) | | | X | | | | X | |
| CCP(2001) | | | | | | X | X | |
| MOE(2001) | | | | | | | X | X |

Table 7.3: Objectives of ideopolitical-moral education

7.2.4 Inadequacies

While stressing the importance of ideopolitical-moral education in resisting foreign culture and helping solve the problems arising in economic reform, the government observed some implementation problems in ideopolitical-moral education (Table 7.4). One major problem was the ignorance of moral education by school authorities. SEC (1990) reminded the school authorities not to misuse lesson hours allocated to Ideology and Moral Character for other purposes (p.871). SEC (1997) clearly criticized the over emphasis on knowledge transmission and ignorance of moral education by school authorities (para. 2, p.2545).

The implementation of ideopolitical-moral education was also questioned. SEC (1990) called for improved teaching methods in moral education. CCP (2000) observed the failure of school moral education to meet either the rising demand of the rapidly-developing society or the psychological development of the youth (p.815). The government's criticism on the inadequacy of moral education was frequent in the late 1990s (CCP 1999, CCP 2000, CCP 2001, MOE 2001). CCP (2000) criticized moral education work in schools as "ineffective", "out of focus", "outmoded", and "unattractive" (para. 1, pp.815-6). The government also questioned the effectiveness of political campaigns. While calling for the use of communist role model Lei Feng in moral education, SEC (1992) emphasized the actual effectiveness of political campaigns and warned against the phenomenon of "*dahong daweng*" (make a sensation) and "*yi zhenfeng*" (a spell) (p.2495).

| | Ignorance by school authorities | Inadequacy in teaching |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| SEC(1990) | X | X |
| SEC(1993b) | | X |
| SEC(1997) | X | |
| CCP(1999) | | X |
| CCP(2000) | X | X |
| CCP(2001) | | X |
| MOE(2001) | | X |

Table 7.4: Inadequacies of ideopolitical-moral education

7.2.5 Teaching approaches

While criticizing the inadequacies of moral education, the government suggested solutions to enhance the teaching effectiveness of moral education (Table 7.5). One solution was the improvement of teaching approaches. The government repeatedly appealed for moral education to be “relevant” and “student-centred” (16/20, 80.0%). CCP (1999) urged that ideological work should be relevant to the reality and the needs of the people, and concerned with actual effectiveness (para.5-7).

The government stressed that ideopolitical-moral education should meet children’s needs, and be based on their age and psychological characteristics. SEC (1993a) criticized rigid or adult-centred moral education and emphasized that teaching should be based on the mental and psychological characteristics of students (p.104). The call for student-centred moral education became more explicit as the economic reform deepened. SEC (1998) urged that moral education be implemented according to students’ moral development (para. 4). MOE (2001) demanded student-centred teaching and criticized current moral education work as “arduous (*fan*), difficult (*nan*), one-sided (*pian*), outdated (*jiu*) (para.1).

While recognizing regional disparity, the government stressed the regional flexibility

in the implementation of moral education from 1991 to 1994 (SEC 1991a, SEC 1991b, SEC 1993, SEC 1994). SEC (1991a) suggested that schools adapt moral education in accordance with regional conditions (p.116). SEC (1991b) recommended schools to integrate regional history in the education of Chinese history (p.125).

| | Relevance | Student-centred | Regional Flexibility | Diversity in teaching method | Innovative teaching |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| SEC(1990) | X | X | | | |
| SEC(1991a) | | | X | | |
| SEC(1991b) | X | X | X | | |
| SEC(1992) | X | X | | | X |
| SEC(1993a) | X | X | | X | |
| SEC(1993c) | X | X | X | X | |
| MOE(1994) | X | X | | | |
| SEC(1994) | X | X | X | X | |
| SEC(1995a) | X | X | | | |
| SEC(1995b) | X | X | | X | |
| SEC(1995c) | X | X | | | X |
| CCP(1996) | X | | | | |
| SEC(1997) | | X | | | |
| SEC(1998) | X | X | | | |
| MOE(1998) | X | | | | |
| CCP(1999) | X | X | | | X |
| CCP(2000) | X | X | | X | |
| CCP(2001) | X | X | | X | |
| MOE(2001) | | X | | X | X |

Table 7.5: Suggested teaching approaches to ideopolitical-moral education

Following the stress on regional flexibility were the calls for “diversity in teaching methods” in moral education from 1993 to 1995, (SEC 1993a, SEC 1993c, SEC 1994, SEC 1995). SEC (1993a) stressed that teaching should be lively. During the year 1993 and 1995, the government placed particular emphasis on cultural activities by issuing the *Notice on the Making Use of Excellent Films for the National Patriotic Education*

in *Primary and Secondary Schools* (SEC 1993c),⁵¹² *Notice on the Recommendation of a Hundred Patriotic songs for Primary and Secondary Schools*,⁵¹³ and *Notice on the Recommendation of Hundred Patriotic Education Readers for Primary and Secondary Schools* (SEC, 1995b).⁵¹⁴ A campaign of the “hundred” patriotic films, songs, and readers was launched to arouse students’ interests in moral education. SEC (1995b) further recommended student-centred extra-curricular activities like drama, story-telling, and speech to motivate students’ reading.

Since 1995, the government has mentioned “innovative teaching” in moral education from time to time to meet the rising needs of students in an era of reform. CCP (1999) attributed the failure of moral education to repetition and formalism (para.13).

7.2.6 Teaching resources

Besides teaching methods, the government advocated use of different teaching media in moral education. Table 7.6 shows that most government directives suggested a variety of teaching media to implement ideopolitical-moral education. Schools were generally expected to function as a medium for moral education but a specific course in Ideology and Moral Character was only mentioned in half of the government directives analyzed (10/20, 50.0%). On the contrary, the government urged integration of moral education with subject teaching (13/20, 65.0%). SEC (1993a) gave examples of language, mathematics, history, geography, natural science, music, art, physical education and so forth (pp.100-1). This indicates the government’s hesitation about

⁵¹² Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu* [The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.159-166.

⁵¹³ Editorial Board of Yearbook of Education in China (1997) *Yearbook of Education in China* (Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian) [in Chinese], Beijing: China Encyclopedia Press, p.863.

⁵¹⁴ Li, Mingyi et al. (Ed.) (2001) *The Guidance Book on the Strengthening and Improving Moral Education Work in Primary and Secondary Schools under the new conditions* [xinxingshixia jiaqianghegaijin zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo zhidao quanshu] (Vol.3), Yanji:Yanbian People’s Press, pp.2521-6.

teaching ideopolitical-moral education through courses in Ideology and Moral Character alone.

Though mentioned in the government documents from time to time (1990-1, 1994, and 1997-8), total occurrence of “code of behaviour” was only 6 (30%). It seems that “code of behaviour” was no longer emphasized in the government directives. In the 1990s, use of role morals was also less frequently mentioned in government directives on ideopolitical-moral education (7/20, 35.0%). The teaching approach of “modelling” was comparatively more frequently mentioned during the mid-1990s. It was only mentioned three times after 1996. The traditional communist role model Lei Feng was advocated in government document issued in the early 1990s (SEC 1992). Following the deepening of the reforms, models were no longer confined to Lei Feng but ordinary people with distinctive morality (“*xianjin bangyang*”) (CCP 2001).

On the contrary, the government called for incorporating “practice” into moral education (12/20, 60.0%). The government also frequently called for implementing moral education through extra-curricular activities (12/20, 60.0%), especially activities organized by such para-government organizations as Communist Youth League, and Women’s Federation (10/20, 50.0%).

The importance of moral texts was recognized by the government, especially in the mid-1990s (SEC 1993a, MOE 1994, SEC 1994, SEC 1995b). Rhyming literature such as *code of behaviour for primary school students (three character song)* [*xiaoxuesheng richang xingwei guifan (sanzige)*] was suggested in SEC (1991a, pp.116-7). While insisting on providing students with “healthy spiritual” reading materials, SEC (1995b) nevertheless stressed voluntary purchase of books by the

students (p.2522).

| | Ideology and moral character class | Subject teaching in school | Code of behaviour | Practice | Extra-curricula activities | Organizations such as the young pioneer | Models | Family education | Integration of school, family and the society | Publications | Films |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------|--|--------|------------------|---|--------------|-------|
| SEC(1990) | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X | |
| SEC(1991a) | | | X | | | | | | | X | X |
| SEC(1991b) | | X | | | X | | | | | X | X |
| SEC(1992) | | | | | X | X | X | | | | |
| SEC(1993a) | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | | X | |
| SEC(1993b) | | X | | X | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1993c) | | X | | | X | | | | | | X |
| MOE(1994) | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X | X |
| SEC(1994) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| SEC(1995a) | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | |
| SEC(1995b) | | | | | X | X | | | | X | |
| SEC(1995c) | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | X | |
| CCP(1996) | X | X | | X | | X | X | | | X | X |
| SEC(1997) | | | X | X | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1998) | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | |
| MOE(1998) | X | X | X | | X | | | X | X | | X |
| CCP(1999) | | | | | | | X | | X | | X |
| CCP(2000) | X | X | | | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| CCP(2001) | | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | X |
| MOE(2001) | X | | | X | | | | | | X | |

Table 7.6: Suggested teaching media of ideopolitical-moral education

With the rapid expansion of mass media in the era of economic reform, films, television and even internet were called for to promote moral education (10/20, 50.0%). MOE (2001) called for stimulation of students’ thinking through discussion and suggested that advanced information technology could be used to improve their progress.

Collaboration between school, family and society was called for once in 1994 to 1995, but it was re-emphasized in the government documents issued between 1998 and 2001 (SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 1999, CCP 2000, CCP 2001) to create a good atmosphere for moral education. The government's call for the whole society to cooperate in implementing ideopolitical-moral education signalled a trend towards mass education in moral education in the late 1990s.

7.2.7 Themes in moral education

Table 7.7 illustrated the shift of themes in moral education recommended by the government. The most frequent themes included "patriotism" (17/20, 85.0%), "socialism" (16/20, 80.0%), "collectivism" (12/20, 60.0%), and the CCP's revolution (12/20, 60.0%).

Though the number of occurrences of "civilized behaviour" was moderate (9/20, 45.0%), it was found throughout the 1990s (SEC 1990, SEC 1991a, SEC 1993a, MOE 1994, SEC 1995c, SEC 1997, SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 2000, CCP 2001). Some themes were found to cluster in a particular period. For example, the themes of "national situations (*guoqing*)" (8/20, 40%) and "Chinese history" (8/20, 40%) were prevalent particularly from 1991 to 1996. "Traditional ethics" (7/20, 35.0%) were given particular emphasis from 1993 to 1996 (SEC 1993b, SEC 1993c, MOE 1994, SEC 1994, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996). "National cohesion" was a particular preoccupation of the government documents from 1994 to 1996 (SEC 1994, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996, CCP 1999). "Labour" (6/20, 30.0%) was found to be popular before 1997 (SEC 1992, SEC 1993a, MOE 1994, SEC 1995a, CCP 1996, SEC 1997).

| | Patriotism | Collectivism | Socialism | CCP's revolution | Five-lovings | Labour | Civilized behaviour | Democracy and leal education | National situations (<i>guoqing</i>) | Chinese history | National cohesion | Traditional ethics | Social ethics | Occupational ethics | Family ethics | Moral quality | Psychological quality | World Outlook |
|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| SEC(1990) | X | X | X | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1991a) | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1991b) | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1992) | X | X | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1993a) | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1993b) | X | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | |
| SEC(1993c) | X | | X | X | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | |
| MOE(1994) | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | X |
| SEC(1994) | X | | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| SEC(1995a) | X | X | X | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| SEC(1995b) | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEC(1995c) | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| CCP(1996) | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| SEC(1997) | | | X | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| SEC(1998) | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | | | | X | | | X | | |
| MOE(1998) | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | | | | X | | | X | | X |
| CCP(1999) | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| CCP(2000) | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | X | X | |
| CCP(2001) | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| MOE(2001) | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X |

Table 7.7: Suggested themes of ideopolitical-moral education

Another group of themes were found to emerge after the mid-1990s. The first group was moral-oriented themes. For example, “moral quality” appeared in 9 documents (45%) after 1995. (SEC 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, CCP 1996, SEC 1997, SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 2000, 2001, MOE 2001). “Psychological qualities” were also

emphasized from 1995 (SEC 1995a, SEC 1995c, SEC 1997, CCP 2000, MOE 2001). “Legal education” was emphasized in all government papers issued from 1994 to 2000 (SEC 1993a, MOE 1994, SEC 1994, SEC 1995a, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996, SEC 1997, SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 1999, CCP 2000). “Democracy”, concerning the basic rights and obligations of citizens (SEC 1995a, p.893), was stressed together with the concept of “legal education”.

Group-oriented ethics have been increasingly prevalent since the mid-1990s, including “social ethics” (MOE 1994, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996, SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 2000, CCP 2001), “occupational ethics” (MOE 1994, SEC 1995c, CCP 1996, CCP 2000, CCP 2001) (1994-2001), and “family ethics” (CCP 1996, CCP 2001).

In the late 1990s, there was a clear rise of the theme “world outlook”, concerning world development (SEC 1998, MOE 2001). The rise of moral-oriented themes from the mid-1990s indicates the adaptation of moral education to the deepening economic reform, and strengthening the linkage with the international world.

7.3 Periodization of moral education in China

The following paragraphs attempt to periodize the development of ideopolitical-moral education in China in the 1990s based on the themes identified.

7.3.1 Political and ideological elements: 1989-1992

In the early 1990s, soon after the 1989 student demonstrations, the government tightened ideopolitical-moral education by placing great emphasis on the ideopolitical aspects of moral education. While emphasizing the threat of western peaceful evolution and bourgeois liberalization, SEC (1990) reiterated the importance of the ideological and political nature of moral education in guaranteeing correct political

orientation of students (para.1) and called for education in patriotism, collectivism, and forming a sense of rules and regulations for day-to-day behaviour and conduct among the students (para.1-2).

SEC (1991a) promulgated *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students* on 20 August. A *code of behaviour for primary school students (three character song)* [*xiaoxuesheng richang xingwei guifan (sanzige)*] was composed to enliven the daily codes of behaviour among the students. In addition, traditional communist role model Lei Feng was re-emphasized in government's directives (SEC 1992).

7.3.2 Nationalistic Education: 1992-1996

Deng's southern tour of Guangdong not only revigorated the economic reform but also relaxed the political and ideological control. In this period, the government advocated *Nationalistic Education* with great energy. The notion "*Nationalistic Education*" actually covers broad content areas such as education in Chinese history, national situations (*guoqing*), and traditional culture.

7.3.2.1 Education in the history of modern and contemporary China

Moral education in the early 1990s was characterized by nationalistic emphases under the banner of patriotism through education in the history of modern and contemporary China. In addition, study of national situations (*guoqing jiaoyu*) was initiated by an open letter from Party secretary Jiang Zemin to the directors of the State Education Commission in 1991.⁵¹⁵ In response to Jiang's letter, the State Education Commission issued a Notice (SEC 1991b) concerning nationalistic education through education in Chinese history and the national situations.

⁵¹⁵ Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu* [*The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools*], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.122-3.

7.3.2.2 Chinese traditional culture

Traditional Chinese culture became the focus of ideopolitical-moral education from 1993 under the umbrella of Deng Xiaoping's theory of establishing socialism with Chinese characteristics. The State Education Commission issued *a Notice on the Promulgation of the Outline of Moral Education for Primary Schools* (SEC, 1993a).⁵¹⁶ "Five Lovings" (the education in the love of motherland, love of the CCP, love of the people, love of collectivism, love of labour, love of learning and science) were quoted as the basic content of moral education. Under the category of "love of the people", the notice stressed traditional ethics such as filial piety, devotion, bravery, respect for teachers and the elderly (para.3, p.98).

To strengthen the education in traditional ethics, the government launched four "hundred" campaigns⁵¹⁷ from 1993 to 1996. The appeal for Chinese traditional ethics was also strongly emphasized in the speeches delivered by party leaders such as General Secretary Jiang Zemin and Vice-premier Li Lanqian at the National Conference on Education in June 1994,⁵¹⁸ signalling the reorientation of the leadership's focus on ideopolitical-moral education from the education in Chinese history to Chinese traditional culture.

On 31 August, 1994, the Ministry of Education issued a document entitled *Some Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving Moral Education Work in*

⁵¹⁶ Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu* [The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.96-107

⁵¹⁷ The four hundred campaigns are the campaigns in regard to "Hundred Patriotic Education Readers", "Hundred Patriotic Education Films", "Hundred Patriotic Songs", "Hundred Patriotic Education Bases" for Primary and Secondary Schools launched by SEC.

⁵¹⁸ Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu* [The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.27,47.

*Schools*⁵¹⁹ (MOE, 1994). Unlike SEC (1990) which called for the introduction of ancient Chinese heroes who bravely protected the motherland from foreign intrusion, the Opinions advocated learning from historical figures with excellent morality, and publishing their stories in the forms of readers and movies with great publicity as a response to the changing social circumstances. It also called for integrating Chinese moral tradition into the ethics of development from socialist revolution and socialist construction (para. 8, p.74). The Opinions marked the government's official recognition of the Chinese moral tradition.

Chinese traditional culture received "official status" by law in 1995. Article 7 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Education*, ratified on March 18, 1995 by the Third Plenary Sessions of the Eighth CCP Central Committee, stipulated the carrying forward of Chinese traditional culture on education in order to absorb achievements on the civilization of mankind.⁵²⁰

7.3.2.3 National cohesion

Nationalistic Education also concerned national cohesion. A *Notice on the Promulgation of the Outline on the Implementation of Education in Patriotism* issued by the State Education Commission on August 23, 1994⁵²¹ (SEC, 1994) stressed 'national cohesion' and 'peaceful unification, one country, two systems' in patriotic education (para.13-4, p.143). It particularly called for the introduction of the national policies of China and achievements of socialist construction among those countrymen

⁵¹⁹ China Education Yearbook Editorial Board (Ed.) *Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian 1995 [China education yearbook 1995]*, Beijing: People's Education Press, pp.72-7.

⁵²⁰ Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu [The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, p.205.

⁵²¹ Department of Educational Foundation, PRC State Education Commission (Ed.) *Zhongxiaoxue de yugongzuo wenjianzilio bidu [The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.139-150.

residing abroad, for example, in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan (para. 39, p.150). It is clear that the notion of “national cohesion” became increasingly important in government documents as the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong and Macau to China got closer.

7.3.2.4 The Cultivation of Socialist Spiritual Civilization

A campaign on “building a socialist spiritual civilization” was launched in 1996. On October 10, the CCP published a document entitled the *Resolution on Some Important Issues related to Strengthening the Construction of Socialist Spiritual Civilization* in the Sixth Plenum of the Fourteenth CCP Central Committee⁵²² (CCP, 1996). Recognizing some negative consequences of the economic opening up such as moral degeneration, corruption, questioning of the value of socialism, and the intrusion of western values, the resolution urged schools to strengthen construction of socialist spiritual civilization in the open period (para.4, 17) and called for education in patriotism, collectivism, socialism, social ethics, occupational ethics, family ethics and so forth (para.7-11).

7.3.3 Moral Qualities: 1997- 2002

China entered the era of Jiang Zemin after the death of Deng Xiaoping in February 1997. Jiang’s idea of “three represents” was held as one of the guiding principles in government documents on ideopolitical-moral education issued after 2000 (CCP, 2000). Prevalent themes in ideopolitical-moral education during this period are as follows.

7.3.3.1 Psychological Health

Since 1995, psychological health has become one of the main concerns in government

⁵²² CCP Central Committee (1996) CCP’s Decision on Some Important Issues to Strengthening the Construction of the Socialist Spiritual Civilization; See <http://www1.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/5089/5106/5182/20010430/456601.htm>

ideopolitical-moral education documents. SEC (1995c) stressed the importance of psychological qualities and reiterated the idea of “two lessons” (*liangke*) education, indicating the official inclination toward psychological health, virtues, and life philosophies in moral education.

Psychological qualities have become increasingly important in the late 1990s. In SEC (1997), psychological qualities were viewed as one of the themes of school moral education work (para.8). The status of psychological qualities was further confirmed in SEC (1998). The rule defined “moral education” as education in politics, ideology, morality, and psychological qualities (para.2, p.963), thus marking the government’s official recognition of psychological qualities in moral education and indicating further de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education in China.

7.3.3.2 Individual well being

The government continued its concern for the cultivation of moral virtues among students. Particular attention was paid to the moral quality of individual citizens. The CCP (2000) admitted that the youth were suffering from individualism, moneyism and hedonism due to changing social conditions including deepening economic reform, and the intrusion of foreign ideologies (para.1, p.815). It called for strengthening moral education work to raise the people’s ideological and moral standards (para. 2) and included education in ideology, morality, law and discipline, and the legal system in moral education work in schools (para.3, 4, 6, 7, pp.816-8).

The CCP (2001) called for rule by law and by morality as the pace of reform and modernization increased (para. 1) in response to symptoms of moral deregulation such as moneyism, hedonism, extreme individualism, lack of honesty, and cheating (para.

2). The outline stressed personal values such as diligence (para.14) but also highlighted such themes as “Me and others”, “Me and the society”, and “Me and nature” (para. 15). Particular attention was paid to social ethics, family ethics and occupational ethics (para. 11-23). The outline particularly highlighted the importance of specified values in the market economy e.g. consciousness of competition, efficiency, spirit of innovation. It emphasized the integration of tradition and the spirit of the contemporary age, individual rights and social responsibility, principles of effectiveness and equity and so forth (para. 5-10).

7.3.3.3 Democracy and Legal education

The terms *democracy* and *legal education* were mentioned in most government documents analyzed. However, the term *democracy* and *legal education* were equated to “law-abiding”, and “follow the collective” in government documents (SEC, 1994, para.8). Democracy education became an important theme in ideopolitical-moral education when the Chinese economy further opened up to market forces with the adoption of the modernisation policy. The CCP (1996) elaborated on the importance of legal education in popularizing knowledge of law, duties and rights. It placed stress on understanding the significance of law in maintaining public life and public order in a socialist market economy. It also stressed the significance of constitution and law to the country’s governance, in establishing a socialist modernised country, and sustaining peace and order (para. 13).

The significance of legal education was reiterated in subsequent documents. SEC (1997) called for education in civic consciousness; focusing on democracy and the legal system, and the rights and duties in school moral education work (para.8), while CCP (2000) stressed legal consciousness, law and discipline, and the legal system in

light of the deepening economic reform (para.3).

7.3.3.4 International outlook

International Education is a component of national education. While the government was launching a campaign of patriotic education, SEC (1994) maintained the principle of opening and called for absorption of achievements of civilization from China and foreign countries (para. 4-5, p.141). A theme of “economy and politics in the contemporary world” (*dangdai shijie jingji yu zhengzhi*) was included in MOE (1998).

7.4 Conclusion

7.4.1 De-politicisation in ideopolitical-moral education

Documentary analysis in this study reveals that the nature of “moral education” expanded to “ideology-political-moral-psychological health” education from the previous “ideology-political-moral” education as official status was conferred on psychological health in SEC (1998). The inclusion of psychological health hints at the lessening of political weight on moral education.

Though political and ideological elements such as Marxism-Leninism and Maoism maintained their significance in the education of citizens, examination of newly added themes in the government directives suggests an intensifying de-politicization in ideopolitical-moral education in China with deepening economic reform in the 1990s (Figure 7.1). For example, the addition of “Chinese history” and “life philosophies” to moral education from 1992 and 1993 respectively indicated a lessening of previously emphasis on socialism and communism. The inclusion of “traditional ethics” (1994), “social ethics” and “family ethics” (1995) respectively evidenced the tendency towards the cultivation of moral virtues in ideopolitical-moral education in the

mid-1990s. In the late 1990s, “international outlook” became a significant theme in moral education.

| Year | Political orientation | → | Moral orientation |
|-----------|-------------------------|--|--|
| 1990-1992 | Socialism, Collectivism | | |
| 1992 | | Chinese history, National conditions (<i>Guo qing</i>) | |
| 1993 | | Life philosophies | |
| 1994 | | Traditional ethics, Democracy and legal education | |
| 1995 | | National cohesion | |
| 1996 | | | Social ethics, Family ethics, Occupational ethics, Psychological health |
| 1998 | | | International outlook |

Figure 7.1: Newly added themes in moral education

7.4.2 Student-centred moral education

Documentary analysis in the present study reveals the government’s recognition of the inadequacy of moral education, as adult-centred, not relevant to the reality of children’s lives. The government has frequently called for improvements in moral education in the context of teaching strategy as well as teaching media.

In the early 1990s, the government called for diversity of methods in implementing moral education. In the late 1990s, the government demanded innovation in moral education. In regard to teaching media, the government called for joint efforts to be made by school, family and the society. The mass media and publications were regarded as important ways of implementing moral education. All in all, the government demanded student-centred moral education which was relevant to

students' lives to meet the needs arising from increased economic openness.

7.4.3 *Shou* and *Fang* in ideopolitical-moral education

Documentary analysis in this study reveals the emphases of the government in ideopolitical-moral education and identified five periods that represent varying degrees of *shou* (tightening political control) and *fang* (relaxing political control) in ideopolitical-moral education:

(1) 1990 to 1991: there was a *shou* in ideopolitical-moral education as the government reiterated the ideological and political nature of moral education. The strategy of following the example of heroic models was also re-emphasized.

(2) 1991 to 1992: there was a relative *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education compared with the previous *shou*. The government launched patriotic education, firstly in the form of education in contemporary Chinese history. Communist role model Lei Feng was replaced by historical heroes who bravely resisted foreign intrusion.

(3) 1993 to 1995: traditional Chinese ethics had become the focus of ideopolitical-moral education. There was a call for learning from historical figures with excellent morality in the *Opinions* (CCP, 1994). At the same time, "communism" was omitted from the guiding principles of government documents such as CCP (1994) (para. 1-3). The outline denied 'narrow nationalism' but stressed the principle of opening up the economy and called for absorption of achievements of civilization from China and foreign countries (para. 4-5). The third period was thus marked with a greater *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education.

(4) 1996: though there was a campaign for *Strengthening the Construction of Socialist Spiritual Civilization*, there was no apparent sign of *shou* in relevant documents. CCP (1996) maintained the importance to China of opening up. While stressing education in patriotism, collectivism, socialism, the document called for education in social

ethics, occupational ethics, and familial ethics (para.7-11). The fourth period is thus regarded as a *fang* period in ideopolitical-moral education.

(5) 1997 and thereafter: signs of greater *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education were nevertheless found in the government documents published after 1997. Legal education, family education and so forth became main themes of ideopolitical-moral education. Inclusion of psychological qualities in ideopolitical-moral education in the *Rule* (SEC, 1998) officially marked further de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education.

The development of *shou* and *fang* cycle in ideopolitical-moral education in the 1990s is summarized in Figure 7.2:

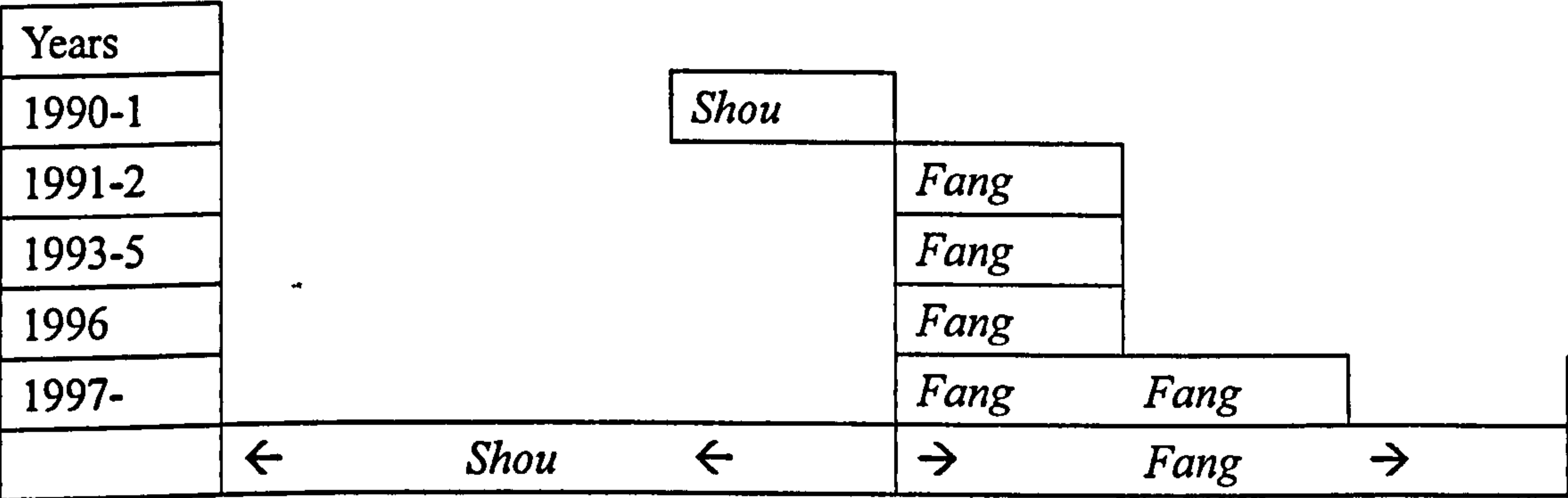


Figure 7.2: *Shou* and *Fang* cycle in ideopolitical-moral education in the 1990s

Though the CCP still exerts tight control on the people, as is shown in government documents, there is evidence that the government has tilted to *fang* rather than *shou* in the era of deepening reform.

7.4.4 Favourable conditions for the 3,4,5 literature

Among the government documents analyzed, SEC (1994) helped to create favourable conditions for the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature. It firstly called for absorption of achievements of Chinese civilization (para. 4-5) and stressed education in Chinese traditional culture, including philosophy, social sciences, art and literature, science and technology as well as the work of distinguished politicians, philosophers, artists,

scientists, educators, and strategists (para.8). It further called for the implementation of nation-wide patriotic education for the youth through the joint forces of schools and such organizations as the Communist Youth League, and Women's Federation (para.16-18) and suggested publication of educational readers for the students (para. 27). The *Notice* also emphasized that patriotic education should be carried out in accordance with characteristics of the youth (para. 19). The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature was thus not a fortuitous phenomenon but made possible by the government policies in regard to ideopolitical-moral education. These policies made recommendations for nationalistic patriotic education entering schools, teaching materials and classrooms.

It is interesting to find that as early as 1991, a *Three Character Song (sanzige)* was attached to SEC (1991a, pp.116-7) to facilitate the teaching of *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students*. The *Song* has 92 sentences (276 characters). Its content is the same as the *Daily Codes*. Though there is no official explanation for the production of the "song", it can be viewed as an official attempt to implement ideopolitical-moral education through three character rhyming literature.

To conclude, favourable conditions to the birth of the 3,4,5 literature that emerged in and after 1993 include:

- the government's stress on traditional Chinese ethics in building morality among the young;
- the government's call for publication of moral readers in educating the young;
- the government's adoption of three character song as a teaching instrument of the *Daily Codes*;
- the government's call for student-centred approaches in implementing moral education.
- the government's call for support from the mass media and the whole society.

7.4.5 Conditions leading to the fall of the 3,4,5 literature

According to documents analyzed, ideopolitical-moral education moved away from a form of nationalistic education or patriotism after the mid-1990s. In regard to themes of ideopolitical-moral education, this period was characterized by psychological health, democracy and legal education. The government maintained the importance of “innovation” and “diversity of methods” in teaching ideopolitical-moral education. Under such circumstances, it is questionable if the 3,4,5 literature could have been supported for a long time by the government.

7.4.6 Significance of the Findings from the Documentary Analysis

Documentary Analysis is important for this study as it shows the shifts in government emphases in moral education in the period under study and its relationship with the publication of the 3,4,5 literature. The findings reveal favourable conditions for the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature and help to explain its decline.

It is also found that the publication of the 3,4,5 literature by the Guangdong province was a response to the central government documents in ideopolitical-moral education. The 3,4,5 movement can thus be viewed as a regional elaboration of the national policy in ideopolitical-moral education. The findings also explain the nearly simultaneous emergence of the *New Three Character Classic* in different provinces in China in 1995 from the perspective of national moral education policy.

In addition, findings from documentary analysis can on one hand triangulate findings from the interviews, verifying the reflection of the informants on the government’s role in the publication, clarifying the role the central government played in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature, and the development of the 3,4,5 movement. On the other hand they supplement the findings of content analysis of moral education texts,

especially in showing the emphasis on values, notably from traditional ethics, in the recent development of moral education in China.

Documentary analysis in the present study also reveals the effectiveness of the government documents as well as the speeches delivered by party leaders in showing the emphases of the government in moral education. The documents were shown to be practical resources for studies related to moral education in China.

Chapter 8

Findings from Interviews

8.1 Introduction

Nine informants were invited for interview. Three were authors of the 3,4,5 literature, two were academics in moral education, two were government officials responsible for the implementation of ideopolitical-moral education in schools. Lastly, two informants were teachers, each with about 30 years experience in teaching the curriculum for Ideology and Moral Character.⁵²³

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, six participants, including one author of the 3,4,5 literature, one government official, and four educators were invited to a focus group meeting. The focus group meeting was held to triangulate the interview findings.

According to the choice of the informants, all interviews and the focus group meetings were conducted in Guangdong province. The informants were enthusiastic about taking part in this study. Permission to take notes during the discussion was granted by all informants. None of them withdrew from the interview or focus group. On the contrary, they became increasingly enthusiastic and all the interviews and meetings ended up taking much longer than was originally planned.

It was unexpected that all informants preferred their names to be listed in the *Acknowledgements*. While the research took all measures to protect the informants from being identified, some of the informants expressed the contrary. They requested that they be mentioned and did not regard the topic as politically sensitive. In addition,

⁵²³ Ideology and Moral Character is a curriculum subject on ideopolitical-moral education in primary schools in China.

no informants requested changes after receiving the draft of sections of the thesis in which the researcher made use of material provided by them.

8.2 Profile of the Informants

8.2.1 Authors

Three author informants (Author A, Author B, and Author C, hereafter, the authors) participated in the writing of the *New Three Character Classic* (1995), the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (1996), and the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (1996) respectively. They reflected on their experience of being invited to join the editorial board of the 3,4,5 literature and provided details about the writing process, their own roles and those of the government, and their evaluation of the 3,4,5 literature.

Author A was an honorary professor at a well-known university in Guangdong province. He was an expert in Chinese Literature with particular interests in classical poem and drama. He was about 70 years old, and had a thorough understanding of political and educational development in contemporary China. Author B was a Professor of Ethics at another well-known university in Guangdong province. He was an expert in Ethics and a key figure in organizations such as Chinese Ethics Society (*Zhongguo Lunli Xuehui*) and Guangdong Ethics Society (*Guangdong Lunli Xuehui*). He was about 60 years old. He used to be secretary of the Party committee at the university. Author C was the director of an educational research centre in Guangzhou. Most of the projects he had participated in related to moral education. He was also a chairperson of an educational journal in Guangdong province. He demonstrated abundant knowledge of social and educational development in Guangdong province during the interview.

8.2.2 Government Officials

Two government officials participated in interviews in the present study, namely Official A and Official B (hereafter, the officials).

Official A held a senior position at the Department of Ideopolitical Education of the Education Board in Guangdong province. Official A was mainly responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of government policies on ideopolitical-moral education in schools of Guangdong province. Official B held a senior position at the Department of Ideopolitical Education in the Education Bureau in Guangzhou. His duties were similar to Official A but he supervised schools at municipal level.

The officials were all experienced in the promotion and implementation of official policies in ideopolitical-moral education at either provincial or municipal level. In the interviews, they helped to provide useful background information on the emergence and development of the 3,4,5 literature, as well as its implementation in schools of Guangdong province.

8.2.3 Academics in Moral Education

Two academics with expertise on moral education (Professor A and Professor B, hereafter, the academics) participated in interviews in the present study.

Professor A was a vice-principal and Party secretary at a university in Guangzhou while Professor B was Dean of the School of Education and Director of the Ethics Research Centre at a university.

The academics interviewed were all experts in moral education. They had conducted research on moral education with numerous publications on students' moral

development and self-cultivation as well as on ideopolitical-moral education in China. They helped to provide a critical review of the 3,4,5 movement in relation to the development of moral education in the open era.

8.2.4 School teachers

Two experienced primary school teachers (Teacher A and Teacher B, hereafter, the teachers) were interviewed in the present study. Teacher A and Teacher B had taught the curriculum for Ideology and Moral Character for 29 years and 30 years respectively. The teachers had first-hand experience of adopting the 3,4,5 literature in teaching the curriculum for Ideology and Moral Character. They were able to provide information showing the different impacts on the classroom between using the 3,4,5 literature and the official moral education textbooks. They also discussed how students and parents responded to the 3,4,5 literature, especially in comparison to their response to formal Ideology and Moral Character textbooks.

8.2.5 Focus Group Meetings

The focus group included an author of the 3,4,5 literature. He was one of the authors of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (1996). He was also interviewed beforehand as Author C. The government official held a senior position at the Educational Bureau of a district in Guangzhou, namely Official C.

The four educators included two secondary school principals (namely Teacher C and Teacher D respectively), one primary school principal (namely Teacher E) and one primary school teacher (namely Teacher F). All teachers had adopted the 3,4,5 literature in their daily teaching. Their practical teaching experience with the 3,4,5 literature shed light on the application of the 3,4,5 literature in both primary schools and secondary schools.

8.3 Findings from the Interviews: A story of the 3,4,5 literature

Adapting the reflective model designed by Dolbeare and Schuman (1982), the informants were asked questions about three stages: their life history (the past), their contemporary experience, and their reflection on the meaning of their experience. These questions were asked in both individual interview and focus group meeting. In this study, “life history (the past)” refers to the informants’ personal review of key features of the development of moral education in China. “Contemporary experience” refers to the informants’ experience of being involved in the 3,4,5 movement, as a policy maker, documents drafter, implementer and so forth. “Reflection on meaning” refers to the informants’ evaluation of the 3,4,5 movement, such as its impact, significance, problems, and difficulties related to this movement.

The findings from the three-stage interviews are compiled and presented in the following paragraphs in an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of the 3,4,5 movement since its inception. Findings from individual interviews and the focus group meeting will be viewed as a whole set of information, as the informants were asked the same questions, in the same sequence. It can be stated at this stage that there was no apparent difference between the findings from the interviews and the focus group.

8.3.1 The rise of the 3,4,5 literature

Information from the informants made clear that the 3,4,5 literature had not come by accident but by intertwined forces of social transformation and official recognition of the inadequacies of orthodox socialist ideopolitical-moral education.

8.3.1.1 Moral deregulation arising from rapid social changes

Most informants related the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature to moral deregulation

(*daode shifan*) arising from rapid social changes. “Moneyism” (*baijin zhuyi*),⁵²⁴ one of the symptoms of moral deregulation, was identified by most of the informants. Author C and Official C observed that people were crazed for money and profits following Deng Xiaoping’s southern tour which confirmed the party line of economic reform. Author C added that “money had increasingly become an important indicator of personal achievement as economic reform deepened.” In a rapidly marketized society like Guangdong, “people strived for money regardless of the means of getting it.”

On the other hand, Professor B reiterated the seriousness of the problems of lack of honesty in Guangdong. He explained that honesty, originally a distinctive feature of traditional Chinese ethics, was ignored in commercialized Guangdong. “Marketization was proceeding at a fast pace but market ethics had yet to be established; people were puzzled as to whether profit-making should become a part of their moral values.” He added the problem was even worse as the government’s “honesty” was also doubted because of rampant official corruption.

Official A attributed the decline of morality to the errors made by the government during the Cultural Revolution. “The government launched the campaign ‘to eliminate the four olds’ (*po si jiu*)⁵²⁵ and fostered a ‘spirit of rebellion’ (*zaofan jingshen*) among the public. As a result, not only traditional Chinese virtues but also socialist ethics were undermined”. Official A went on, “There was a strong call from the public for re-building the morality of youth after the end of the Cultural

⁵²⁴ “Moneyism” means money worshipping.

⁵²⁵ The “Four olds” are old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits, see Li, K.R. (Ed.) (2002) *Hanying zhengzhi falu cidian* [*Chinese-English Dictionary of Politics and Laws*], Beijing: China Book Press, p.50.

Revolution.” The publication of the 3,4,5 literature was regarded as a remedial solution tried by Guangdong provincial government.

8.3.1.2 Spoiled young generation

Official A attributed the production of the 3,4,5 literature to “youth problems” which were becoming increasingly alarming along with fast economic advances taking place in Guangdong province. Official A found it a “paradox” that the youth often lacked ambition when they were provided with plenty of job opportunities and “Guangdong families were generally rich and the young did not need to worry about bread and butter in the early 1990s.” Official A went on, “there was on the contrary a growing sense of inferiority among the youth. Self-wounding has been on the rise in recent years.” “Cases of youth suicide were increasing. There were about 20 youth suicides in one year in Guangdong.” The youth were thus vulnerable in face of modern-day pressures.

According to the teachers, there had been an influx of spoiled single children in Guangdong since the adoption of the single child policy in China. Spoiled by their parents, single children lacked self-discipline and self-initiative. These “little emperors at home” were self-centred and reluctant to cooperate with each other. Their motivation to learn was also low. In addition, they could not distinguish right and wrong when faced with massive information from mass media (Teacher A).

8.3.1.3 Challenges arising from incoming cultures

The economic reform and open policy brought not only western technology and capital to China but also western culture and thoughts. It was not unusual to find people queuing in the western section of the bookshop at the beginning of the open period. Professor A pointed out that the public were so obsessed by the western

culture that they always considered China inferior to the West.

Guangdong people were also greatly influenced by popular culture from neighbouring Hong Kong and Taiwan. “Guangdong students could easily gain access to information from Hong Kong and Taiwan. They were crazy about Hong Kong and Taiwan’s movies and pop songs”. (Official C, Teacher F)

The new culture was perceived negatively by the author and government official. Author A and Official A blamed the emerging culture for containing “harmful elements, for example, pornography and violence, which adversely affected the young and needed to be tackled.” The production of the 3,4,5 literature aimed to resist the negative influence of the incoming foreign culture.

8.3.1.4 Failure of socialist moral education

Besides the problems arising from the process of marketization, the informants unanimously attributed the success of the 3,4,5 literature to the failure of orthodox socialist moral education. Government officials admitted the failure of orthodox socialist moral education in attracting students’ interests or fostering moral values among students. “Orthodox moral education was too “ideal” and “adult-centred.” “It only stressed students’ concern for the nation, and the realization of communism. It placed too much emphasis on ideological and political elements with too little understanding of students’ behaviour, thus boring students.” (Official A, C) Professor A added that top-down ideopolitical-moral education only disseminated official policies among the people. No one knew whether these policies were understood and agreed by people or not. The top-down ideopolitical-moral education was described as “false, grand and void” (*jia da kong*) by most informants (Official A, Author C) and

“far away from the reality” (Official C, Author C, Teacher A).

To most informants, orthodox socialist moral education was only “a collection of political slogans.” It ignored psychological and mental needs of the students and was thus not well received by the students and was ineffective in cultivating “appropriate” values among them (Official A, B, C, Author A, B, Professor B, Teacher A). Official A quoted the following story to illustrate the ineffectiveness of ideopolitical-moral education.

“What does the CCP do?” a group of primary school students were asked.

“The CCP goes to wars.” The students replied.

Official A found it ironic as the students did not know what communism referred to after studying ideopolitical-moral education for several years. They could not even give an official model answer to the question.

8.3.1.5 Government’s initiatives to strengthen moral education

According to the officials, the government realized the problem with orthodox moral education and tried some remedial measures but they had failed. For example, the government attempted to strengthen ideopolitical-moral education after the 1989 student demonstrations by issuing a new edition of “*Daily Codes of Conduct for Primary School Students*” (August, 1991). However, the *daily codes* were ignored by the students, thus prompting the central government to realize the “need” to seek a “new” way to attract students’ interests in moral education (Official A)

Official B argued that the government attempted to improve ideopolitical-moral education through a “broad moral education approach” (*dajiaoyu*) which stressed the collaboration of school, family and the society in the 1990s. Author B added that the central government now adopted a “pragmatic” approach in moral education by

paying more attention to students' needs in order to attract their interest. Teacher D agreed that moral education had placed greater emphasis on psychological needs of the youth in the 1990s because of the rising problem of single children.

The government also attempted to improve moral education by expanding teaching content. The academics and the authors noticed that traditional ethics were currently considered by the government as a "possible resource" for moral education. The then vice-president, Li Lanqing's appeal for traditional Chinese culture in a book entitled the *Traditional Chinese Ethics* (1995)⁵²⁶ was perceived as "an official recognition of traditional Chinese culture" by Professor A.

Author A noticed that traditional ethics enjoyed wide public acceptance in Guangdong province. "The intellectuals called for the education of traditional Chinese culture to the students as they found the western culture could have negative effects on students' morality." Professor B attributed the popularity of Confucian concepts such as "harmony" and "*The Midday Way*"⁵²⁷ in Guangdong to frequent contacts between Guangdong and Hong Kong and Taiwan due to their geographical proximity.

All the officials interviewed saw a need to uphold traditional Chinese ethics when the market value of orthodox socialist values in the society was decreasing. Official A added that Guangdong, as one of the pioneer SEZs, was among the first regions to experience problems arising from rapid social transformation. The Guangdong

⁵²⁶ Luo, G.J. (Ed.) (1995) *Zhongguo chuantong daode [Traditional Chinese Ethics]*, Beijing: The University of Chinese People Press, pp.I-III. The Prefaces of the book were written by Party leaders Jiang Zemin and Li Peng.

⁵²⁷ The concept of "Midday Way" came from the *Doctrine of the Mean* (500 BC), an ancient Confucian Classic written by Zisi, the grandson of Confucius, and inherited and developed by Mencius. The *Doctrine of the Mean* is one of the Four Books (the Four Classics of Confucianism), with the *Analects of Confucius*, the *Mencius* and the *Great Learning*. The core concepts of *Doctrine of the Mean* include "Harmony" and "Equivalence".

government was keen to strengthen moral education work with Confucian ethics to build a “great cultural city” (*wenhua dasheng*) and strive for a balance between “spiritual civilization” and “material civilization”.

8.4 The Commissioning of the 3,4,5 literature

The following paragraphs explain the story of the 3,4,5 literature according mainly to the memory of an author of each publication, i.e. Author A for the *New Three Character Classic*, Author B for the song and Author C for the rhyme, supplemented by other informants’ viewpoints. It is concerned not only with factual information about the formation of the literature but also with the internal feelings of the authors. The discussion will follow the sequence of the publication: the *New Three Character Classic*, the *Four Character Song*, and then the *Five Character Rhyme*.

8.4.1 The publication of the *New Three Character Classic*

Author A was an editorial board member of the *New Three Character Classic*. He observed that the writing of the *New Three Character Classic* was an important event for Guangdong provincial government judged by composition of the editorial board. Author A elaborated: “on top of the editorial board, there were three consultants, including Huang Huahua, the then Vice-Secretary of Guangdong province, Lu Zhonghe, the Vice-President of Guangdong province who was responsible for educational affairs and a Guangdong cadre Yang Ziyang. The chief editor was Yu Youjun, the then director of the provincial propaganda department. There were three Associate Editors, including Lan Hong (the then Vice-President of the provincial propaganda department who was responsible for liaising with writers); Xu Renzhi (the then director of provincial Education department) and Huang Tianji (the then Vice-President of Sun Yat Sen University in Guangdong province). Other members included university Professors Li Jinquan (Professor at Sun Yat Sen University) and a

group of experienced secondary school teachers.” The editorial board was thus composed of a group of government officials and educators.

Author A guessed the reason for his being invited to the editorial board was because of his academic achievement in Chinese literature and professional experience in education. In regard to the invitation, Author A responded proudly with smile, “this was my chance to teach the next generation with traditional Chinese ethics and help solve the youth problem. Hence I immediately accepted the invitation.”

To the knowledge of Author A, the provincial leaders had no overall plan for the publication apart from replicating the chant form from the ancient *Three Character Classic*. The content and writing of the *New Three Character Classic* were left to the decision of the editorial board. He recalled that the editorial board held several working group meetings after the autumn 1994. Author A emphasized that the atmosphere and discussion in the meetings was good, “Members were free to express their viewpoints. The government did not exert any intervention during the writing process.”

Author A highlighted the role of the public in the editing process, “The editorial board presented the first draft to the public for comment in November 1994. The draft was however abandoned as it was criticized as “*loosely organized*” and “*uneven in writing standard*” by board members and a panel of commentators comprising secondary school teachers, students and parents. The board then appointed a professor, one of the board members who had profound experience in writing long poems to rewrite the draft. At this stage, the Chief Editor Yu Youjun suggested that “*to be a good child at home, to be a good student in school, to be a good citizen in the society*” should be

the theme of the *New Three Character Classic*. Yu's suggestion was then accepted by the board.

"Then the professor responsible for re-writing the draft read the *Three Character Classic* many times in order to understand its writing strategies and then rewrote the draft in two nights." Author A continued, "The *New Three Character Classic* to some extent reflected the professor's personal philosophy of life. Values such as filial piety originally embedded in the *Three Character Classic* were retained in the *New Three Character Classic* as the professor considered these values still important and valuable in the society. Historical models quoted in the *Three Character Classic*, like Wen Tianxiang and Yue Fei were retained in the *New Three Character Classic*."

Nevertheless, some chants in the *Three Character Classic* were "amended" in accordance with "materialistic theory". Author A gave an example: the *Three Character Classic* started with a chant "*Men at their birth/ are naturally good,*" (*ren zhi chu/ xing ben shan*). As human nature was neither good nor bad according to socialist materialistic theory, the professor changed the chant to "*Humans at the beginning/ are like unpolished jade*" (*ren zhi chu/ ru yu pu*).

According to Author A, the publication of the *New Three Character Classic* was an attempt made by the provincial government to popularize ideopolitical-moral education. "The provincial propaganda department at first did not expect the *New Three Character Classic* could receive such a warm market response. It was originally targeted only at the Guangdong youth and thus rhymed in Cantonese."

Author A, government officials (Official A, B) and teachers (Teacher A and Teacher B)

noticed the supplementary role of the *New Three Character Classic* to official Ideology and Moral Character textbooks. Teacher A added, “The *New Three Character Classic* was similar to the Ideology and Moral Character texts in content except it paid more attention to students’ code of behaviours, and values such as filial piety, devotion, and patriotism.”

As the *New Three Character Classic* was written to foster traditional Chinese ethics among the youth, especially primary school students, “considering the cognitive level of targeted readers, the board thus chose a lively writing approach which was “comprehensive” (*xiaochang*) and “understandable” (*mingbai*). Such ideological terms as “communism” and “socialism,” and political slogans were abandoned but interesting stories and pictures were included in the *New Three Character Classic*. The academics, however, alleged that the *New Three Character Classic* also targeted the general public, serving as a reader for the whole society. Nevertheless, students were no doubt one of the targeted readers of the *New Three Character Classic*.

In regard to reference to official policy in ideopolitical-moral education, Author A held that the writing of the *New Three Character Classic* did not use any government document as a guide. However, other informants such as Official A related the publication of the *New Three Character Classic* to the *Notice on the Promulgation of the Outline on the Implementation of Education in Patriotism* (SEC, 1994) in order to promote traditional ethics, nationalism and patriotism among the students.

8.4.2 The publication of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*

Author B was one of the editorial board members of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*. According to Author B, the song was an extension of the successful

New Three Character Classic. The *Four Character Song* was written to cultivate social ethics such as “to respect others, to love others and to take care of public property” among the general public. Author B shared his participation in the writing of the *Four Character Song* with the researcher. He thought he had been invited to the editorial board of the *Four Character Song* mainly because of his rich knowledge of ethics. Like Author A, Author B was also proud to be invited, “it was a good opportunity for me to serve the community. I could see no reason to reject the invitation.”

Regarding the formation and composition of the editorial board, Author B recalled that the provincial propaganda department firstly formed an editorial board chaired by Yu Youjun. The editorial board comprised department cadres Lan Hong, Gu Zuoyi, Zhang Hanqing, experienced teachers Zhang Chenggan, and university professors Huang Tianji and Zheng Weiming.

“Ten half-day editorial board meetings were held to discuss the content and organization of the *Four Character Song*.” Author B found that provincial propaganda cadres, “though they had some prior thoughts on the writing of the book, were willing to listen to the suggestion of the academics. The atmosphere of the meetings was good.” The writing load was shared among committee members after the meetings. Author B noticed the important role of Yu Youjun, the chief editor in the editorial process. He pointed out that the attendance rate of most cadres was affected by Yu’s presence or not. Most cadres attended the meetings when Yu was present.

8.4.3 The publication of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*

Author C was one of the editorial board members of the *Five Character Rhyme of*

Family Ethics. He remarked proudly that he was directly invited to the board by the chief editor, Yu Youjun. “Perhaps it was because Mr. Yu knew that I was a language specialist, especially in poem writing, so he invited me to join.” Author C added that some other board members like Cai He were invited for their professional knowledge of family ethics. Author C then elaborated, “I accepted with pleasure as I had had good experience of working with Mr. Yu before. In addition, it was my social responsibility to participate in this provincial moral education work.”

In regard to the editing work of the *Five Character Rhyme*, Author C stressed that the *Five Character Rhyme* was a joint publication produced by Guangdong provincial propaganda department and the Women’s Federation, a para-government organization. Author C then introduced the composition of the board: “(Guangdong) provincial propaganda department formed the editorial board for the *Five Character Rhyme* which was chaired by Yu Youjun, Head of the department. Board consultant Huang Qicao was a high-ranking cadre of the Women’s Federation. Zhang Chenggan was a retired teacher as well as an expert on moral education; Li Qiang was a teacher for Chinese Language at a secondary school; Cai He was a Professor for Sociology at the Sun Yat Sen University; Lin Xianjian was an expert on social studies at the Foshan University; and Xiong Xiaoyan who was the director of the Educational Research Centre and a language expert.”

Author C remembered that Yu Youjun called two editorial board meetings on the eve of 1995. After designing the framework of the *Five Character Rhyme*, academic members shared the writing task. “During the writing stage, one or two meetings were called monthly. Committee members frequently discussed the drafts and made amendments accordingly. The atmosphere in board discussions was generally good.

Members were willing to share their viewpoints and receive criticism.”

“There was a serious internal consultation process,” Author C went on, “two drafts were abandoned during the process of discussion. A final draft was finished in April 1996 and then shown to the public for external consultation.” Board member Zhang Chenggan was responsible for the follow up work.

For the targeted readers of the *Five Character Rhyme*, Author C found that the rhyme elaborated some basic principles in regard to familial relationship and morality. “The *Five Character Rhyme* was written for the well-being of the families. It is clearly targeted at the general public.”

8.5 The rise of the 3,4,5 literature

8.5.1 The 3,4,5 literature in schools

The government officials stressed that the 3,4,5 literature fostered “traditional Chinese ethics” (*zhonghua meide*), “national spirit” (*minzu jingshen*) and “patriotism” (Official A). With the “compulsory purchase scheme”,⁵²⁸ all Guangdong students were required to purchase the *New Three Character Classic* through schools. On the other hand, teachers got their complimentary copies of the *New Three Character Classic* from the provincial government (Author C). In the word of Official A, the *New Three Character Classic* was “owned by everyone” (*renshou yiben*) in Guangdong.

The 3,4,5 literature was taught to a different extent and in different ways in both primary and secondary schools. The *New Three Character Classic* was the most popular among the three publications. All teacher informants interviewed had used the

⁵²⁸ All students are compelled to buy the book through their schools under the scheme.

New Three Character Classic in their teaching, though in different ways. Nevertheless some teacher informants claimed that they had used all publications in the 3,4,5 literature. For example, Teacher E developed a teaching kit on traditional Chinese ethics with the *New Three Character Classic* and *Four Character Song*. Teacher D (a secondary school teacher) adapted all publications of the 3,4,5 literature for class assembly, morning assembly and other group activities.

In primary schools, the *New Three Character Classic* was often taught in lessons of Ideology and Moral Character in accordance with different teaching objectives or assorted into teaching materials for a moral education programme (Teacher C). Teacher informants observed positive students' response to the *New Three Character Classic*. As Teacher A pointed out, formal Ideology and Moral Character textbooks were too didactic and dull for students but the genre of the *New Three Character Classic* was new and attractive to them. The text was also simple enough for the students to understand and remember. Students were happy to recite its chants and actively discussed it with classmates. The teachers' observation was echoed by the government officials (Official A, C)

Teachers employed different teaching methods with the *New Three Character Classic*. Recital remained the most common method. Teacher A and Teacher B asked students to recite the *New Three Character Classic* line by line in class periods, morning gatherings, as well as in the gatherings of the Youth Pioneer League. Teacher E arranged a 15-minutes group recitation of the *New Three Character Classic* in daily morning assembly. Teacher D arranged recitals or speech competitions for secondary school students. Interestingly reciting the *New Three Character Classic* was not seen as a boring but rather an enjoyable learning activity by the students according to the

informants' observations. Teacher E observed that students swung their bodies in accordance with the rhythm while reciting the *New Three Character Classic*. Teacher E added that joyful reciting could help motivate students to study Ideology and Moral Character and facilitate their relevant learning.

Story-telling was another common teaching strategy. Teacher A told students the stories of ancient figures with distinctive morality, for example, Sima Guang, Su Qin. Students found the stories of historical figures quoted in the *New Three Character Classic* interesting as they like listening to new stories. In addition, students found the stories of historical figures such as Su Qin who "tied to a beam and pricked the thing with an awl" (*xuanliang cigu*) "new" as the stories were banned before the economic reform. Students even found these stories more attractive than the stories of revolutionary heroes. Teacher E agreed and added, "Students will find the lesson boring if we do not tell stories in the *New Three Character Classic*."

The informants described favourable factors leading to the rise of the *New Three Character Classic*. One of the favourable factors was the "compulsory purchase scheme" which made the *New Three Character Classic* accessible to every Guangdong student. But to some informants, like Teacher C, the *New Three Character Classic* was well received by both students and parents for its easily-understandable rhymes and colourful illustrative pictures. Teacher A believed that as parents would buy the book for their children even without the "compulsory purchase scheme" as they were confident of the educational effectiveness of the *New Three Character Classic*.

Official A explained that the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic* was due

to the great official propaganda force exerted. A variety of propaganda activities such as recital, story-telling competition, and drama shows were organized in school campuses by the provincial government. Teacher C recalled that the government also organized study groups and competitions such as quizzes in schools. Teacher A observed that the texts of the *New Three Character Classic* were posted on school boards in 1995. Official A emphasized that the propaganda activities for the *New Three Character Classic* were designed in accordance with students' psychological characteristics. Teacher D insisted that students enjoyed these propaganda activities.

The teachers reported that provincial government also organized a series of training programmes for teachers in order to enhance their teaching skills with the *New Three Character Classic*. All teacher informants attended the courses and considered them useful for their adaptation of the *New Three Character Classic* for classroom use.

The song and the rhyme, though adapted for use in some schools, were comparatively less mentioned than the *New Three Character Classic*. According to Author C, the song and the rhyme were not taught in detail in schools. Sometimes teachers only gave explanation of vocabulary.

8.5.2 Extension of the *New Three Character Classic* in the society

The *New Three Character Classic* was not only widely read in schools but also in the society. Official propaganda works penetrated nearly everywhere in Guangdong in and around 1995. Author A recalled that the texts of the *New Three Character Classic* were posted on notice boards in street corners and alleys as well as bus stations. As Teacher A pointed out, "no matter where you go, you can read the chants of the *New Three Character Classic*." Professor B added that the *New Three Character Classic*

was also disseminated through grassroots political organization such as “street agencies” (*jiedao*).⁵²⁹

The provincial government also publicized the *New Three Character Classic* through the mass media: the texts were replicated in songs and pictures, and a cartoon series was shown on television. To strengthen publicity of the *New Three Character Classic*, Guangdong provincial government launched three relevant public campaigns “hundred songs to praise China” (*baige song zhonghua*), “hundred books to educate the distinguished” (*baishu yu yingcai*), “hundred movies to praise national heroes” (*baipian yang zhonghun*) (Official A).

Parents were also the focus of propaganda. According to Teacher D, Guangdong provincial government ran training courses for parents to facilitate parent-child reading of the *New Three Character Classic*. The courses were well received by the public.

8.5.3 Popularity of the *New Three Character Classic*

According to the informants, the *New Three Character Classic* was awarded “the best-seller prize” for its high turnover rate (Teacher A, Professor A, B, Official B, Author A). Its popularity was so great that it was even selected as one of the “top ten news items” in Guangdong province. Its best-selling status was so rare in China’s publication circle that it created a “heat of the *New Three Character Classic*.” (Professor A, B, Official A, B, Author A, B, C)

Author A illustrated the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic* with two

⁵²⁹ *Jiedao* is an administrative body under the grassroots political authority in China’s cities which are responsible for residents’ affairs.

letters received by the professor responsible for re-writing the draft. “One letter questioned him why the rhymes of the *New Three Character Classic* were based on Cantonese (a dialect) but not Putonghua (the national Chinese language). The question reflected the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic* outside Guangdong.” “Another letter came from a worker in northern China who doubted if the chant, “*Li Taibai/ a supernatural being in poem writing/ has great capacity for drinking and poetry*” (*Li Taibai/Shizhixian/ yi doujiu/ shibaipian*) could cause teen alcoholism. The professor recognized the concern and then amended the chant to “moody/ and good imagination” (*Feicaiyi/ Lianxianggao*) in later editions.” These two letters actually showed the *New Three Character Classic* was not only popular in Guangdong but in other provinces.

Author A added with smile that the 3,4,5 movement spread from Guangdong to other provinces and even overseas. “The success of the *New Three Character Classic* attracted numerous emulations in other provinces, e.g. Shanxi, Xian.” “In addition, the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic* attracted overseas’ attention. In 1996, its Hong Kong edition was published.

8.6 Favourable factors leading to the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic*

The informants attributed the rise of the 3,4,5 literature (mainly the *New Three Character Classic*) and its relevant movement to different factors. The academics highlighted the impact of a strong government propaganda drive to ensure the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic*. To Professor A and Professor B, the reason that the classic became famous with the society at large was the result of government propaganda from recitals, story-telling competitions, and drama shows organized in school campuses, cartoon series on television, and training courses

organized for teachers and parents.

However, front-line teachers, though they agreed on the influence of strong government propaganda forces, and activities organized for the students and parents, found that the “novelty” of the *New Three Character Classic* as compared to previous formal Ideology and Moral Character text was an important factor in attracting students’ attention.

The government officials and the authors, on the other hand, attributed the success of the *New Three Character Classic* to the innovation in Guangdong provincial government which adopted a “*pouring new wine into an old bottle*” approach to reform moral education. As Official A pointed out, “the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was actually a breakthrough in tightly controlled ideopolitical-moral education. Guangdong provincial government could not have achieved it if it had not been ready to absorb new ideas.” Official A found that the choice of “*new wine*” and “*old bottle*” was timely and rational. The “*new wine*” comprised largely traditional ethics which the Chinese had inherited from generation to generation. Author B added that the “*old bottle*” was important to the success of the 3,4,5 literature as poetry was a traditionally accepted genre in China and easily won support from the people.

Teacher A remarked that students appreciated the novelty of the *New Three Character Classic* and enjoyed reciting its chants because they were bored by Ideology and Moral Character texts. On the other hand, stories on ancient Chinese figures were “new” to students just because they had been neglected since the foundation of the PRC. Hence students’ interest in the *New Three Character Classic* was actually a reaction to orthodox socialist ideopolitical-moral education.

8.7 The fall of the 3,4,5 literature/the cooling of the 3,4,5 movement

The informants generally observed the gradual cooling of the *New Three Character Classic* in schools and in the society after 1997. It should however be noted that the *New Three Character Classic* was still “included as teaching material in some schools” (Author A). The informants nevertheless drew our attention to the following reasons behind the cooling of the 3,4,5 movement.

Firstly, the development of the 3,4,5 movement was limited by the 3,4,5 literature itself. The “*pouring new wine into an old bottle*” strategy of the *New Three Character Classic* was doubted by the academics. Professor A found that the *New Three Character Classic* was inferior, to some people (especially the educated), to the original text of the *Three Character Classic* as it somehow contained the CCP-endorsed values, or ideology, though packaged in traditional ethics. “Children might find the *New Three Character Classic* interesting but the educated may consider it too simple and not inspiring enough. Some people prefer to read the ancient *Three Character Classic*.” Professor B, on the other hand, questioned the power of traditional Chinese culture in binding people as it had been fiercely criticized three times: in the May Fourth Movement, during the Cultural Revolution, and in the late 1980s. Professor B further doubted the effectiveness of one single text in fostering moral values among the readers (even young children) in view of the rapid social development in the PRC.

The “campaign” form of the 3,4,5 movement was also questionable. The academics observed that the spread of the 3,4,5 movement was to a certain extent an outcome of government propaganda and doubted the durability of this “campaign” form of moral education. As Professor B pointed out, the 3,4,5 movement was “basically a

government-led movement, though with massive participation of the intellectuals and the public. The movement was so top-down that it was questionable if the movement could be attractive to the public for a long time when official corruption was so rampant?”

Author A and Professor A described the rise and fall of the 3,4,5 movement as “a *swarm of bees*” (*yiwofeng*) phenomenon, a Chinese metaphor for tides and trends. Professor A added that the society had changed a lot with more opening up, “a monopoly of moral texts was no longer feasible in an increasingly pluralistic Chinese society.” “If the literature was written to popularize moral education, it should be targeted at different reader groups”. However, people had become increasingly individualized today. They had their own way of thinking and their own choice of life. The case was particularly true for youth who were fond of new and fashionable things. Today the youth could obtain information and develop their own philosophy through different means such as popular songs. The moral education programme had now to compete with newly emerging popular culture and to keep pace with the development of the society. The *New Three Character Classic*, though once very popular, was nevertheless losing its attractiveness for the youth.

Teacher A agreed with Professor A’s observation and noticed the following vicious cycle: when the *New Three Character Classic* was no longer novel to the students, the students lost interests in it. When the students lost their interest in the *New Three Character Classic*, the parents, teachers, and the general public became less enthusiastic for the *New Three Character Classic*. Eventually the heat of the *New Three Character Classic* cooled down.”

Author B attributed the cooling of the 3,4,5 movement to the inconsistency of government's policies on moral education and wondered why the government favoured new trends at the expense of the efforts the authors had put in to the writing of the 3,4,5 literature. The officials attributed the changing official positions towards the 3,4,5 literature to the adaptation the government had made in face of rapid social transformation, especially the fast advance of the Internet. Official A pointed out, "it was impossible for the government to exert control over information access when China was now opened up to the Internet. Realizing this challenge, the central government expanded ideopolitical-moral education to cover wider content areas of health education, law education, and environmental protection in the 1990s. "Moral education" in China in recent years actually covered four main areas: political, ideological, moral, and psychological health.

Official A continued, the provincial government realized the need to enhance students' self-discipline and independent moral judgement in the face of an influx of information. "The young had to learn how to get along with their friends, teachers and classmates, and how to cope with depression and frustration as the society became increasingly complicated." Teacher C confirmed that "self-management" had become the recent core theme of moral education through such programmes as "*Learn to live, learn to learn, and learn to behave*". Moral education in school campuses had begun with the theme of "*Respect teachers, behave myself*"(*zunshishouji*) in recent years.

The officials also remarked that the content scope of moral education in post-reform China had become wider and wider. As Official B pointed out, "communism was no longer the sole agenda of moral education in China today. Instead, the dominant theme of moral education was the *Implementation Outline on Ethic Building for*

Citizens (CCP Central Committee, 2001). The provincial government placed great emphasis on the propagation of the *Guangdong Maxims* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department, 2002). For the *New Three Character Classic*, it had been incorporated into the current moral education curriculum.”

In addition, the informants also noticed the central government currently encouraged a variety of strategies for promoting moral education instead of relying on any single text or approach in face of ever-rapid social transformation (Professor A, Official A, Author C, Teacher A). The government officials stressed that the recent moral education programme was characterized by a more practice-oriented approach. Official A took several recent moral education programmes as examples. “When Guangdong provincial government published the *Guangdong Maxims* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department, 2002), the government launched a programme of “maxim rewriting,” requiring students to rewrite the maxims according to their own life experience and viewpoints.” On the other hand, though the method of “models” was still employed in school, the models were no longer confined to official revolutionary models like Lei Feng. Students could select their own “models” to interview in a programme entitled “Interviewing models.” Official A cited some students’ work to illustrate students’ participation and the wide scope of interviews the students had conducted, including factory manager, school teachers, the doctors who contributed to the fight against SARS,⁵³⁰ and so forth. Official A further stressed that current moral education programmes were designed with reference to the findings of survey of the youth. For example, the Ministry of Education conducted a survey of the youth in 2001 in order to understand their specific needs. Author C concluded that

⁵³⁰ SARS is “Severe acute respiratory syndrome”. It was an atypical pneumonia that first appeared in November 2002 in Guangdong of the PRC. See, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SARS> [Accessed 24 March, 2007].

current moral education in China was student-centred.

Parallel to student-centred moral education was the dropping of some formerly compulsory administrative practices. The abolished practices included the book purchase policy, with the aim of saving parents' expenditure. This made the high turnover rate of the *New Three Character Classic* no longer possible in today even though the book was still included on the recommended booklist in some schools (Official A, Author C).

8.8 Significance of the 3,4,5 literature

Though the “*New Three Character Classic Heat*” was found to have cooled down in recent years, the informants held that the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was an important event in the development of ideopolitical-moral education in China. Official A pointed out that the publication of the 3,4,5 literature hallmarked the shift of moral education from “false, grand and void” utopian to the reality. The informants found that such “real and practical” (*kandechu zuodedao*) moral education was accepted by the public in the 1990s.

The 3,4,5 literature also indicated the official emphasis on Chinese traditional ethics stressing self-cultivation, public ethics, family harmony, spirit of the nation and patriotic sentiments in moral education (Official A, Professor A, B, Author B, C). The party ideology was no longer the only doctrine for moral education in China. The emphasis on traditional culture was also significant to recent political developments in China as the government then officially upheld traditional culture in the Sixteenth People's Congress (November 2002).

The teacher informants agreed that the *New Three Character Classic* successfully attracted students' attention to moral education work. As Teacher A pointed out, the *New Three Character Classic* received greater acceptance than the official "*Daily Code of Conduct of Primary students*" or "*The works of Chairman Mao*" from students. The informants also observed the positive effect of the *New Three Character Classic* on students' behaviour. Teacher A found that some students had learnt courtesy from reading about ancient figures. Author A noted that more students were willing to give up their seats to those in need in public transport after reading the *New Three Character Classic*.

Professor B and Author B stressed that the 3,4,5 movement reflected cultural consciousness in the process of social transformation in response to the Western cultures. The 3,4,5 movement in return created a better social environment for moral education by attracting people to moral education (Official B, Official C).

The 345 literature also contributed to the subsequent development of moral education in China. Official C added that the success of the *New Three Character Classic* provided some help for the central government in developing the current nation-wide curriculum for Moral Character and Society. As China has become more open to the outside world, as well as to foreign culture, since joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), the emphasis on traditional ethics was even more apparent in resisting (*kangheng*) the incoming foreign culture. In 2003, the national theme of moral education was "to expand Chinese culture, to build up ideals and faith" [*hongyang zhonghua wenhua, shuli lixiang xinnian*] (Official A).

Official A also noted that the importance of the individual was not denied in the

recent moral education programme. Recent themes of the curriculum for Moral Character and Society were student-oriented, such as “Me and myself”, “Me and my family”, and “Me and the society”.

Professor B drew attention to the central government’s advocacy of public ethics in the *Outline of the Ethics Construction for Citizens* (2001) in which the 3,4,5 literature featured.

Professor A further pointed out the implication of the 3,4,5 literature for regional autonomy in developing moral education programme: the 3,4,5 literature not only reflected the innovation and ambition of Guangdong provincial officials to strengthen moral education in response to new economic and social circumstances but on the other hand to some degree indicated the autonomy that the regional government enjoyed in developing a regional moral education programme.

8.9 Conclusion

8.9.1 The 3,4,5 literature in relation to social transformation

All informants argued that the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was necessary in view of moral deregulation arising from rapid social changes such as the younger generation being spoiled in single-child families and money worshipping (moneyism) generated from marketisation. There was a strong call to re-build morality in post-reform China, particularly in Guangdong province, a base of economic reform and opening up. Fully aware of the ‘false, grand and void’ aspect of the orthodox socialist moral education, the provincial government officials saw a need to uphold traditional Chinese ethics when the orthodox socialist values were having decreased market value in the society.

Not only the government but also the educated saw the need to write the 3,4,5 literature, a moral education text for the well-being of the society. The authors did not perceive any risk but felt honoured in accepting the invitation to join the editorial boards. Some of them saw their participation in the writing as their “social responsibility.”

School teachers also felt a need to reform the orthodox socialist Ideology and Character course as its content and teaching method were no longer attractive to students. The revolutionary texts as well as the former party bible “*The works of Chairman Mao*” were alien to the students today. From the informants’ observation and the public’s responses to the 3,4,5 literature in terms of turnover rate, there was enthusiasm for a reform in moral education among the public, including the parents.

The publication of the 3,4,5 literature thus met the expectation of reforming moral education from all stakeholders in the society. The provincial government was clearly not the only party to recognize the need for the publication. Though it took a lead in the publication, it interacted with other interest groups such as the intellectuals (the authors) and the public (for example, the teachers).

8.9.2 Professional support for the publication of the 3,4,5 literature

The interviews showed the government’s pursuit of professional support in producing the 3,4,5 literature. Academics and experienced teachers were invited to the editorial board. In addition, the choice of academics and teachers to a certain extent reflected the government’s emphasis on professional knowledge. Three authors interviewed were university scholars or senior staff of research institutions. They were invited for their professional backgrounds in either ethics (Author B) or language (Author A,

Author C). The invitation revealed the government's concern for professional knowledge rather than ideology in the publication.

On the other hand, experienced teachers such as Chang Chenggan were invited for their professional teaching experience. This showed the government's concern for teaching effectiveness and its determination to write a moral reader that was in accord with cognitive and psychological characteristics of students, with the professional knowledge of teachers.

On the other hand, all author informants found that they were free to express their viewpoints and their suggestions were respected by the board. According to the informants, all three publications of the 3,4,5 literature were written by the academics and teachers, not by cadres.

8.9.3 A positive collaboration between the government and the intellectuals

The provincial propaganda department took a leading role in the production of the 3,4,5 literature, including:

- Formation of the editorial boards;
- Selection of board members, such as authors, experts of moral education;
- Calling editorial meetings;
- Chairing editorial meetings;
- Organizing consultation work;

Nevertheless, the findings from the interview revealed a positive collaboration between the stakeholders in the production process such as the authors and the teachers. Firstly, the authors generally felt that they were respected by the government. They were also free to voice their viewpoints in the editorial process, without being obliged to follow the guiding thoughts of any particular documents. The autonomy

enjoyed by the authors was so great that Author A felt that the *New Three Character Classic* was a reflection of the philosophy of life of the professor responsible for rewriting the draft. Author B, though he resented the inconsistency of the government policies in regard to the publication of the 345 literature, felt that his professional knowledge was respected and emphasized by the government. The role of editorial members was apparently neither “flower vase” nor “rubber stamp”.

Secondly, the teachers also played an important role in the production of the 345 literature. Experienced teachers such as Chang Chenggan were invited to the editorial board. In addition, they played a major role in the consultation process. Their comments on the drafts were treated seriously by the editorial board and the government as a number of drafts were abandoned because of criticism received in the consultation process. Though the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was initiated by the provincial government, Figure 8.1 shows the interactive roles of different stakeholders involved in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature such as academics, teachers, parents and students:

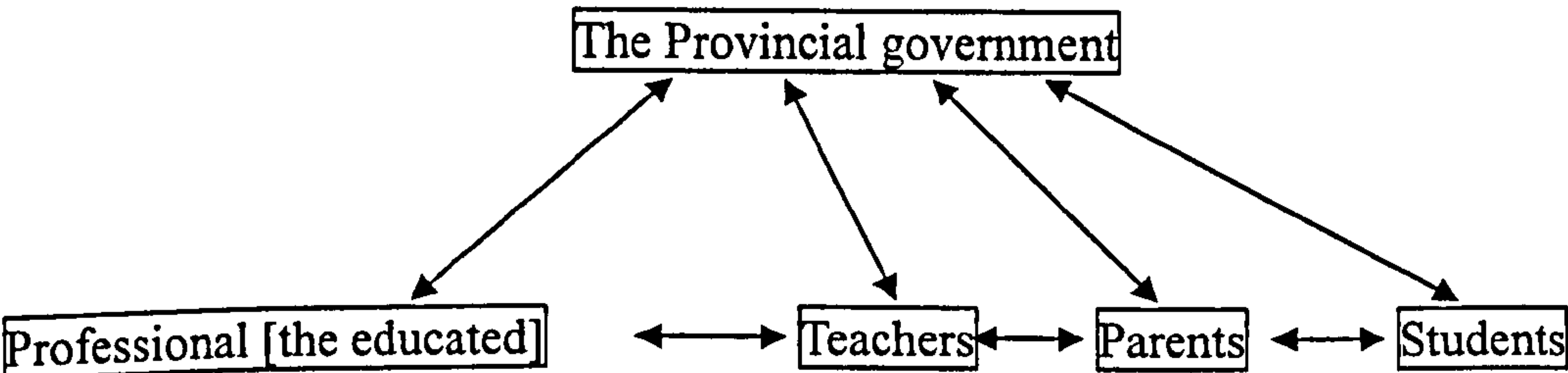


Figure 8.1: Interactive role of stakeholders in the publication the 3,4,5 literature

8.9.4 The 3,4,5 movement as a “secularization” of moral education

Orthodox moral education in China was described as “too ideal”, “false, grand and void,” and “far away from the reality” by the informants.

The informants found that the adaptation of the genre of the ancient *Three Character*

Classic by the provincial government aimed at popularizing moral education among the public. Stories and pictures were added in the text in order to attract child readers (or readers with lower academic standards). In addition, the government painstakingly abandoned using communist jargon in order to differentiate the *New Three Character Classic* from orthodox moral education text.

The production of the 3,4,5 literature by the provincial government showed some signs of 'secularization' in ideopolitical-moral education in China. The notion of 'secularization' is commonly used in the field of religion. When used in a moral context, phrases like 'the secularization of morality', are intended to describe the freeing of morality from its basis in theology.⁵³¹ The production of the 3,4,5 literature illustrates how the following features of 'secularization' of moral education were identified:

- Lively and easily-memorized chants instead of rules or code of behaviours were used in order to reduce a sense of preaching;
- Stories and pictures were included to increase the attractiveness of the books among the young readers and the general public;
- A decline in the social standing of government leadership, as the 3,4,5 literature was initiated by the provincial propaganda department but published by a para-government publisher;
- There was a decline in the extent to which the government officials engaged in the writing process;
- Various propaganda activities were organized to attract public attention;
- Student-centred activities such as quiz, recital, story-telling, drama contest were organized on school campuses to attract students' attention;
- Province-wide propaganda programs such as cartoons were screened on television;
- A serious consultation process took place in order to transmit the voice of the public.
- The effectiveness of disseminating moral messages was emphasized instead of

⁵³¹ Chadwick, O. (1995) *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.229.

political ideals.

The teacher informants observed that both parents and the students were positive to the production of the 3,4,5 literature which had once become a fashionable issue on school campuses. The 3,4,5 literature also successfully won support from the public.

8.9.5 The 3,4,5 literature and national curriculum reform

The production of the 3,4,5 literature was regarded as a “need” in Guangdong province, one of the SEZ, which had experienced the negative consequences of economic opening up. The 3,4,5 movement was initiated by the government with the aim of popularizing moral education among the public, especially the young children, with the genre of the *Three Character Classic*. According to teacher informants, the 3,4,5 literature was adapted, though in varying degrees, to the teaching of Ideology and Moral Character, indicating a quiet modification of formal ideopolitical-moral education was taking place.

The movement started with a regional “moral education project” in Guangdong provinces. The 3,4,5 literature quickly won public acceptance and expanded its sphere of influence to other provinces. The informants unanimously held that the production of the 3,4,5 literature was a distinguished regional achievement in ideopolitical-moral education. They also found that the core values of the 3,4,5 literature such as traditional Chinese ethics were then incorporated into the curriculum for Moral Character and Society. This revealed the central government’s recognition of this regional moral education reform project in face of rapid social transformation.

Official A found that ideopolitical-moral education had begun to be de-politicized since 1995. Traditional Chinese ethics provided an alternative resource for moral education reform while the communist values were decreasing in their influence on

the people, and promoting awareness of cultural heritage was a common theme among the intellectuals. The publication of the *New Three Character Classic* marked further de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education and the official denial of previous ideal-oriented ideopolitical-moral education.

8.9.6 The 3,4,5 movement as a moral education reform in a pluralistic society

It is interesting to note that both the rise and the fall of the 3,4,5 movement are related to rapid social transformation. On one hand, the informants noted the importance of the 3,4,5 literature in addressing social and moral problems arising in a time of rapid social transformation such as cultural conflicts, moral deregulation, and deteriorating students' discipline. Because of its novelty, the 3,4,5 literature won public acceptance and became a focus of moral education in China soon after its emergence.

However, as the novelty of the 3,4,5 literature gradually declined while the pace of social change sped up, the prominence of the 3,4,5 literature was soon overtaken by new initiatives such as *Guangdong Provincial Maxims on ethic building for citizens* (2002) in view of rapid social changes. Teacher A attributed the enduring success of the *Three Character Classic* in ancient China to the stability and closed nature of the ancient society. As Guangdong province became increasingly pluralistic in the late 1990s, the government adopted diversified approaches and utilized multifaceted resources accordingly. Moral texts like the 3,4,5 literature had to make way for other more student-centred moral education programmes. The 3,4,5 literature did nevertheless play a vital role in initiating moral education reform in a communist society in the process of rapid social transformation.

8.9.7 Significance of the Interviews

This Interview exercise provided a broader picture of the publication process of the

3,4,5 literature. The authors shared their personal experience of joining the editorial boards and observation of the development of the 3,4,5 movement. They also gave personal details about the editorial boards of the 3,4,5 literature that would otherwise have been unavailable.

The teachers, on the other hand, shared their experience of making use of the 3,4,5 literature in their actual classroom environment. They particularly shared their observation on students' and parents' response to the 3,4,5 literature and thus provided a full range of public reaction to the new materials.

The officials described the process of development of the 3,4,5 literature with reference to the change of government policies in moral education. Their reflections shed light on the development of the 3,4,5 movement especially compared with previous and subsequent trends in moral education.

The academics shared some insights on the evaluation of the 3,4,5 movement. Though they had not really participated in the development process of the 3,4,5 literature, they commented on the movement from a broader perspective of economic reform and modernization in the recent decade. Their evaluation supplemented other informants' viewpoints.

The Interview chapter provides rich information on the nature of the 3,4,5 literature, its development and, most importantly, its role in government-led reform of moral education. However, there are areas such as the values embedded in the 3,4,5 literature and the actual government priorities in the 1990s that needed further investigation in other chapters.

The four categories of informants: school teachers, government officials, academics, and authors of the 3,4,5 literature shared their observation and commented on the 3,4,5 movement from different perspectives. Their viewpoints on the 3,4,5 movement were found to be highly consistent but supplementary to each others. The quadrilateral validity check on interview findings was found to be useful.

The invitation of more than one participant in each category of informant was found to be satisfactory too as there was high consistency within and across groups. This arrangement also served as triangulation of the data provided by the informants. In addition, the interviews provided valuable information that could triangulate findings from content analysis and documentary analysis in the previous chapters.

The interviews also show that there was no significant difference between the viewpoints of the informants and the participants of the focus group meeting. On the contrary, their viewpoints were supplementary to each other. Participation and response from the informants was encouraging. They expressed their viewpoints on a topic that might have been sensitive willingly and with pleasure. No apparent pressure was noticed during the interview or in the focus group meeting. This, on one hand, shows the openness of the political atmosphere in China and, on the other hand, ensures the possibility and effectiveness of adopting the technique of interviewing and focus group meeting in further research in the field of moral education in China.

Chapter 9
Discussion

9.1 Introduction

After presenting the findings from the content analysis, documentary analysis and interviews, this chapter aims to answer the research questions raised in this study with the data collected, and further examine the implications of the 3,4,5 literature for ideopolitical-moral education development in China’s opening up period since 1992. Theories of moral education and its practice in post-communist regimes will be reviewed against the findings of the present study.

9.2 The 3,4,5 literature

Content analysis reveals differences in the distribution of values in the 3,4,5 literature (Table 9.1). The *New Three Character Classic* contains traditional themes (32.90%), personal values (22.08%), social values (20.78%) and national themes (12.55%). On the other hand, the *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* consist predominantly of social and personal values (>80%). Global values are only present in the *New Three Character Classic* (2.60%). Political themes are less mentioned in the 3,4,5 literature (<10%).

| Text | Traditional themes (%) | Personal values (%) | Social values (%) | National themes (%) | Political themes (%) | Global Values (%) |
|---------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Classic | 32.90 | 22.08 | 20.78 | 12.55 | 9.09 | 2.60 |
| Song | 0 | 38.55 | 49.40 | 7.23 | 4.82 | 0 |
| Rhyme | 2.13 | 34.04 | 58.51 | 2.13 | 3.19 | 0 |

Table 9.1: Values distribution of the 3,4,5 literature

The *New Three Character Classic* is characterized by high percentage of traditional themes (32.90%). The classic fosters national pride in patriotic acts and a sense of shared national identity among readers through the mentioning of “historical figures”

in different “historical events” and “historical achievements” in diverse academic areas such as science and literature.

The *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* concentrate on personal and social values. Closer inspection of their sub-themes reveals that the *Four Character Song* places the greatest emphasis on such personal values as “self” values, “civilized behaviour” and “righteousness”. For social values, “environmental protection” was the most frequently mentioned sub-theme, followed by “unity” and being “law-abiding”.

The *Five Character Rhyme* contains largely social values. The text pays special attention to family ethics, including “familial love”, “familial education”, “filial piety”, “family equality” and “familial responsibility”. “Personal values” are the second largest category of themes/values. “Self” values were the most frequently advocated sub-theme of personal values, followed by “enthusiasm for learning” and “simplicity”.

Though greater emphasis is placed on traditional themes, the *New Three Character Classic* also concerns the personal moral growth of children. It emphasizes such personal values (22.08%) as “righteousness”, “civilized behaviour” and “enthusiasm for learning” with the stories of ancient models Yang Zhen, Che Yin, Sun Kang and so forth. Also emphasized are social values (20.78%) such as “unity” and “filial piety”. Children are urged to be filial at home, to get along well with others in the society, and work hand in hand to help contribute to the modernization of China.

National themes and political themes are less frequently mentioned than traditional

themes, social and personal values in the 3,4,5 literature. The *New Three Character Classic* demonstrates China's enduring cultural greatness by national themes (12.55%) with the reference to her vast territory and beautiful geographical features, and distinguished construction achievements such as the Great Wall.

In sum, the *New Three Character Classic* contains both protectionist themes emphasizing patriotism and safeguarding China from foreign invasions, and moral values catering for the needs of the modernization of China. On the other hand, the *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* consist primarily of morality themes focusing on self-cultivation and healthy interpersonal relationships.

9.3 The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature in Guangdong province

9.3.1 Social context

The informants unanimously agreed that the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was necessary in view of moral deregulation (*daode shifan*) arising from rapid social transformations. Close inspection of sub-themes of personal and social values embedded in the 3,4,5 literature reveals strong association of value orientations in the 3,4,5 literature with social transformation in Guangdong province during the period of strengthening economic reform. In regard to the category of social values, Table 9.2 shows the emphasis on family ethics (such as “filial piety”, “family love”, “family equality” and “family education”), “environmental protection”, “concern for the society”, “unity” and “law-abiding” in the 3,4,5 literature.

The advocacy of family ethics such as “familial love” between husband and wife, parents and children, and in-laws, seems to be a response to the over-emphasis placed on material conditions by Guangdong families. Children are thus reminded of the importance of “filial piety”. Parents are also alerted to appropriate family education in

view of rising problem of spoiled single children. The call for “concern for the society” in the *New Three Character Classic* seems to be a response to the over-emphasis on academic pursuits among Guangdong students and parents.

| Social Values/ number of occurrences (percentage) | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> (N:48) | <i>Four Character Song</i> (N:41) | <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> (N:55) |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Filial piety | 11(22.92%) | | 4(7.27%) |
| Familial love | | | 26(47.27%) |
| Family education | | | 12(21.82%) |
| Family equality | | | 4(7.27%) |
| Environmental protection | | 12(29.27%) | |
| Concern for the society | 6(12.5%) | | |
| Unity | 9(18.75%) | 8(19.51%) | |
| Law-abiding | | 8(19.51%) | |

Table 9.2: The most frequently mentioned social values of the 3,4,5 literature

In addition, the calls in the literature for environmental protection for the prosperity of Guangdong and the continuity of mankind seem to be responding to the increasingly alarming environmental problems such as water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution in Guangdong in recent year as shown in Chapter 2.

Besides, the stress on “unity” in the literature reflected the official concerns about the growing individualism and indifferent community relationships in Guangdong province demonstrated in the Literature Review chapter. The literature thus called for the public to help and show concern for one another.

The mentioning of “law-abiding” values seems to respond to a rise in crime and juvenile delinquency as shown in Chapter 2. The literature thus called for students to

follow school rules, the public to observe traffic rules, marriage laws, and regulations on environmental protection and so forth in order to reduce deviant behaviour and maintain social stability and prosperity.

In the category of personal values, “civilized behaviour”, “righteousness”, “self” and “simplicity” and “enthusiasm for learning” are most frequently mentioned (Table 9.3).

| Personal Values/ number of occurrences (percentage) | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> (N:51) | <i>Four Character Song</i> (N:32) | <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> (N:32) |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Civilized behaviour | 10(19.61%) | 6(18.75%) | |
| Righteousness | 12(23.53%) | 6(18.75%) | |
| Self | | 9(28.13%) | 10(31.25%) |
| Simplicity | | | 6(18.75%) |
| Enthusiasm for learning | 10(19.61%) | | 6(18.75%) |

Table 9.3: The most frequently mentioned personal values of the 3,4,5 literature

Like social values, the most prevalent sub-themes of personal values are found to be closely related to social transformation in Guangdong province. First of all, the advocacy of “civilized behaviour” such as politeness, courtesy, and good-manners reflects an official response to the increasing number of spoiled children and smug upstarts who were ignorant of “civilized behaviour” in post-reform China.

On the other hand, the upholding of “righteousness” seems to be related to the increasing tension between “profit” (*li*) and “righteousness” (*yi*) and money worshipping in commercialized Guangdong observed by the academics in the interviews. The stress on “simplicity” values such as thrift in the 3,4,5 literature is clearly a response to the rising hedonism, widespread extravagance and consumerism in all walks of life in Guangdong.

In addition, “self” values such as “self-discipline” were advocated in the 3,4,5 literature to resist “harmful things”. Readers are discouraged from participating in illegal/vice activities such as gambling and prostitution (The *Four Character Song*, lines 117-120) or “unhealthy” entertainment (The *Five Character Rhyme*, lines 129-132). The former clearly refers to the deteriorating problem of crime while the latter possibly related to Western culture and popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan which flooded into China after the adoption of the opening up and economic reform policy in 1978 (see Literature Review and interviews with Professor A and B).

Besides, the stress on “enthusiasm for learning” in the literature seems to be an official response to the rising number of spoiled children in Guangdong who are blamed as “lazy” and lacking in “determination” and “perseverance”.

Table 9.4 summarizes the association of values embedded in the 3,4,5 literature and social problems emerging in Guangdong during the process of marketization:

| Themes/values | Relevant social problems |
|--------------------------|--|
| Civilized behaviour | spoiled single children, smug upstarts |
| Righteousness | Money worshipping, moral deregulation |
| Simplicity | Money worshipping |
| Self | Moral deregulation, invasion of foreign cultures |
| Enthusiasm for learning | spoiled single children |
| Family ethics | spoiled single children, family crisis |
| Unity | indifferent neighbourhood, growing individualism |
| Law-abiding | deviant behaviour |
| Environmental protection | Pollution |

Table 9.4: Themes/values in the 3,4,5 literature and relevant social problems

9.3.2 Political context

The informants all saw a need to uphold traditional Chinese ethics when the orthodox

socialist values were having decreased market value in the society. The government officials held that the 3,4,5 literature was written to promote traditional ethics, nationalism and patriotism among readers in order to fill the vacuum left by the orthodox socialist values. According to Official A, the strengthening of moral education work with traditional ethics was an important task of Guangdong provincial government to make Guangdong a “great cultural province” (*wenhua dasheng*). The writing of the 3,4,5 literature has thus clear political significance to the Guangdong provincial government.

The analysis of sub-themes of values embedded in the 3,4,5 literature reveals the demands of the provincial government on the public. For example, the call for “enthusiasm for learning” urges the new generation to strive for academic achievement in order to contribute to the modernization and guarantee Guangdong’s competitiveness for future development with other provinces.

The advocacy of global values, though in relatively small number, in the *New Three Character Classic* on the one hand signifies the importance of scientific modernization, one of the “four modernizations” launched by Deng Xiaoping, but on the other hand shows the official demand to catch up with global scientific advances. Although the government directives repeatedly denounced western culture as the root of moral degradation (CCP 1996, CCP 1999, 2000), they did not deny the western scientific advancements. The mention of the ancient Silk Road which connected China and the West in the past further indicated China’s determination to open up to the international world (SEC, 1997).

Besides addressing increasing social problems arising from social transformation, the calls for “law-abiding” behaviour and family ethics in the literature aim to create a

harmonious social atmosphere which is beneficial to the administration.

The upholding of traditional and national themes to glorify patriotic acts and a variety of achievements of the ancient Chinese in the *New Three Character Classic* to a certain extent elaborates the “nationalistic education” called for in the government’s directives (SEC, 1993a; MOE, 1994).

The 3,4,5 literature has both political and social significance to Guangdong province and even the whole country (Figure 9.1).

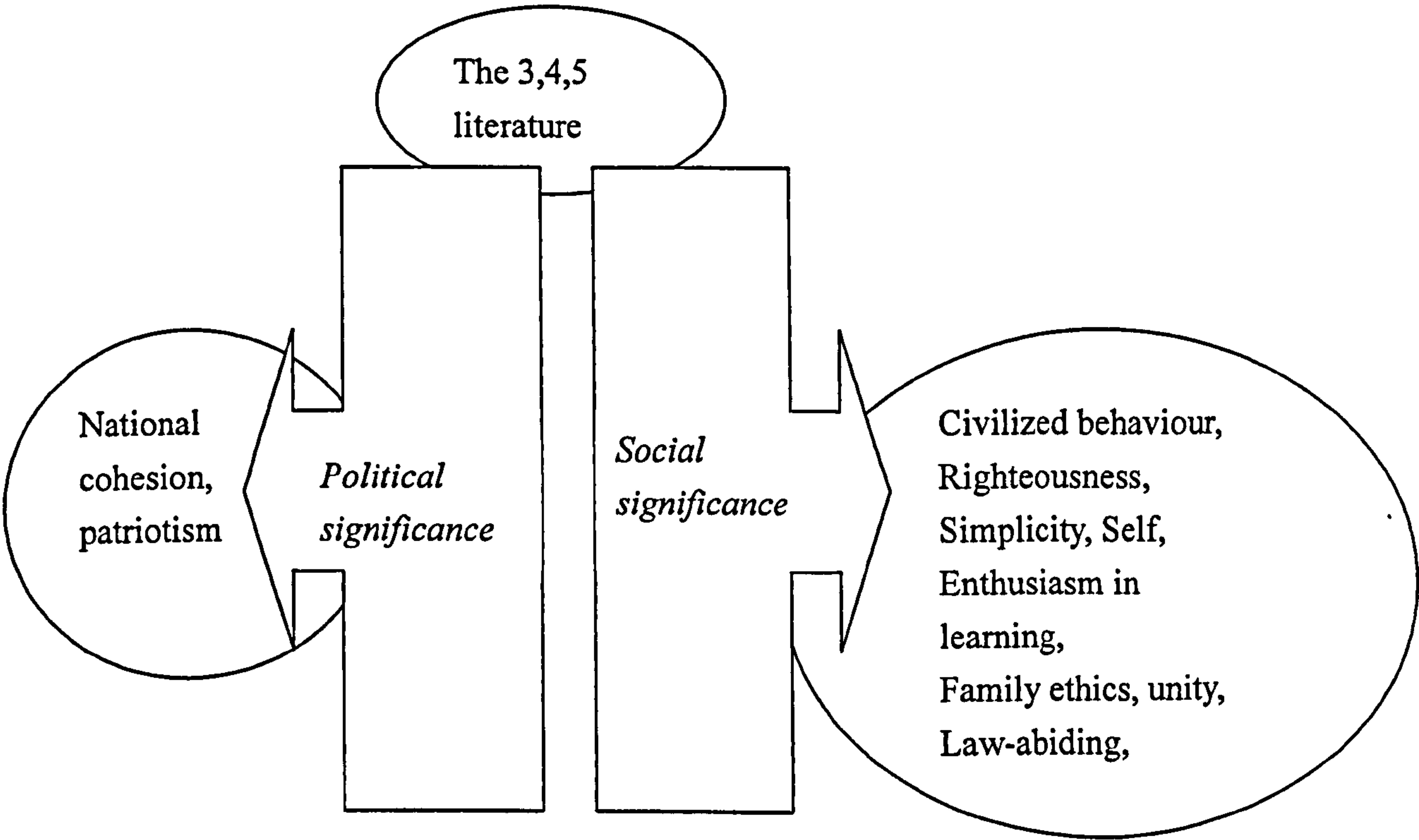


Figure 9.1: Significant themes/values contained in the 3,4,5 literature

9.3.3 Context of ideopolitical-moral education: “New” wine in old bottle

The informants all saw the urgency to reform orthodox ideopolitical-moral education which was too “adult-centred”, “ideal” and “distant from the reality”. Such “false, grand but void” moral education was unattractive to students.

The findings from the interviews support recent reports of the difficulties of ideological and political education in the PRC. For example, a survey in Beijing had illustrated that both students and teachers were passive and indifferent to ideopolitical-moral education.⁵³² The Shekou Storm (*Shekou fengbao*)⁵³³ in 1988 further indicated that the youth in the SEZs did not blindly follow the official indoctrination but bravely defended their own stands (Chapter 3). Ideological and political work seems to be neglected by the public. The government noticed the problem and reiterated the need to reform the inadequate moral education work in the early 1990s (SEC 1990, SEC 1993b). The publication of the 3,4,5 literature was regarded by the informants as an attempt of Guangdong provincial government to reform moral education work.

According to the preface of the *New Three Character Classic*, a strategy of “putting new wine (values) in an old bottle (genre)” was employed to cultivate moral values in readers. Both “new wine” and “old bottle” are interesting in ideopolitical-moral education in China.

In regard to the “new wine”, the content analysis of the *New Three Character Classic* reveals that it includes largely traditional and national themes, personal and social values, with a few political themes and global values. Traditional Confucian ethics such as self-cultivation, regulation of the family, social civility, well-being of the people which the Chinese had inherited from generation to generation should not be “new” to the public. Confucian ethics became “new” only because they had been

⁵³² Yang, J.Y. et al.(1990) Exploring the Questions of College Students' Road of Growth, *Chinese Education*, 23(1), pp.10-19.

⁵³³ Xu, L. (1995). The “Shekou Storm”: Changes in the Mentality of Chinese Youth Prior to Tiananmen, *The China Quarterly*, (June 1995), Issue 42, pp. 541-572.

officially denounced for the past forty years.

Whilst socialist values were no longer seen as having authority by the public, traditional Confucian ethics were borrowed by the government to provide a new framework for ideopolitical-moral education. For example, the Ministry of Education called for “integrating Chinese moral tradition into the ethics developing from socialist revolution and social construction” (MOE, 1994, para. 8, p.74). Nonetheless, as illustrated in Chapter 2, some traditional concepts such as “righteousness” were controversial in the process of modernization. There was also a rise of “new” concepts such as “environmental protection”, “friendly” parent-child relationships and “equality” among family members to cater for the “new” needs of the society.

The 3,4,5 literature was not simply a revival of Confucianism. Confucian ethics was used by the government to fill the moral vacuum left by declining socialist values. Thus, the low frequency of political themes in the 3,4,5 literature did not necessarily mean that the literature was free of politics. The political inclination of the authors of the 3,4,5 literature was indeed clear. In the *New Three Character Classic*, the Cultural Revolution was blamed as “chaotic streams” (“*luan liu*”) while Deng Xiaoping was praised for putting “the chaotic streams in order, revolutionized to get things right” (“*bo luan liu/ fan yu zheng*”) (lines 259-260) and for his engineering of the economic reform. The *Four Character Song* also highlights the economic reform by saying,

Living in a prosperous time, (*shi feng sheng shi*)
it is under reform to strengthen itself. (*gai ge tu qiang*) (lines 5-6)

As the ancient *Three Character Classic* had previously been denounced by the government because of its Confucian adherence, the provincial government was cautious in dealing with the “old-bottle”, the genre of Chinese classical poem that had

been prevalent in China for more than 1,000 years. The word “new” (*xin*) was added to the book name *Three Character Classic* not only to highlight the addition of “new” values in the text but also to differentiate the text from the ancient *Three Character Classic* and thus to avoid any possible political troubles. Its preface also declares the objectives of the text as the cultivation of “spiritual civilization”, new patriotic thought, communist ideals, collectivism and socialism (the so-called “contemporary national spirit”) (the so-called “new wine”) among the young (*qingshaonian*) with Deng Xiaoping’s theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. As the inclusion of Confucian thought was so “new” in the context of ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC, it would be politically safer to implement under the umbrella of Deng Xiaoping’s theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”.

9.4 The rise of the national 3,4,5 movement

The “*New Three Character Classic Heat*” gathered momentum following its becoming popular in Guangdong province. Tens of publications, from moral education to language, philosophy, and health, were produced in name of “*Three Character Classic*” or “*new Three Character Classic*”. The keen competition among different versions of the *New Three Character Classic* clearly evidenced the rise of a moral education movement that grew in the strengthening economic reform period and the employment of rhyming moral literature as an effective means of moral education. The informants provided evidence of the leading role played by the Guangdong version in terms of the quantity sold and time of publication.

The “*New Three Character Classic Heat*” spread from southern Guangdong to other northern provinces, including cosmopolitan Shanghai and capital Beijing. The government officials, authors and the academics regarded the wide spread of the 3,4,5

movement as a “great achievement” of Guangdong moral education work. They generally attributed the “successful” spread of 3,4,5 movement to the innovation and initiative of Guangdong provincial government in launching the publication and the spirit of reform of Guangdong people.

The unprecedented south-to-north and region-to-centre spread of the 3,4,5 movement contradicted the usual flow of influence of ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC which was mainly north-to-south and centre-to-region. However, as Author A remarked, the Guangdong provincial government was initially not confident of the popularity of the *New Three Character Classic*, “otherwise, it needed not exert such great propaganda force for the text”. Therefore, the innovation and initiative of Guangdong provincial government and the spirit of reform of Guangdong people could explain the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature in Guangdong but might not be good reasons to explain the rise of the national 3,4,5 movement. In contrast, the rise of the 3,4,5 movement was led by the following favourable conditions identified by the findings from documentary analysis and the Literature Review chapters.

9.4.1 Guangdong’s “one step ahead” experience of economic reform

Guangdong was selected as one of the SEZs in 1979 when the economic reform and opening up began. Since then, Guangdong had been “one-step ahead” in economic reform and enjoyed the fruits of economic prosperity. Guangdong GDP growth exceeded the national total. Living standards in Guangdong had also been greatly improved. Nevertheless, Guangdong also unavoidably experienced some “negative” effects of economic reform such as increasing corruption and smuggling as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Guangdong was “one-step ahead” not only in economic reform but also in experiencing these “negative” effects of economic reform. However, Guangdong was not the only province to suffer from these social problems accompanied by economic reform and opening up. Chapter 2 has illustrated that Guangdong province experienced quite similar social problems to those that emerged in the whole country during the process of marketization, namely growing individualism and money worshipping, loss of faith in communism, indifferent interpersonal relationships, alarming family crises, the single child problem, environmental degradation, and rise in crime rate.

New social problems prompted Guangdong government to seek relevant solutions earlier than other provinces. The spread of the 3,4,5 literature was evidence of other provinces learning from Guangdong’s experience in tackling social problems following the spread of economic reform. The south-to-north 3,4,5 movement indicates the pioneering role of the Guangdong province in moral education work, in addition to economic development.

9.4.2 Guangdong’s “one step ahead” in reforming moral education

Guangdong provincial government saw an urgent need to reform moral education work in order to tackle social problems arising from the process of marketization. But what form should the reform take? The government’s directives in moral education offered some hints. The *Notice on the Promulgation of the Outline on the Implementation of Education in Patriotism* (SEC, 1994) called for the teaching of Chinese traditional culture, including philosophy, social sciences, art and literature, science and technology as well as the work of distinguished politicians, philosophers, artists, scientists, educators, and strategists (para.8). It further advocated the

publication of educational readers for the students (para. 27).

In fact, the SEC attached a *Three Character Song (sanzige)* (SEC 1991a, pp.116-7) to supplement the teaching of *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students* as early as in 1991. Though the text was only called *three character song (sanzige)*, and not *Three Character Classic (sanzijing)* and its content was entirely the same as the *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students*, it was clear official demonstration of the use of a Chinese poem in ideopolitical-moral education.

The “war” between the Guangdong and Beijing versions of *New Three Character Classic* further showed that Guangdong was not the only province to observe the official call for “nationalistic education” in the government’s directives. In fact, the text of the Beijing version had been published in *Guangming Ribao (Guangming Daily)* before the publication of the Guangdong version.⁵³⁴ The author of the Beijing version, Li Hanqiu, was a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). He would have had good knowledge of the government stand on ideopolitical-moral education as well as the pros and cons of publication of the text. But why did the *New Three Character Classic* eventually appear earlier in Guangdong than other provinces? Why was the 3,4,5 literature generated in Guangdong, a region where economic activities are most intense but perhaps most ‘spiritually polluted’?

The slow publication of the Beijing version in fact indicated hesitation on the part of the individual author (even with a party background) and/or the publishers in the publication of the text. The slow publication of Beijing and Shanghai versions of the new three-character classics actually reflected a cautious “wait and watch” approach

⁵³⁴ The *CPPCC Daily*, 23 June, 2001.

of the respective publishers. Even the central government was also cautious in producing the *Three Character Song (sanzige)*. These all show the sensitivity of the publication of ideopolitical-moral education materials with the name or content of *Three Character Classic* in China in the mid-1990s despite frequent calls for “traditional ethics” and an “innovative approach” in moral education by the government.

In contrast, Guangdong was bold enough to launch a mass campaign with great propaganda force in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature. The editorial board of the literature was chaired by provincial Head Huang Huahua. The bold drive of Guangdong provincial government can only be explained by the possibility that it was granted silent approval by the central government before the launch of the project. This possibility is confirmed by the party’s recognition of the publication of the 3,4,5 literature indicated by the continuous promotion of Yu Youjun, the chief editor of the 3,4,5 literature, from Head of Guangdong propaganda department to the mayor in Shenzhen SEZ, then provincial leader of Hunan and recently Shanxi.⁵³⁵ The publication of the 3,4,5 literature has always been regarded as a “great work” in ideopolitical-moral education by Guangdong provincial officials.

The case of the 3,4,5 movement is another experiment tested in the SEZs. This is an experiment in moral education rather than economics. “Letting some people become rich first” is one of basic principles initiated in Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms and opening up China to the outside world. The 3,4,5 movement borrowed the successful experience of establishing SEZs in southern China in the process of economic reform. The SEZs were granted some freedom to organize their economies.

⁵³⁵ *Tai Kung Pao*, 22 June, 2006, p.A23.

The spread of the 3,4,5 literature supports Shirk's (1994) argument that this kind of particularism not only reduced resistance to the new open policies from the powerful planning, finance and industrial bureaucracies but also motivated provincial officials to develop their local economies in a pragmatic, profit-oriented manner. It further enhanced inter-province competition.⁵³⁶ The tacit blessing enjoyed by Guangdong in the reform of ideopolitical-moral education can be attributed to the progressive attitude of Guangdong provincial government which was emphasized by the academics in the interviews. It was the enthusiasm and boldness of the Guangdong provincial government which made possible the pioneering position of Guangdong in this reform of ideopolitical-moral education.

9.4.3 Teaching value of the 3,4,5 literature

According to the informants, the *New Three Character Classic* had been treated as a supplementary moral reader in moral education lessons on a voluntary basis by schools. Our teacher informants gave positive comments on the texts, claiming that the content of the text was attractive to students and aroused students' interests in moral education lessons.

Confucian ethics and historical figures were alien to the new generation because of an official ban since 1949. Hence Confucian figures became a new fashion to the young when their stories were introduced to the students. The teacher informants reported that students found the stories of ancient figures more attractive than those of revolutionary heroes. Teaching the *New Three Character Classic* became a new trend in schools shortly after the text was published.

⁵³⁶ Shirk, S.L. (1994) *How China opened its Door: The Political Success of the PRC's Foreign Trade and Investment Reforms*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, pp.36-9.

The author and teacher informants also observed the educational value of the *New Three Character Classic*. They noticed that students imitated moral behaviour of the ancient figures. The *New Three Character Classic* was widely believed to be a better moral text than orthodox socialist moral education text, though there was a lack of empirical data supporting its educational value.

9.4.4 Market value of the 3,4,5 literature

The blossoming of the *New Three Character Classic* also reflects a huge market demand. As mentioned, orthodox socialist moral education was widely considered “inadequate” in developing students’ morality. The crisis of faith in “socialist moral education” should be seen as the fourth crisis of faiths in addition to the crises of “three faiths” in Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought, socialism and the future of the country (Chapter 2). Also illustrated in Chapter 2, parents were concerned about the growth of their children, even though they sometimes expressed it in wrong ways. Our teacher informants noticed that parents believed in the ability of the *New Three Character Classic* to foster moral values among their children. As teacher A pointed out, “parents would buy the book for their children even without the compulsory purchase scheme”. A surge of emulations of the *New Three Character Classic* just reflected a rise of parents’ demands for new moral education materials intertwined with notable worry about youth problems and failing orthodox socialist moral education.

The popularity of the 3,4,5 literature proved its market/commercial value. As mentioned, other provinces than Guangdong also perceived the need to improve moral work in view of rapid social transformation but hesitated because of the political risk. The silence of the central government on the publication of the 3,4,5 literature can be

regarded as a silent approval. While the 3,4,5 literature was proved to be a politically safe but profit-making business, other provinces strived for emulations and repetitions, not only in moral education but in other disciplines. The 3,4,5 movement thus carried commercial value. Commercial profits thus helped boost the heating of the 3,4,5 literature.

9.5 The retreat of the national 3,4,5 movement

The influence of the *New Three Character Classic* lasted for some years since its publication. The Literature Review nonetheless showed more recent replications of the *New Three Character Classic*. The *New Three Character Classic* was still “included as teaching material in some schools” (Author A). Nevertheless, the influence of the *New Three Character Classic* has waned in recent years, with the increase in rhyming moral literature published, e.g. the *Guangdong Maxims* (Editorial Committee, 2002). The following discussions will examine factors relevant to the cooling of the “*New Three Character Classic* Heat”.

9.5.1 Social context

China hurtled towards a market economy in the late 1990s. Her GDP grew by 7.9 percent in 2002 in spite of a global economic slowdown.⁵³⁷ Economic growth in Guangdong was encouraging even though facing keen competition from other provinces. She was still the first province in terms of gross light industrial output value, foreign trade and per capita urban family income in 1998 (Chapter 2).

Accompanying rapid economic growth was an indifference to politics and ideology. Surveys showed that people placed higher priority on economic development than

⁵³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Rongji [Accessed 25 March, 2006]

democracy.⁵³⁸ Zha (1997) noticed a widespread public fatigue and indifference towards politics in post-Tiananmen China. The new generation were more interested in lifestyle than revolution⁵³⁹. The academics added that the public had become increasingly individualized in recent years. The new generation was fond of new and fashionable things. Though the 3,4,5 literature had once attracted students' interest in the "boring" Ideology and Moral Character lessons, the teachers observed that its attractiveness decreased in the late 1990s when it was no longer a novel text.

China moved away from a "virtuocratic" state towards a system that was more "meritocratic" (Reed, 1995)⁵⁴⁰ in the 1990s. Students, parents, and even school authorities placed greater emphasis on academic attainment rather than ideology. School authorities was warned not to misuse the lesson hours allocated to Ideology and Moral Character for other purposes (SEC 1990). The market value of moral education texts thus decreased.

In the late 1990s, the Chinese youths were developing close linkage with the outside world via the internet following its rapid expansion and the popularity of personal computers. Though under tight government security checks, the internet provides students with multifaceted information. Hence the stories about ancient figures in the *New Three Character Classic* were no longer innovative and attractive to the new generation. On the other hand, the academics considered the 3,4,5 literature was as "too simple" and "not inspiring," and thus difficult to meet the rising needs of the

⁵³⁸ Pei, M.X. (1997) Racing against time: Institutional Decay and Renewal in China, in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, pp.17-8.

⁵³⁹ Zha, J.Y. (1997) China's Popular Culture in the 1990s, in W.A. Joseph (Ed.) (1997) *China Briefing: the Contradictions of Change*, Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, p.109.

⁵⁴⁰ Reed, G.G. (1996) The Multiple Dimensions of a Unidimensional Role Model: Lei Feng, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, p.248.

society in a period of rapid changes.

9.5.2 Political context

In discussing the cooling of the “*New Three Character Classic Heat*”, Professor B questioned the over-reliance on the personal leadership of Yu Youjun in the development of the 3,4,5 movement. After the chief editor Yu was promoted to municipal Head of Shenzhen,⁵⁴¹ it was questionable if his successor was as interested in the movement. In fact, even if Yu had remained in Guangdong province, he might not have continued to promote the 3,4,5 literature as the national policy on ideopolitical-moral education changed greatly in the late 1990s.

The development of the 3,4,5 literature was firstly affected by the issue of the *Implementation Outline on Ethic Building for Citizens* (CCP, 2001). The outline was a directive on ideopolitical-moral education in China under the leadership of Jiang Zemin. Guangdong provincial propaganda department responded by producing *Guangdong Provincial Maxims on Ethic Building for Citizens* (Guangdong Provincial Propaganda Department, 2002). Since then, the focus of propaganda of the Guangdong provincial propaganda department had been the *Guangdong Maxims* instead of the 3,4,5 literature. The 3,4,5 literature was naturally less mentioned than before.

Documentary analysis also reveals a shift of themes in ideopolitical-moral education. “Nationalistic education” was replaced by “moral qualities” from 1997. In the late 1990s, major themes of ideopolitical-moral education included “psychological health”, “individual well-being”, “democracy and legal education”, and “international

⁵⁴¹ Yu Youjun was promoted to be acting municipal mayor of Shenzhen in April 2000. See http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2003-06/10/content_913057.htm [Accessed 25 March, 2006]

outlook". Hence, the *New Three Character Classic* was no longer emphasized in official discourse.

The government also called for "innovative teaching" and "diversity of method" in the late 1990s. It denied any repetition and formalism. In addition, the 3,4,5 literatures relied heavily on heroic models. However, the "modelling" strategy was less mentioned in the government directives in the late 1990s. There was no model in the more recently published *Guangdong Maxims*. This is further evidence that the literature was becoming outdated in the late 1990s.

According to the informants, the "*New Three Character Classic Heat*" was to a certain extent the result of strong government propaganda. However, the longevity of any political (moral) campaign was questionable in post-reform China. Professor A pointed out, "people had got tired of official political propaganda and kept away from government produced materials to avoid painful memory of the Cultural Revolution." The cooling of the "*New Three Character Classic Heat*" indicates the limitation of the campaign of moral education in post-reform China. As China became increasingly pluralistic, the government could not easily organize political campaigns as before.

The academics held that the 3,4,5 literature was limited by its adherence to government-endorsed values. Professor A argued that the popularity of such values could not last long. The new generation always stands up against authority. As the 3,4,5 literature was more or less indoctrination in government-endorsed values, and such values were instilled partly by a strategy of copying models, the students would not retain interest in it for a long time. Lastly, the removal of the "school purchase scheme" also made the mass selling of moral education texts more difficult.

9.6. Implications of the 3,4,5 literature for ideopolitical-moral education in China

Though the “*New Three Character Classic Heat*” cooled down in recent years, the 3,4,5 movement might still be one of the largest moral education movements in the recent decade in China in terms of durability and scope of influence. Its rise and fall sufficiently indicate some major changes in moral education work in China.

9.6.1 Policies in ideopolitical-moral education

9.6.1.1 Changing themes in ideopolitical-moral education

The rise and fall of the 3,4,5 literature are closely associated with changing themes in ideopolitical-moral education in China. The emergence of the *New Three Character Classic* marked the turn to nationalistic education from previously revolutionary education in the first half of the 1990s. The high percentage of traditional themes and the introduction of the morality of Chinese historical figures can be traced to the Ministry of Education which called for the integration of “Chinese moral tradition into the ethics developing from socialist revolution and socialist construction” (MOE 1994, para. 8, p.74).

The subsequent *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* were published in March 1996 and August 1996 respectively, about one and a half year after the publication of the *New Three Character Classic*. Content analysis reveals their focuses are different from the *New Three Character Classic*’s by placing greater emphases on personal and social values (Table 9.5).

| Book/Values | Traditional themes | National themes | Personal values | Social values |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| The <i>classic</i> | 32.90% | 12.55% | 22.08% | 20.78% |
| The <i>song</i> | 0 | 7.23% | 38.55% | 49.40% |
| The <i>rhyme</i> | 2.13% | 2.13% | 34.04% | 58.51% |

Table 9.5: Relative percentage of theme/values in the 3,4,5 literature (selective)

The shift in relative content weighting of the 3,4,5 literature is related to changing

themes, from “nationalistic education” to “psychological qualities” (SEC 1995a, SEC 1995b), “social ethics” (MOE 1994, SEC 1995c) and “occupational ethics” (MOE 1994, SEC 1995c) in the government’s directives.

The calls for “psychological qualities” (SEC 1997, CCP 2000, MOE 2001), “social ethics” (CCP 1996, SEC 1998, MOE 1998, CCP 2000, CCP 2001) and “occupational ethics” (CCP 1996, CCP 2000, CCP 2001) are found to be stronger than “traditional ethics” (CCP 1996, CCP 1999) in the late 1990s. The qualities advocated in the late 1990s are reflected in the subsequent *Guangdong Maxims* which contain predominantly personal values and social values but no traditional themes. Hence the 3,4,5 literature and its subsequent literature clearly indicate the shifts of themes in ideopolitical-moral education in the government’s directives during the 1990s.

9.6.1.2 Changing approach in ideopolitical-moral education

The 3,4,5 literature and its subsequent literature also indicate changing approaches to ideopolitical-moral education in China in the recent decade. The 3,4,5 literature emerged when the government called for “innovative” teaching in ideopolitical-moral education (SEC 1992, SEC 1995c), “diversity in teaching method” (SEC 1993a, 1993c, SEC 1994, SEC 1995b), “relevance” (SEC 1991b, SEC 1992, SEC 1993a, 1993c, MOE 1994, SEC 1994, SEC 1995a, SEC 1995b, SEC 1995c), and “student-centred” methods (SEC 1991b, SEC 1992, SEC 1993a, 1993c, MOE 1994, SEC 1994, SEC 1995a, SEC 1995b, SEC 1995c).

The 3,4,5 literature was “innovative” for it (1) employed a previously denounced Confucian genre of *Three Character Classic*, (2) advocated high percentage of traditional and national themes instead of political themes, and (3) quoted historical

models with excellent morality instead of revolutionary models to cultivate moral values in readers. As mentioned, the content of the 3,4,5 literature was “relevant” to current social transformation. The writing of the 3,4,5 literature was also “student (recipient)-centred”. As Author A pointed out, the *New Three Character Classic* was written in a “comprehensive” (*xiaochang*) and “understandable” (*mingbai*) way. Interesting stories and pictures were preferred to ideological jargon and political slogans to avoid boring the young children.

The *Guangdong Maxims* (2002), a subsequent moral text published by Guangdong provincial government also demonstrated official efforts to produce “student (recipient)-centred” and “relevant” moral texts. Firstly, the text focused on the cultivation of moral qualities of readers indicated by high percentage of personal and social values. The *Guangdong Maxims* consisted of five chapters, all starting with “Me” (*wo*), for example, “Me and my family”, “Me and others”. Besides, the *Guangdong Maxims* was “innovative” in collecting folklore Chinese maxims instead of rewriting them into a new text, signalling the lessening government intervention. Surprisingly, heroic models were absent from the *Guangdong Maxims*. Suffice to say, the *Guangdong Maxims* illustrated the official calls for “relevance”, “student-centred” and “diversity of method” (CCP 2000, 2001, MOE 2001) in ideopolitical-moral education.

9.6.1.3 Flexibility in ideopolitical-moral education

The government directives emphasized “regional flexibility” in the implementation of ideopolitical-moral education in the first-half of the 1990s (SEC 1991a, SEC 1991b, SEC 1993c, SEC 1994). Provincial government could enjoy autonomy in the implementation of ideopolitical-moral education. SEC (1991a) further suggested that

schools should adapt moral education teaching in accordance with regional conditions (p.116).

The publication of the 3,4,5 literature to a certain extent reflected “regional flexibility”. According to the government officials, Guangdong propaganda department was free to organize the publication work, including the invitation of experts and teachers to the editorial board and consultation committee. The authors themselves found that they were free to discuss the publication. They did not feel any government pressure during the process of publication.

Close inspection of the materials in different versions of the *New Three Character Classic* further indicates that regional government/publishers enjoyed a lot of flexibility and a high level of autonomy in producing moral education materials. Take “models” employed in the *New Three Character Classic* for example, 22 of the historical models were used in all three classics (22/61, 36.07%), 42 in both Beijing and Guangdong versions (42/61, 68.85%), and 26 in both Shanghai and Guangdong versions (26/61, 41.94%).

Local models were employed in the *New Three Character Classic*. For example, political leaders Sun Yatxin and Deng Xiaoping, officials Lin Zexu, Liang Qichao and Deng Shichang, and inventor Huang Daopo are all local Guangdong models to demonstrate the brilliant achievements of the Chinese. In addition, the *New Three Character Classic* particularly mentioned the battle of San Yuan Lane to demonstrate the bravery of Guangdong people in resisting foreign invasions. It also described Zhu Jiang, a Guangdong river, as one of China’s great rivers. The flexibility in the writing of the literature is further evidenced of a *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education in

China.

Daun (2002) suggests that “decision makers are too distant from education users (pupils’ parents) to be responsive to local needs and to be accountable for educational quality” “when education is managed by a national bureaucracy”.⁵⁴² The production of the 3,4,5 literature reveals regional autonomy in developing moral education materials. Localization of education enabled the provincial policy makers to make a prompt response to local needs led by economic reform and inadequate socialist ideopolitical-moral education by producing the 3,4,5 literature. Their responses were recognized by other stakeholders such as teachers, and the academics in the interviews.

9.6.2 Practice in ideopolitical-moral education

9.6.2.1 Professionalism in moral education

The 3,4,5 literature also marked “professionalism” in producing moral education texts. Unlike previous government-initiated moral education campaigns in which the textbooks were written by cadres themselves, the publication of the 3,4,5 literature showed the following features of professionalization:

According to the interviews with the government officials and the authors as well as other information collected by the researcher, scholars (experts in language or ethics), school teachers and Party cadres were invited to join the editorial board of the 3,4,5 literature (Appendix 9). The ratio of the three categories of board members is summarized in Table 9.6:

⁵⁴² Daun, H. (Ed.) (2002) *Educational Restructuring in the Context of Globalization and National Policy*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, p.xvi.

| Editorial Committee of the 3,4,5 literature | Officials (no./%) | Scholars (no./%) | Teachers (no./%) | Unknown (no./%) |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 7(50%) | 5(35.7%) | 2(14.3%) | 0 |
| <i>Four Character Song</i> | 6(50%) | 3(25%) | 2(16.7%) | 1(8.3%) |
| <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 6(46.2%) | 4(30.8%) | 1(7.7%) | 2(15.4%) |

Table 9.6: Editorial Members of the 3,4,5 literature:

The production of the 3,4,5 literature was a project initiated by the Guangdong provincial government. Party cadres were logically included into the editorial boards. But it is worth noting that cadres invited to the board were largely those responsible for either educational or propaganda affairs, reflecting the official emphasis on their expertise in education administration and propaganda processes.

Besides their own “experts” inside the Party, the government relied on academic experts from universities or research institutions. Language experts (Author A, Author C) and Ethics experts (Author B) were invited to join the editorial work by the provincial government. The invitation revealed the government’s concern for professional knowledge rather than ideology in the publication.

Experienced teachers such as Chang Chenggan were also invited for their professional teaching experience. This showed the government’s concern for teaching effectiveness and its determination to produce a moral education text in accordance with learning and psychological characteristics of students, and the professional knowledge of teachers.

The authors told the researcher in the interviews that their opinions were respected by the provincial government throughout the editorial process. Author A held that the

professor responsible for rewriting the draft of the *New Three Character Classic* enjoyed great autonomy and even felt that the draft reflected to a certain extent the professor's personal opinions. These all showed the official reliance on the professional knowledge of the experts. Comparatively, cadre members did not appear to have played a key role in the editorial board. As Author B observed, cadre members' presence largely depended on the presence of the chief editor Yu Youjun. If Yu attended the meeting, most cadre members were present and vice versa.

Table 9.7 further simplifies the figures in Table 9.6 to show the proportion of government officials and non-government member in the respective editorial boards. As for Table 9.7, it shows a balance between official and non-official members in the editorial boards of all three moral education texts analyzed in this study.

| | Officials | Non-officials |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| <i>New Three Character Classic</i> | 7(50%) | 7(50%) |
| <i>Four Character Song</i> | 6(50%) | 6(50%) |
| <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> | 6(46.2%) | 7(53.8%) |

Table 9.7: Number of officials/non-officials in editorial boards of the 3,4,5 literature

The number of experts invited to the editorial boards indicated the rise of professionalism in ideopolitical-moral education in China. The government sought professional support from experts in order to promote the effectiveness of ideopolitical-moral education programmes. As the government officials put it, the 3,4,5 literature was a product of the cooperation of officials (*guan*) and the people (*min*); the government was no longer the sole author of moral texts but cooperated closely with the masses. Composition of the editorial boards of the 3,4,5 literature reflected the government's attempt to balance the ratio between the officials and non-officials.

As a part of the ideal of service, professionals have a conviction that they possess something of intrinsic value to offer, and have a sense of responsibility that their duty for educating children is much more important than that which is contractual to the employer (Langford, 1978)⁵⁴³. This ideal of service is sometimes coined ‘professional accountability’. At the heart of professional accountability resides a belief in responsiveness to clients. The authors interviewed illustrated their “professional awareness” as they unanimously regarded their participation in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature as their social responsibility. They all saw it as their duty to educate the young children with new rhyming literature.

The government officials also demonstrated their professionalism in the publication of the 3,4,5 literature. According to the findings from the interview, the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was initiated by the provincial propaganda department which saw the inadequacies of orthodox ideopolitical-moral education. They showed their “professional” responsibility to be aware of the shortcomings of socialist ideopolitical-moral education and initiated a reform in response to it.

Our author informants explained that the invitation of academics into the boards was mainly based on their professional knowledge of ethics or language abilities. Engagement of knowledgeable scholars in the publication actually marked the professionalism of ideopolitical-moral education in China in order to fill the needs of the teachers, the students, the parents, and the society. This was reasonable as education in China was turning towards meritocracy instead of ideocracy as marketization deepened. Moral education was no longer a matter of political slogan or

⁵⁴³ Langford, G (1978) *Teaching as a profession: an essay in the philosophy of education*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp19,46.

models. Characteristics of its targets (for example, the students) had to be duly considered.

The 3,4,5 movement marks the growth of civic and professional involvement in moral education in the PRC. Though to some writers, political authorities at present still mobilize the people to exert themselves for state-directed ends and in the process, to engage in ritualistic rites of loyalty to state leaders,⁵⁴⁴ the case of the 3,4,5 movement illustrates moral education is moving away from authoritarianism and forwards to an open and more flexible implementation.

9.6.2.2 “Secularization” of moral education

“It doesn’t matter it’s a black cat or white cat; it’s a good cat as long as it catches mice.” (Deng Xiaoping)

The saying of Deng Xiaoping reflected his realistic and pragmatic approach to social, economic and political development, which was reflected in the production of the 3,4,5 literature. According to the officials and authors, the 3,4,5 literature aimed to provide an alternative to the “false, grand and void” ideopolitical-moral education for the benefit of the public, especially young children. Hence the rhyming genre of the old *Three Character Classic*, was chosen instead of direct indoctrination. The text was made readable to young children by including exegesis, illustrative pictures, Putonghua pronunciation, and the stories of ancient figures. As Author A pointed out, the *New Three Character Classic* was written in accordance with the principle of “avoiding the use of political terminology”. Thus, the low frequency of political themes in the literature might be due to the avoidance of overloaded young children with too many political elements.

⁵⁴⁴ Lieberthal, K. (2004) *Governing China: from revolution through reform*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, p.xvi.

According to findings from the interviews, public support was sought in the production of the 3,4,5 literature. Teachers and parents were invited into consultation panels and their opinions were taken seriously by the government. Several drafts were abandoned because of the criticism received from the panels. Engagement of parents and teachers in the consultation reduced the discrepancy between the government (producer) and the public (final users) and helped reduce resistance from practising teachers or parents but strengthened public support for the reform.

The production of the 3,4,5 literature was evidence of a “secularization” of moral education. According to Bruce (2002), ‘secularization’ is a social condition manifest in (a) the declining importance of religion for the operation of non-religious roles and institutions such as those of the state and the economy; (b) a decline in the social standing of religious roles and institutions; and (c) a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices, display beliefs of a religious kind, and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by such beliefs.⁵⁴⁵

Ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC had aimed high at creating ‘revolutionary successors’ for the CCP since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. Nevertheless, the development of the 3,4,5 literature marks the following characteristic of ‘secularization’ of revolutionary education:

- (a) A decline in market value of socialist values;
- (b) A decline in authority and attractiveness of Ideology and Moral Character lessons among the students;
- (c) A decline in enthusiasm of teachers for Ideology and Moral Character lessons (Chapter 3).

As official A noticed, “The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature marked the moving down

⁵⁴⁵ Bruce, S. (2002) *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*, Oxford: Blackwell. p.3

of ideopolitical-moral education from “heaven”(tianshang) to “the earth”(renjian). The “down to earth” text was clearly successful in winning positive response from the stakeholders. In the interviews, the teacher informants reported that students enjoyed reading the *New Three Character Classic* because it was not as “indoctrinating” as orthodox Ideology and Moral Character texts. The students also found the three-character rhymes and stories of ancient figures novel and interesting.

9.6.2.3 Moral education movement

Guangdong provincial government saw the need to reform ideopolitical-moral education and boldly initiated the publication of the 3,4,5 literature. The reform introduced traditional ethics and a classical three-character rhyme genre, both denounced previously by the central government, into ideopolitical-moral education. Provincial officials organized massive propaganda activities in school campuses and in the society to promote the 3,4,5 literature soon after the literature was published. Workshops were organized for both teachers and parents to familiarize their teaching. These propaganda works helped popularize the literature in the school campus and in the society.

The informants agreed that the concentrated propaganda helped to strengthen the popularity of the 3,4,5 literature. The 3,4,5 movement was basically a government-led reform in ideopolitical-moral education movement, according to the informants. Nonetheless, the academics doubted the suitability of “campaign” forms of moral education in China today. Firstly, the attractiveness of any campaign was limited by its top-down nature. Secondly, a “campaign” could lead the public to associate it with the sorrowful memory of the Cultural Revolution.

In the late 1990s, there was a surge of commercialization and individualism in the Chinese society accompanied by the growing marketization. The government found it difficult to mobilize the public and launch a massive political movement. For example, the campaign for ‘socialist spiritual civilisation’ (1997) lasted only for a short period⁵⁴⁶.

9.7 Significance of the 3,4,5 literature in ideopolitical-moral education

9.7.1 Moving from state-oriented to student-oriented moral education

The informants, including the government officials, frankly criticized orthodox ideopolitical-moral education as “too idealistic” and “irrelevant to the reality”. It was only concerned with the cultivation of revolutionary spirit among the public and ultimately aimed to establish the socialist regime but it was irrelevant to the current social conditions. The informants’ comments were supported by the findings from content analysis. The para-government documents on ideopolitical-moral education published in the early reform period indeed contained a high percentage of political themes.

Although the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was to a certain extent a government-led movement in support of “nationalistic education”, its dissemination of governmental-endorsed values was even described as a kind of “indoctrination” by Professor A, the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature nevertheless showed increasing concern for the recipient (the readers, such as young children) from the provider of ideopolitical-moral education (the government). The borrowing of the poetry genre of *Three Character Classic* showed the government’s effort in making the literature readable for children. Illustrative pictures were added to attract the attention of young

⁵⁴⁶ Chen, F. (1998) Rebuilding the Party’s normative authority: China’s socialist spiritual authority, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 45 (6), p.34

children.

In addition, the authors addressed the readers as “the young” (“*qing shao nian*”) (line 173) or “good children” (“*hao ernu*”) (line 417). This way of addressing readers hints that young children are the targeted readers of the *New Three Character Classic*. The preponderance of traditional themes over political themes in the *New Three Character Classic* can further be attributed to the young age of readers. Sub-themes such as “enthusiasm for learning” and “filial piety” are clearly child-oriented. Models of good behaviours adopted in the *New Three Character Classic* like Huang Xiang⁵⁴⁷ and Kong Rong are famous figures in Chinese children’s literature and had already been used in the ancient *Three Character Classic*. All these measures indicate the government’s effort to address the psychological needs of young children. The 3,4,5 literature thus showed the shift of ideopolitical-moral education from state-centred to student-centred moral education in the 1990s.

“Student-centred” teaching was found to be one of the most strongly advocated policies in the analysis of government directives (16/20, 80%). The official policies were reflected in the *Guangdong Maxims*. Firstly, the *Guangdong Maxims* concentrate on the fostering of personal and social values among readers. No political themes were included. Secondly, the *Guangdong Maxims* is only a collection of moral maxims from folklore. There was no elaboration, description, explanation or any other form of reinvention. Though the *Guangdong Maxims* was itself a provincial elaboration of the national *Outline* (CCP, 2001), the text shows the lessening of government intervention and increasing student-centred content in ideopolitical-moral

⁵⁴⁷ The story of Huang Xiang is one of *Ershisi Xiao Gushi* [*The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*], see <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/scriptorium/xiao/xiao1924.html#tale-19> [Accessed 6 January, 2006].

education.

The case of the 3,4,5 literature also reveals the urge to re-steer ideopolitical-moral education to the needs of the recipients as the society became increasingly individualised and placed greater and greater emphasis on the new generation. Our teacher informants noticed that students' response to the *New Three Character Classic* directly affected the acceptance by parents and teachers of the text. When young children liked reading the text, teachers and parents widely employed the text in their teaching. In contrast, when young children no longer found the text attractive, teachers and parents also lost interest in using the text as teaching materials, and thus leading to the cooling of the "*New Three Character Classic Heat*".

9.7.2 De-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education

Content analysis of the 3,4,5 literature with the previous and subsequent literature shows a de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education. As mentioned, two para-government documents published in the 1980s (the early economic reform period) contain a majority of political themes (>45%). The findings support the predominance of political themes in previous values studies of Chinese textbook (Yang 1982, Kwong 1985).

However, political themes were less mentioned in the 3,4,5 literature (5.70% in average). The *New Three Character Classic* advocated the development of civilized behaviour, enthusiasm for learning, filial piety and so forth. The *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* concentrated on the cultivation of social values and familial ethics among readers. Value orientations of the 3,4,5 literature show a de-politicization of moral education in the period of strengthening economic reform.

Low percentage of political themes is also found in all new three character classics analyzed (9/09% in Guangdong version, 7.83% in Beijing version, 4.67% in Shanghai version). It should be noted that the author of the Shanghai version, Cai Feng, was actually one of the co-authors of the *Sixiang Xiuyang Xiaocidian* (Cai, Feng et al. 1985) in the 1980s in which mostly political themes were embedded (54.49%). Differences in value orientations in these two publications clearly reflected the shifts in national emphases rather than change in the personal views of an individual author.

The findings of the *New Three Character Classic* support previous studies in post-Mao period which identified increasing emphasis on moral development in school texts (Lin 1991). It further revealed the emphases on traditional and national themes, and global values in addition to the stress on “good manners”, “traditional Chinese values”, and “protection for the environment” identified by Lin (1993).⁵⁴⁸

Content analysis of the subsequent moral text, the *Guangdong Maxims* (2002) showed no political themes but high percentage of personal values (47.13%) and social values (51.72%). “Self” was particularly mentioned in this newly published provincial moral text. The same value orientations were also found in two recently-developed curricula of ideopolitical-moral education analyzed. Political themes were not mentioned in the subsequent documents, showing a continuous de-politicization in ideopolitical-moral education in the late 1990s. Though China still claims to be a socialist country, ideology and politics were no longer the prime concern of ideopolitical-moral education.

⁵⁴⁸ Lin, J. (1993) *Education in Post-Mao China*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, pp.1-8; Lin, J. (1991) *The Red Guards' Path to Violence*, New York: Praeger.

As a matter of fact, political values were found to be unpopular among the public and students in the reform era. Communism is now widely believed to be “meaningless” in China.⁵⁴⁹ The government was forced to make alternatives as the market value of socialist values decreased. As Lee and Ho (2005) observed, moral education in the PRC has focused on “the education for democracy”, “individual well being and the moral quality of citizens” and “the development of global awareness” in the recent decade.⁵⁵⁰ The de-politicization in ideopolitical-moral education is noticed as economic reform and opening up was proceeding.

9.7.3 The sustaining of traditional ethics

Traditional ethics were viewed as an obstacle to modernization and a relic of feudalism by the CCP government but were upheld in the 3,4,5 literature under the banner of patriotism. The stress on Confucian values such as “filial piety” in the 3,4,5 literature indicates a shift of value orientation in official ideopolitical-moral education in China during the period of strengthening economic reform and signals the official recognition of traditional ethics in cultivating the new generation of the Chinese. Traditional ethics were incorporated into moral education in addition to the official sponsorship of conferences on Confucianism in recent years.

Though less popular than the *New Three Character Classic*, the subsequent *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* should not be ignored as these two publications reflect a rise in the importance attached to family ethics and social ethics and signify a revival of family education. As the CCP intentionally attempted to replace traditional Chinese families by socialist “communes” after it came to power in

⁵⁴⁹ Wang, G.W. (2003) *Ideas won't keep: The Struggle for China's Future*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, p.9.

⁵⁵⁰ Lee, W.O. and Ho, C.H. (2005) Ideopolitical shifts and changes in moral education policy in China, *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(4) (December 2005), pp.417-435.

1949, its re-emphasis on public ethics and family ethics such as “familial love”, “familial education” and “filial piety” in the 3,4,5 literature indicates official recognition of the importance of family education in moral education and the failure of previous attempts to replace family education with ideological education. As the relevance of socialist values was decreasing and family crises were becoming increasingly apparent, the government reiterated the value of familial education.

At the same time, social ethics had long been ignored in the PRC, though socialist ethics were advocated. But as documentary analysis revealed, social ethics and family ethics became increasingly important after 1996. The sustaining traditional ethics such as social ethics and family ethics in the subsequent *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* reflects a changing official emphasis in ideopolitical-moral education. It also indicates the powerful cultural force of traditional ethics in moral education in the Chinese society once political controls relaxed.

In the 3,4,5 movement, traditional culture and intellectuals were introduced to the original top-down flow of ideological control, to narrow the discrepancy between the CCP (provider) and the public (recipient), and thus enabled the CCP to respond to the needs of the public (Figure 9.2):

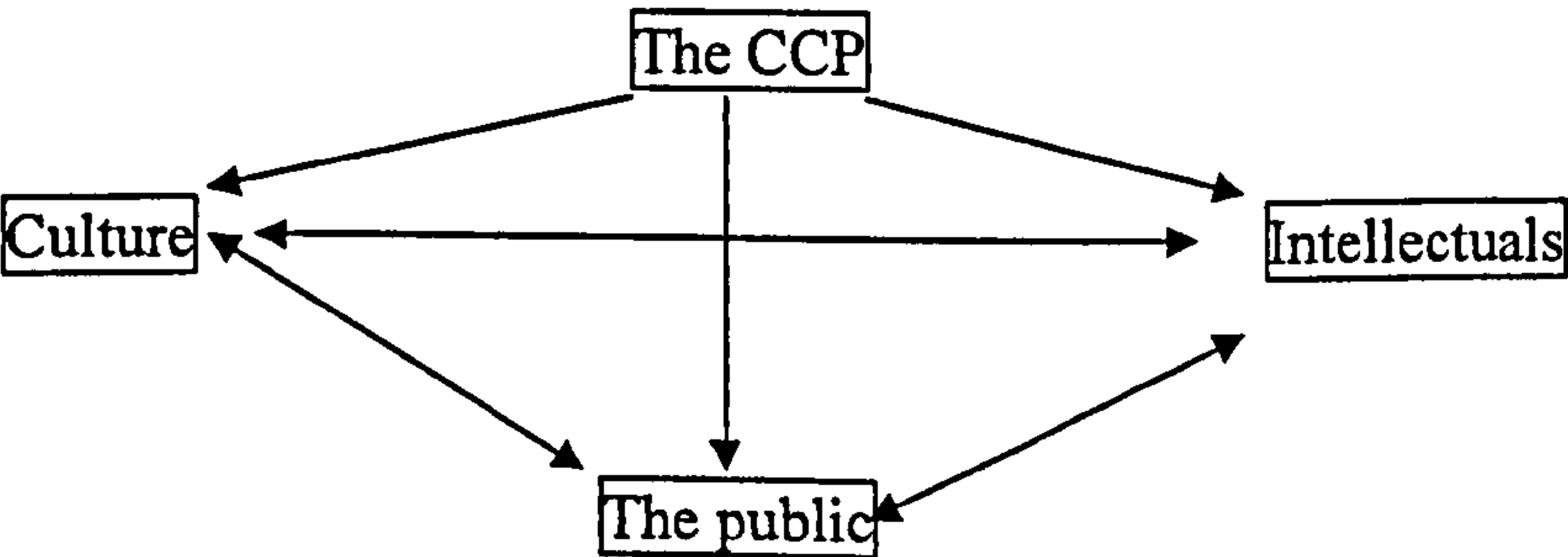


Figure 9.2: “Back to the culture, Response to the public”⁵⁵¹ in moral education

⁵⁵¹ The author acknowledges his gratitude to Prof. Lee Wing On for his suggestion of the phrase “back to culture, response to the public”.

Traditional Confucianism stressed order and stability in a hierarchical structure, extending theoretically from family up through officialdom to the Emperor, the son of Heaven, who was responsible for maintaining the system, hence the duty of obedience to seniors. The upholding of traditional ethics can thus boost social order and harmony, and help solve social problems arising in the process of economic reform such as family crisis and moral deregulation.

On the other hand, the choice of “back to culture” was congruent to the rise of Neo-conservatives in the mid-1990s. The authors expressed their concerns for moral deregulation in the public (particularly the young) and the importance of solving the youth problems with traditional ethics embedded in the 3,4,5 literature. Their thinking was actually in line with the “neo-conservatives,” a new intellectual force that emerged after Deng Xiaoping’s 1992 southern tour. The neo-conservatives, such as Xiao Gongqing⁵⁵², expressed their concerns about the emergence of an ideological vacuum and the moral decline in the process of modernisation and marketisation. They called for reinstatement of nationalism and Chinese cultural identity as a solution and held that the Confucian tradition, particularly its moral code and its sense of social responsibility, could be the best foundation upon which to rebuild Chinese cultural identity.⁵⁵³

In China, intellectuals have traditionally played the role of social conscience. Contrary to the confrontation of the government and intellectuals during the Tiananmen demonstrations, the rise of neo-conservatives in the 1990s showed the

⁵⁵² Xiao Gongqing is a historian at Shanghai Teacher’s University and a key figure in the 1980s’ neo-authoritarianism debates

⁵⁵³ Chen, F. (1997) Order and stability in social transition: neoconservative political thought in post-1989 China, *The China Quarterly*, No. 191, pp. 595-6, 607-8.

improving relationship between the government and intellectuals. This was not accidental as the most strident intellectual voices for radical reform had been exiled after the Tiananmen Incident. Liu (2001) further sees the rise of neo-conservatism as a usual response of intellectuals after a political surge. The Chinese intellectual world has shown a propensity for turning to national studies and conservatism after every massive political surge in modern China's history⁵⁵⁴. The stress on traditional ethics in the 3,4,5 movement by intellectuals in 1995 (six years after the 1989 students' demonstrations) supports Liu's explanation of the rise of neo-conservatism in the wake of political surge.

The authors were proud of the government's invitation to join the editorial boards. They were happy to work with provincial officials. They felt that they were respected by provincial cadres and given a high degree of autonomy in discussion and writing during the publication process. To Author A, the *New Three Character Classic* to a certain extent reflected the personal philosophy of the scholar responsible for rewriting the drafts. The government's trust in the intellectuals was noteworthy, especially after the Tiananmen June 4th Incident. It indicates the good relationship between the government and the intellectuals after the incident. The 3,4,5 movement further illustrates how the government took advantage of the rise of neo-conservatism to seek their support in moral education reform. Such cooperation between the government "guan" and the intellectuals "min" helped to lessen any discrepancy and enhance social harmony.

The active participation of the authors in the writing of the 3,4,5 literature showed the

⁵⁵⁴ Liu, Q.F. (2001) The Topography of Intellectual Culture in 1990s Mainland China: A Survey, in G. Davies (Ed.) *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, p.67.

socio-political role played by the intellectuals by “reinforcing” the government and pushing for change.⁵⁵⁵ The upholding of traditional ethics in the *New Three Character Classic* was concurrent with the rise of neo-conservatism, thus facilitating its quick spread from Guangdong to other provinces.

In 2001, Jiang Zemin called for “ruling with virtue” and appealed to government officials to study Confucian classics like *the Analects*. This reflected the official recognition of Confucian teachings in post-reform China.

Smith (1991) considered six main attributes central to an ethnic community, including:

- a collective proper name;
- a myth of common ancestry;
- shared historical memories;
- one or more differentiating elements of a common culture;
- an association with a specific ‘homeland’;
- a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (1991, p.21).⁵⁵⁶

Gabriel et al. (2006) further suggest that cultural norms typically change slowly and reflect the enduring pattern of political actions⁵⁵⁷.

Liu (2003) suggests that Confucianism comprises three divisions:

1. Spiritual Confucianism: the traditions of great thinkers such as Confucius;
2. Political Confucianism: the tradition of Han Confucian Dong Zhongshu and others that serve as the official ideology of the dynasties;
3. Popular Confucianism: belief at the grassroots level that emphasizes concepts

⁵⁵⁵ Fewsmith, J. (2001) *China since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.10.

⁵⁵⁶ Spencer, P. and Wollman, H. (2002) *Nationalism: a critical introduction*, London: SAGE Publications, p.67.

⁵⁵⁷ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.46.

such as family values, diligence, and education.⁵⁵⁸

Confucianism is not only a concern of the government but also of the educated and the grassroots people. In fact, traditional Chinese culture never vanished in spite of being fiercely denounced officially during the Cultural Revolution. It was deep-rooted in people's minds. In the days when socialism was upheld, traditional Chinese culture and values were less mentioned. But when the government relaxed its ideological control, and particularly when socialist ethics were unable to bind the public, traditional ethics resurfaced and became fashionable again. The *New Three Character Classic* borrowed the ancient genre of *Three Character Classic* to disseminate "new" officially endorsed themes/values. The informants held that the borrowing was successful in attracting students' interest with these easily-memorized and simple chants. These all show the strength of cultural roots rather than political intervention in moulding people.

The reduction in references to the *New Three Character Classic* did not necessarily mean the fall of the *Three Character Classic* in China. It is found that the genre of the *Three Character Classic* has still persisted in deeper grassroots society, in the art and literature. There has been an upsurge of the original version of the *Three Character Classic* in China in recent years,⁵⁵⁹ showing the enduring teaching influence of the original classic. In addition, the *New Three Character Classic* is still adopted in some schools, though it receives less attention from the school authorities or the public.

The publication of the 3,4,5 literature indicates an official effort to forge an effective hegemony over an increasingly "individualized" population and to enhance national

⁵⁵⁸ Liu, S.S. (2003) *Essentials of Contemporary Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, p.23.

⁵⁵⁹ Luo, W.Y. (2006) *Extraordinary Language [Feichang Yuwen]* Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, p.176.

solidarity. As Gabriel et al. (2006) argue, one of the reasons for the disintegration of the Soviet Union is the absence of common language or ethnicity concurrent with the general loss of confidence in the Communist party.⁵⁶⁰ While there was an apparent decline of beliefs in communism and the CCP among the public, the “back to culture” strategy was a timely choice for the government. The 3,4,5 movement illustrates the strength of cultural heritage in moral education and nation building. This study is further evidence of the association between a common sense of identity and national history in fostering feelings of patriotism, and supports Smith’s (1991) suggestion on the importance of common historical memories and culture in maintaining nation building. Common language and culture are particularly important to ethnic community with long history of civilization like China.

9.7.4 Shifts in models in the process of marketization

Confucian teachings encouraged rulers to be virtuous role models for the public, and Confucian teachers used stories of persons with high moral standards to cultivate ideal human character. The CCP also has a long tradition of using role models to prescribe proper socialist attitudes.⁵⁶¹ The CCP created tens of revolutionary models for ideopolitical-moral education through its propaganda apparatus. Lei Feng was a typical loyal and selfless hero/model created by the propaganda groups of the PLA and propagated by the CCP, and was used as a tool for moral/political education in China from 1963. Reed argued that role model Lei Feng shared common virtues such as “loyalty”, “filial piety”, “self-cultivation through education”, “benevolence” and “modesty frugality” with traditional Confucian role models.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.48.

⁵⁶¹ Zhang, M. (1999) From Lei Feng to Zhang Haidi: Changing images of model youth in the Post-Mao reform era, in R. Kluver and J.H. Powers (Eds.) *Civic Discourse, Civil Society, and Chinese Communities*, Stanford: Ablex Publishing Corporation, p.111.

⁵⁶² Reed, G.G. (1996) The Multiple Dimensions of a Unidimensional Role Model: Lei Feng, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational

Lei Feng was only mentioned one time in the *New Three Character Classic*. Instead, the text introduces another group of historical figures such as Yue Fei and Qi Jiguang as heroes/models. As Reed (1996) pointed out, the process of creating a model was by its very nature a reductionist activity.⁵⁶³ He compared the values advocated through Lei Feng and Confucian role model to indicate overlapping values among them. To expand the work of Reed (1996) and investigate the shifts of values advocated in the para-government ideopolitical-moral education texts in the 1990s, values advocated through historical figures in the *New Three Character Classic* and values advocated in the *Guangdong Maxims* through “Me”⁵⁶⁴ will be added for comparison purpose.

As mentioned, the three largest personal and social values advocated in the *New Three Character Classic* include the values of “righteousness”, “civilized behaviours” (“modesty” in Reed’s term), “enthusiasm for learning” (“self-cultivation through education” in Reed’s term), “filial piety”, “unity” and “concern for the society”.

On the other hand, the three largest personal and social values advocated in the *Guangdong Maxims* include “self”, “benevolence”, “civilized behaviours” (“modesty” in Reed’s term), “unity”, “familial education”, and “filial piety”.

The comparison reveals that the values of “modesty”, “filial piety”, and “self-cultivation through education” were manifested in very different political cultures with very different social outcomes, no matter what kind of model was

Research, pp.245-259.

⁵⁶³ Reed, G.G (1996) The Multiple Dimensions of a Unidimensional Role Model: Lei Feng, in L.N.K. Lo, and S.W. Man, (Eds.) *Moral and Civic Education*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, p.245.

⁵⁶⁴ There is no mention of hero/model in the *Guangdong Maxims*. All five chapters of the *Guangdong Maxims* start from “Me”, for example, “Me and myself”, ‘ME’ is thus regarded as the model of the *Guangdong Maxims* in this paper.

adopted. These are the core values of socialist education.

Nevertheless, the comparison illustrates the new demand for values in the process of economic reform. The *New Three Character Classic* particularly stresses the importance of “righteousness”, “unity” and “concern for the society”. All these values were basically Confucian teaching. The stress on these Confucian values indicated their special relevance to social transformation during the process of economic reform. As mentioned, the stress on “righteousness” is closely related to the rising tension between “righteousness” (*yi*) and “profit” (*li*). The calls for “unity” and “concern for the society” are apparently a response to the growing individualism.

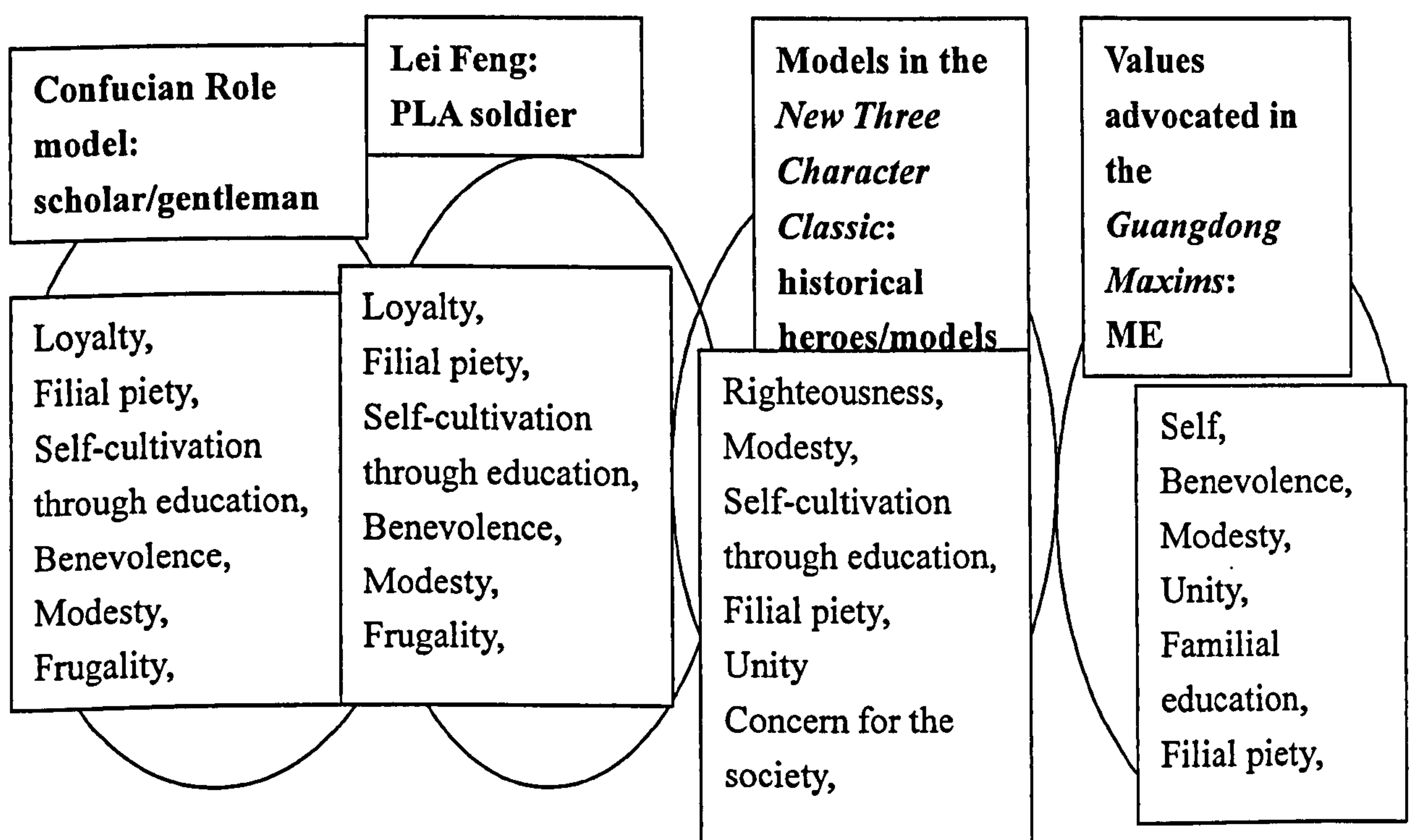


Figure 9.3: Overlapping virtues of the models quoted in the Confucian role model and Lei Feng [adapted from Reed (1995, p.236)], the *New Three Character Classic* and the *Guangdong Maxims*,

The *Guangdong Maxims* is characterized by its stress on “benevolence” and “familial education”. “Benevolence” is actually one of the values emphasized in Confucian

teaching and model Lei Feng. It is indeed the fourth largest sub-theme (personal values) in the *New Three Character Classic*, just behind “enthusiasm for learning”. Thus “benevolence” should also be regarded as a common requirement of role models in China.

The emphasis on “familial education” had its own significance in China as marketization deepened. On one hand, “familial education” was urged as a remedy for social problems arising from economic reform, for example, spoiled single children. On the other hand, the call also indicates the revival of family ethics in official discourse. All newly demanded values are thus related to the social transformation.

Besides the identification of overlapping characteristics of the hero/model in different social settings, the comparison also indicates the shifts in values of role models used for ideopolitical-moral education. The replacement of Lei Feng with historical heroes in the *New Three Character Classic* on one hand indicates the continuing adoption of the role model strategy in ideopolitical-moral education as China entered a period of deepening economic reform, but on the other hand illustrates the fading of Lei Feng in face of rapid social transformation during the process of marketization. In the late 1990s, no role model is employed in the *Guangdong Maxims*. This is a significant adaptation of ideopolitical-moral education in China as marketization deepened.

9.7.5 Piloting curriculum reform

Our teacher informants observed that the 3,4,5 literature not only enlivened the Ideology and Moral Character lessons but also contributed significantly to the subsequent curricular reform. Their observations were supported by the findings from the content analysis in this study. It is found that the two subsequent moral education curricula, the *Revised Nine-year Compulsory Primary Ideomoral and Secondary*

Ideopolitical curriculum guidelines (MOE, 1997) and the *Morality and society curriculum guidelines* (for senior primary) (MOE, 2002) have similar distribution of values to the *Four Character Classic* and *Five Character Rhyme*, with their high percentage of personal and social values. Unlike the *New Three Character Classic*, these two recently developed curricula contain only a few traditional themes. Political themes are infrequent in all documents analyzed (Table 9.8)

| Text | Traditional themes (%) | National themes (%) | Personal values (%) | Social values (%) | Political themes (%) | Global Values (%) |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Classic | 32.90 | 12.55 | 22.08 | 20.78 | 9.09 | 2.60 |
| Song | 0 | 7.23 | 38.55 | 49.40 | 4.82 | 0 |
| Rhyme | 2.13 | 2.13 | 34.04 | 58.51 | 3.19 | 0 |
| MOE(1997) | 0 | 5.26 | 47.37 | 40.00 | 6.32 | 1.05 |
| MOE(2002) | 1.11 | 13.33 | 25.56 | 45.56 | 4.44 | 10.00 |

Table 9.8: Values distribution of the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent moral curricula

Analysis of the most frequently mentioned sub-theme of personal values in the two new curricula indicates their similarity with the 3,4,5 literature (Table 9.9). MOE (1997) has the same frequently mentioned sub-theme (i.e. “Civilized behaviour”, “Righteousness” and “Enthusiasm for learning”) with the *New Three Character Classic* and *Four Character Song*. MOE (2002c) has two out of three sub-themes (i.e. “Righteousness” and “Enthusiasm for learning”) in common with each of the three publications in the 3,4,5 literature.

| Personal Values/number of occurrences (percentage) | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> (N:51) | <i>Four Character Song</i> (N:32) | <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> (N:32) | MOE(1997) (N:45) | MOE(2002) (N:23) |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Civilized behaviour | 10(19.61%) | 6(18.75%) | | 7(15.56) | |
| Righteousness | 12(23.53%) | 6(18.75%) | | 8(17.78) | 4(17.39) |
| Self | | 9(28.13%) | 10(31.25%) | 7(15.56) | 7(30.43) |
| Simplicity | | | 6(18.75%) | | |
| Enthusiasm for learning | 10(19.61%) | | 6(18.75%) | 7(15.56) | 3(13.04) |

Table 9.9: The most frequently mentioned personal values in the 3,4,5 literature and subsequent moral education curricula

Table 9.10 shows the most frequently mentioned sub-theme of social values. It also reveals the close relationship between the two new curricula and the 3,4,5 literature. Both curricula have two sub-themes in common with the *New Three Character Classic* and *Four Character Song*.

The analysis clearly shows the close association between the newly developed curricula and the 3,4,5 literature, especially the *New Three Character Classic* and *Four Character Song*. Values embedded in the new curricula are mainly Confucian teaching such as the concept of “righteousness”. The 3,4,5 literature can be regarded as a pilot for the recent reform in moral education curricula. As mentioned, the government was very cautious in dealing with ideopolitical-moral education. The new moral education curricula was introduced only after the 3,4,5 literature was proved to be successful in attracting students’ interest and free from political risk associated with the inclusion of the Confucian teaching in ideopolitical-moral education. On the other hand, the *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* are significant in piloting the introduction of personal and social values, though these two texts were less popular than the *New Three Character Classic*.

| Social Values/ number of occurrences (percentage) | <i>New Three Character Classic</i> (N:48) | <i>Four Character Song</i> (N:41) | <i>Five Character Rhyme</i> (N:55) | MOE(1997) (N:38) | MOE(2002) (N:41) |
|--|--|--|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Filial piety | 11(22.92%) | | 4(7.27%) | 5(13.16) | 3(7.3) |
| Familial love | | | 26(47.27%) | | |
| Family education | | | 12(21.82%) | | |
| Family equality | | | 4(7.27%) | | |
| Environmental protection | | 12(29.27%) | | | 3(7.3) |
| Concern for the society | 6(12.5%) | | | | 13(31.70) |
| Unity | 9(18.75%) | 8(19.51%) | | 12(31.58) | 11(26.83) |
| Law-abiding | | 8(19.51%) | | 5(13.16) | 3(7.3) |

**Table 9.10: The most frequently mentioned social values in the 3,4,5 literature
and subsequent moral education curricula**

9.8 Significance of the 3,4,5 case

9.8.1 *Fang* in ideopolitical-moral education

The 3,4,5 case is evidence of a *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education throughout the period of deepening economic reform under study. The *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education was illustrated by the de-politicization in para-government moral texts analyzed and the decentralization in moral education policies and practice.

Firstly, the low percentage of political themes contained in the 3,4,5 literature and other versions of *New Three Character Classic* is evidence of a de-politicization in para-government moral texts. In contrast, traditional and national themes were upheld under the banner of “nationalistic (patriotic) education”. Historical figures were quoted to advocate traditional Chinese (Confucian) ethic in all versions of *New Three Character Classic*. The *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* concentrated on personal and social values. It is worth noting that ideological

terminology such as “communism” and “socialism” was abandoned by the government in order to fit the students’ psychological development (Author A). The trend of de-politicization was particularly apparent when compared with previous reiteration of ideological and political elements in ideopolitical-moral education shortly after the 1989 student demonstrations.

Socialist values are clearly not core values in ideopolitical-moral education, though it was still under the control of the government. De-politicization was even clearer in subsequent moral texts such as the *Guangdong Maxims* and more recently introduced moral curricula. All these documents contain predominantly personal and social values. Documentary analysis also revealed that “moral education” had expanded from “ideology-political-moral” education to “ideology-political-moral-psychological health” in the period of strengthening economic reform, signalling the reduction in political weight on “moral education.”

Secondly, the publication of the 3,4,5 literature signified a decentralisation of moral education and official recognition of regional contribution to moral education, in a region where economic activities were most intense but perhaps also most ‘spiritually polluted’. The 3,4,5 movement thus marks a turn to a “bottom up” from its previously “top-down” flow of ideopolitical-moral education. Besides, the outstanding sales of the *New Three Character Classic* triggered emulations with different content areas in other provinces including capital Beijing and cosmopolitan Shanghai. This was perhaps the first time an influential moral text generated in the south was copied by the north. With the establishment of the PRC, ideopolitical-moral education was centralized. Provincial governments had to follow Beijing’s top-down approach to ideopolitical-moral education. The 3,4,5 movement shows the changes in the

top-down and north-south flow of ideopolitical-moral education.

The publication of different versions of the *Three Character Classic* also illustrates “regional flexibility”, a kind of decentralization in ideopolitical-moral education. Regional governments enjoyed great autonomy in the publication of moral education texts, including the recruitment of authors, organization of work, selection of content and ways of expression, in accordance with specific characteristics and needs of respective regions.

The 3,4,5 case further illustrates the openness and willingness of regional government to address the problems of moral decline in the process of marketization and inadequacies of orthodox socialist moral education in the force of a bold drive for reform. Regional governments are playing increasingly important roles in formulating moral education policy in China. The development of the 3,4,5 literature from Guangdong further illustrates regionalisation and particularly the influence from the South to the central government in ideopolitical-moral education. The 3,4,5 case shows the increasing regionalization on moral education development in China under the impact of marketisation.

The rising regionalization indicated in the 3,4,5 case shed some light on the state-province relationship in regard to ideopolitical-moral education in the mid-1990s. Fewsmith (2001) argues that since 1989 the central government has been losing control over the provinces.⁵⁶⁵ The 3,4,5 movement clearly shows that the central government had not lost its control over the provinces even though the sub-nation

⁵⁶⁵ Fewsmith, J. (2001) *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.83.

regions were granted a high degree of autonomy in the planning and implementation of ideopolitical-moral programs. Despite having state-province tensions in dealing with rampant corruption and distribution of resources, Guangdong has kept harmonious relationships with the central government and followed close behind the national policy on ideopolitical-moral education. Ideopolitical-moral education was clearly not a centre of struggle between the state and province.

The publication of the 3,4,5 literature and its subsequent documents is also evidence of the implementation of “student-centred” and “relevant” ideopolitical-moral education with “innovation” and “diversity in methods”. These changes indicate the openness and flexibility of the government in ideopolitical-moral education. Regional governments, intellectuals, teachers and even the public had played their parts in ideopolitical-moral education. It should be noted that the role of students (the public) was not limited to recipient of ideopolitical-moral education. In contrast, their needs and expectations played a significant role in the policy making in ideopolitical-moral education.

Ideopolitical-moral education in China had long been characterized by *shou* and *fang* cycles. As a matter of fact, the *shou* and *fang* oscillations were still visible in the period of economic reform and opening up.⁵⁶⁶ Nonetheless, recent ideopolitical-moral education was characterized by (1) fewer *shou* and *fang* oscillations; (2) *fang* rather than *shou* as marketization deepened in the recent decade.

The change can be partly explained by the reduction of conflicts within the party

⁵⁶⁶ Lee, W.O. (2001) Moral Education Policy in China: The Struggle between Liberal and Traditional Approach, in M. Bray and W. O. Lee (Eds.) *Education and Political Transition: Themes and Experiences in East Asia*, Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, pp.201-219.

leadership. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the shifts in the party's line in political control were closely related to conflicts in the party's leadership. The 1989 student demonstrations also revealed this kind of oscillation. It seemed that China's political succession has been successfully institutionalized since the succession of Jiang Zemin.⁵⁶⁷ The smooth power transition helped create the country's political stability and reduce oscillations in national policy.

The increasing *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education in marketized China is also related to changes in political elite. In Mao's period, the PRC was ruled by communist revolutionary veterans. Thus, their hardship and bonding experience in establishing the PRC and their ideology became a legitimate basis for their rule. Nevertheless, revolutionary veterans were replaced by technocrats to carry out the economic reform in Deng's period. When Jiang came to power, technocratic leaders were better educated and more technocratic⁵⁶⁸ but with no revolutionary experience. They had to seek and consolidate their legitimacy through economic success.⁵⁶⁹ The shifting focus of the political elites from ideology to economic success enhanced *fang* in ideopolitical-moral education.

9.8.2 Moral education as soft power

The 3,4,5 literature contained a high percentage of traditional Confucian ethics and it was propagated with great energy by the provincial government. The high-sounding emergence of traditional Confucian ethics in the official discourse puzzled many writers (Zhou 2003).⁵⁷⁰ In fact, traditional Confucian ethics were not only

⁵⁶⁷ Zheng, Y.N. (2000) The Politics of Power Succession in Post-Deng China, *Asian Journal of Political Sciences*, 8(1) (June 2000), p.27.

⁵⁶⁸ Fewsmith, J. (2002) Generational Transition in China, *The Washington Quarterly*, (2002 Autumn), 25(4) p.23.

⁵⁶⁹ Li, C. (2002) Jiang Zemin's Successors: The Rise of the Fourth Generation of Leaders in the PRC, in F.N. Pieke (Ed.) *People's Republic of China* (Volume II), Aldershot, England: Ashgate, p.203.

⁵⁷⁰ Zhou, Z.P. (2003) Geming gele sishinian yiye huido wusi qian: xinsanzijing duhou [Returning to

emphasized in the 3,4,5 literature but also in all other versions of *New Three Character Classic*, as well as subsequent para-government moral texts, and newly developed moral curricula.

The upholding of traditional Confucian ethics in recent ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC can be explained by the concept of “soft-power” invented by Nye Jr. in a book entitled *Bound to Lead* in 1991⁵⁷¹. Nye Jr. differentiated the concept of “soft power” from “hard power”. The latter refers to “military power and economic powers” which can be used to get others to change their position by “inducement (“carrots”)” or “threat” (“sticks”). The former, also called “the second face of power”, referring to “intangible power resources” such as “attractive culture, political values, and institutions and politics that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority” which gets others to want the outcomes that you want.⁵⁷²

Nye Jr. (2004) further explains the importance of “soft-power” in politics,

Soft (co-optive) power is just as hard command power. If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow. If it can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to have to change....(p.77)⁵⁷³

Gabriel et al. maintain the importance of public support for a political system. The

the May Fourth at one night from forty-year revolution: After Reading the *New Three Character Classic*, in Z.P. Zhou (Ed.) *Jindai renwu yu sichao [Modern Figures and Trends of Thought]*, Taipei: Sanmin, pp.332-4.

⁵⁷¹ Nye, Jr. J. S. (1991) *Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power*, New York: Basic Books.

⁵⁷² Nye Jr., J.S. (2004) *Power in the Global Information Age: from Realism to Globalization*, London and New York: Routledge, p.5.

⁵⁷³ Nye Jr., J.S. (2004) *Power in the Global Information Age: from Realism to Globalization*, London and New York: Routledge, p.77.

lack of public support may erode the foundations of a political system.⁵⁷⁴ In the Maoist period, the CCP secured public support by communist ideals. People were mobilized by political slogans or campaigns. Party leaders were revolutionary idols for the young. Communist ideals could be regarded as the early “soft-power” employed by the CCP alongside its centralized, vertical and hierarchical rule. The Cultural Revolution was the climax of the pursuit of such revolutionary ideals.

Nevertheless, the worshipping of party leaders and pursuit of revolutionary ideals disappeared following the end of the Cultural Revolution. Communism was no longer a common faith for the people, especially the new generation, as shown by the so-called “Shekou Storm” (Chapter 3). In addition, the CCP government was plagued with corruption. Its revolutionary ideals seemed to have been lost in the economic reform. The CCP had to resort to alternative strategies in order to maintain its rule.

To many China watchers, resorting to old methods and ideas simply indicates the leadership’s inability to see beyond its ideological and cultural barriers.⁵⁷⁵ Nevertheless, emphases on Confucian teaching such as self-cultivation, well-being of the family and the society, and social harmony could help in maintaining political and social order and legitimacy of the current leadership. The CCP leadership has been routinely reissuing the policy of “stability above everything” [*wending yadao yiqie*], that is, “maintaining political and social stability is the uppermost task for all party and governmental bodies,” since the 1989 student demonstrations.⁵⁷⁶ The upholding

⁵⁷⁴ Gabriel A et al. (2006) *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, New York: Pearson/Longman, p.46.

⁵⁷⁵ Ogden, S. (1995) *China’s Unresolved Issues: Politics, Development, and Culture*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, p.3.

⁵⁷⁶ Ding, X. L. (2002) The Challenges of Managing a Huge Society under Rapid Transformation, in J. Wong and Y.N. Zheng (Eds.) *China’s Post-Jiang Succession: Problems and Perspectives*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, p.204.

of traditional Confucian ethics can thus facilitate building social cohesion in view of rising economic and social pluralism led by economic reform.

As Nye Jr. (2004) pointed out, attractive culture, political values, and institutions and politics and so forth are all “intangible power resources” for “soft power”. The government was aware on one hand of the power of cultural bonding of traditional values in the public and on the other hand the decline of the market value and legitimizing force of socialist values (political values). Traditional Confucian ethics were upheld as an alternative resource for “soft power” to secure public support, and maintain political and social order. The 3,4,5 case expands Nye Jr.’s (2004) observation by showing the interchangeable nature of sources of “soft-power” and the flexibility in the government’s practice in its rulings in accordance with changing economic, social or political circumstances.

“Soft” sources of power are becoming more important in not only local administration but also world politics today. Nye Jr. (2004) contends that “the universalism of a country’s culture and its ability to establish a set of favourable rules and institutional that govern areas of international are critical sources of power.”⁵⁷⁷

Confucianism maintains “grand unity” in the whole world by saying that “all within the four seas are brothers” (The *Analects*, 12:5).⁵⁷⁸ The *New Three Character Classic* also advocated the connection with overseas Chinese, by saying,

The dragon generation (Chinese), (*long chuan ren*)
spread overseas; (*bian hai wai*)

⁵⁷⁷ Nye Jr., J.S. (2004) *Power in the Global Information Age: from Realism to Globalization*, London and New York: Routledge, p.57.

⁵⁷⁸ Confucius (1992) *The Analects* (translated by Lau, D.C.), Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp.110-1.

Patriotic feeling, (*chi zi qing*)
will never change. (*zhong bu gai*) (lines 409-412).

The highlight of traditional and national themes in the *New Three Character Classic*, in addition to the upholding of traditional Confucian ethics in the 3,4,5 literature and other relevant moral rhymes, shows the positive attitude of the CCP government towards traditional Chinese culture, and help enhance its image among the Chinese all over the world. A collection of Chinese maxims in the *Guangdong Maxims*, a text subsequent to the 3,4,5 literature, further shows the government's utilization of traditional Chinese ethics in current moral education work. These all helped the government to build up moral authority through Confucianism besides its invitation to modern neo-Confucians in China, sponsorship of research projects related to Confucian studies, organization of international conferences on Confucianism, and celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Confucius.

Confucian values have their binding power in Asian nations and societies of the Chinese. The positive attitude of the CCP government to a certain extent helped create favourable conditions for its linkage to other Chinese societies and promoted its legitimacy through the moral authority of Confucianism. The 3,4,5 case thus illustrates the formation of "soft" sources of power for expanding the PRC's influences to "international" Chinese societies alongside its own growing economy (hard power).

9.8.3 A sign of democratization

Democracy in China is always a concern in the West. Lieberthal (2004) poses a challenging suggestion: why has the Chinese population not been given the

opportunity to develop regular means of political participation?⁵⁷⁹ The 3,4,5 movement nevertheless illustrates some signs of democratization in tightly-controlled ideopolitical-moral education, which had long been regarded as a means of ideological control that only involved government officials in formulating policy, implementing programmes, and producing materials. Though policy formulation and publication of the 3,4,5 literature were still in the hands of the government officials, the invitation to academics to join editorial boards and the public in consultation panels shows signs of public participation in a government-controlled business and signalled democratization of moral education. Though the selection criteria for membership of editorial boards and consultation panels were not really transparent, the government was clearly not the sole policy maker in the process of the 3,4,5 movement.

The informants told the researcher that the educated and teachers played an active role in the editorial process of the 3,4,5 literature. In addition, parents, teachers and even students were invited to consultation panels on the 3,4,5 literature. Their comments were taken seriously by the editorial board. Some drafts were revised and even abandoned because of criticisms in the process of consultation. Grassroots participation in the formulating of a government-led moral education movement revealed a breakthrough of democratic social participation within a solid political structure. The public participation in ideopolitical-moral education work shows the greater openness of the government as China became increasingly pluralist.

In addition, the concern for personal moral quality in the 3,4,5 literature alongside

⁵⁷⁹ Lieberthal, K. (2004). *Governing China: from revolution through reform*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, p.xvi.

with the growing emphasis on psychological health, democracy and legal education and world outlook in ideopolitical-moral education identified in government directives and more recently moral education curricula is sufficient evidence of the efforts of the government to lead the country to further integrate into the international world.

As the government emphasizes political stability, it is cautious about making any change in political structure that might have an impact on its legitimacy. However, there are some signs of democratization in China such as elections in rural areas. There are also signs of liberalization with the implementation of marketization and a free economy. People are now enjoying more personal freedom in their daily life than before. They can travel abroad comparatively freely. Their children can also be sent to study abroad.

The Western and Chinese ideas of democracy are not always the same. In the West, it generally implies one person: one vote. In China it (presumably) means working for the public good. The liberal signs in the government's emphases in ideopolitical-moral education also illustrate how China is walking along the track of democratization.

9.8.4 Interplay of moral education with economic, social and political changes

In the last decade, China experienced rapid changes in technology, personal lifestyle, and global environment that had never occurred before. There were initiated by the economic reform and opening up programme in 1978. The society was concerned about money worshipping, moral decline and spoiled single children. The 3,4,5 literature offered an official response to rapid social transformation in the process of

marketization and the retreating communist power, accompanied by the opening of China to the outside world and rampant corruption.

It is worth noting that the social and political transformations are all the results of economic liberalization brought by the economic reform and opening up programme. Guangdong province experienced the “negative” effects of the reforms and thus produced the 3,4,5 literature. The borrowing of traditional Confucian ethics in the literature to shape social behaviour was an official compromise to intellectuals and the public while the market for socialist values was decreasing.

On the other hand, economic reform and opening up in China attracted not only Western capital but also western culture to come. In response to the “negative” impacts of Western cultures, the government launched a campaign of patriotic education. Under the banner of patriotic (nationalistic) education, the *New Three Character Classic* appealed for traditional themes to block Western influences and shore up the legitimacy of the CCP government. The 3,4,5 movement spread from Guangdong to other northern provinces as the influence of the economic reform spread northwards.

As the market economy became stronger, the Chinese society became increasingly globalised and the students could get access to information from electronic media. Hence, moral education could no longer be achieved by any single moral text. Instead, an even more student-centred approach was needed to arouse students’ attention. The fall of the 3,4,5 movement was clearly related to economic, social and political development.

China became increasingly pluralistic and open to the rest of the world in the late 1990s. The government repeatedly appealed for “innovation”, “diversity in teaching methods”, “student-centred” and “relevant” ideopolitical-moral education in its directives in the late 1990s, in response to changing economic, social and political circumstances. While stressing its rule of the country not only by morality but also by law, the government emphasized the importance of legal education in popularizing knowledge of law, duties and rights (CCP, 1996). Ideopolitical-moral education in China is currently characterized by the concern for psychological health, democracy and legal education. Among these themes, democratic education is a point of global concern. Though the calls for democratic education are little more than lip service, concern for democracy is nevertheless important in the context of ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC.

The content analysis of the subsequent moral texts and recently developed moral curricula shows the current official emphasis on personal and social values. There are also apparent changes in teaching methodologies for moral education such as the emphasis on folklore sources but less reliance on heroic models.

The 3,4,5 case clearly illustrates how China responded to the inevitable interaction between ideopolitical-moral education and changing economic, social and political circumstances. It also shows the impacts of economic liberalization on ideopolitical-moral education. Sigel (1970) argues that political socialization is closely associated with rapid political change which brought about the disruption of old social patterns, ideological orientations and economic conditions⁵⁸⁰ (Figure 9.4).

⁵⁸⁰ Sigel, R. (1970) Learning Political Values, in E.S. Greenberg. (Ed.) *Political Socialization*, New York: Atherton Press, pp.20-1.

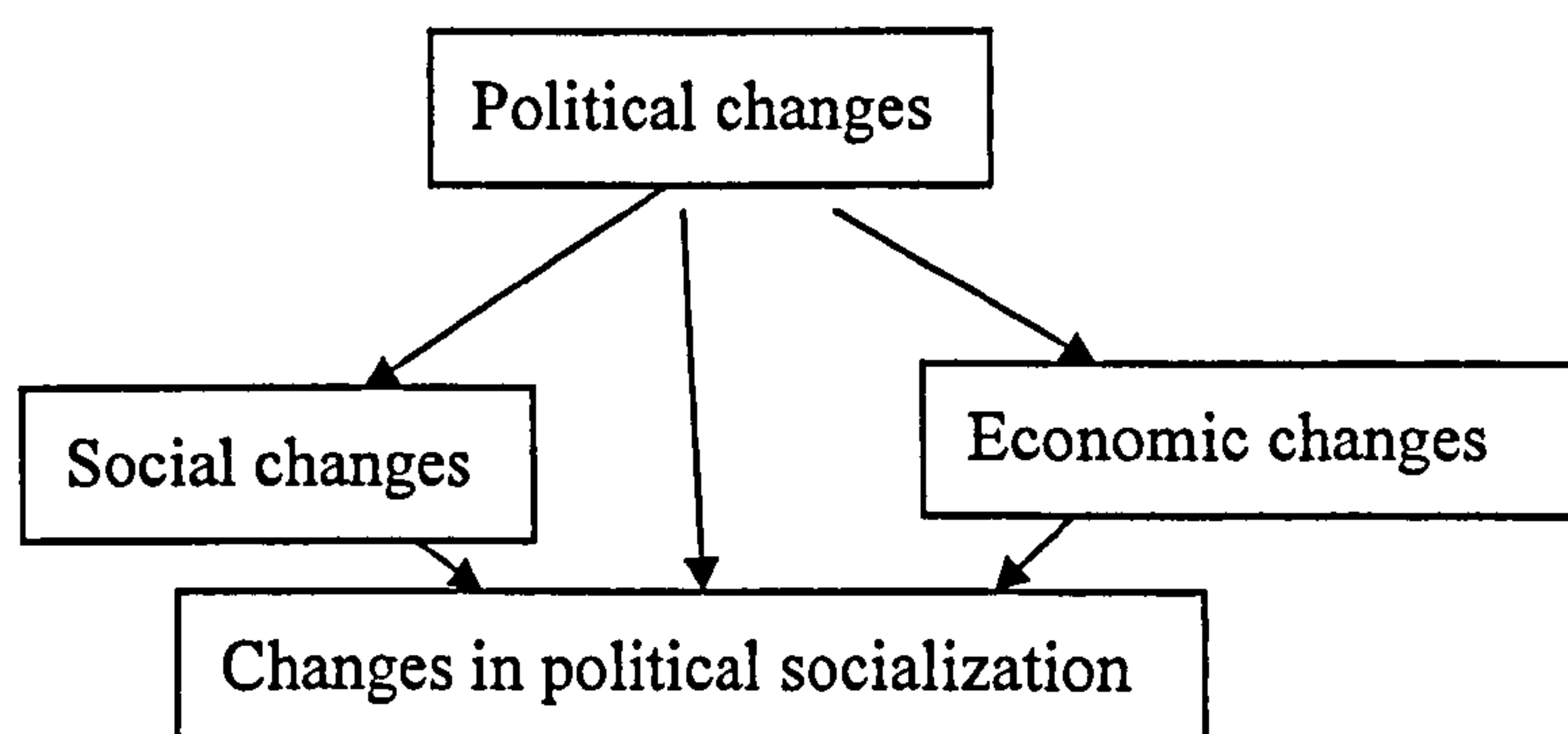


Figure 9.4: Changes of political socialization initiated by political changes (Sigel, 1970)

The 3,4,5 case nonetheless shows an alternative path for changes in political socialization. The publication of the 3,4,5 literature by Guangdong provincial government aimed to reduce such social problems as moral deregulation, money worshipping and spoiled single children, indifferent interpersonal relationship, and so forth. At the same time, the publication upheld traditional themes to boost national patriotism in response to the declining authority of socialist values. Seemingly the publication of the 3,4,5 literature was led by changing social conditions and political situations caused by the economic liberalization that started with the introduction of economic reform and opening up in 1978. The government made political compromise (such as decentralization) in response to changing social conditions brought by economic changes, though no apparent political change was introduced.

The case of the 3,4,5 movement shows that changes in political socialization can be initiated by economic change rather than political change (Figure 9.5):

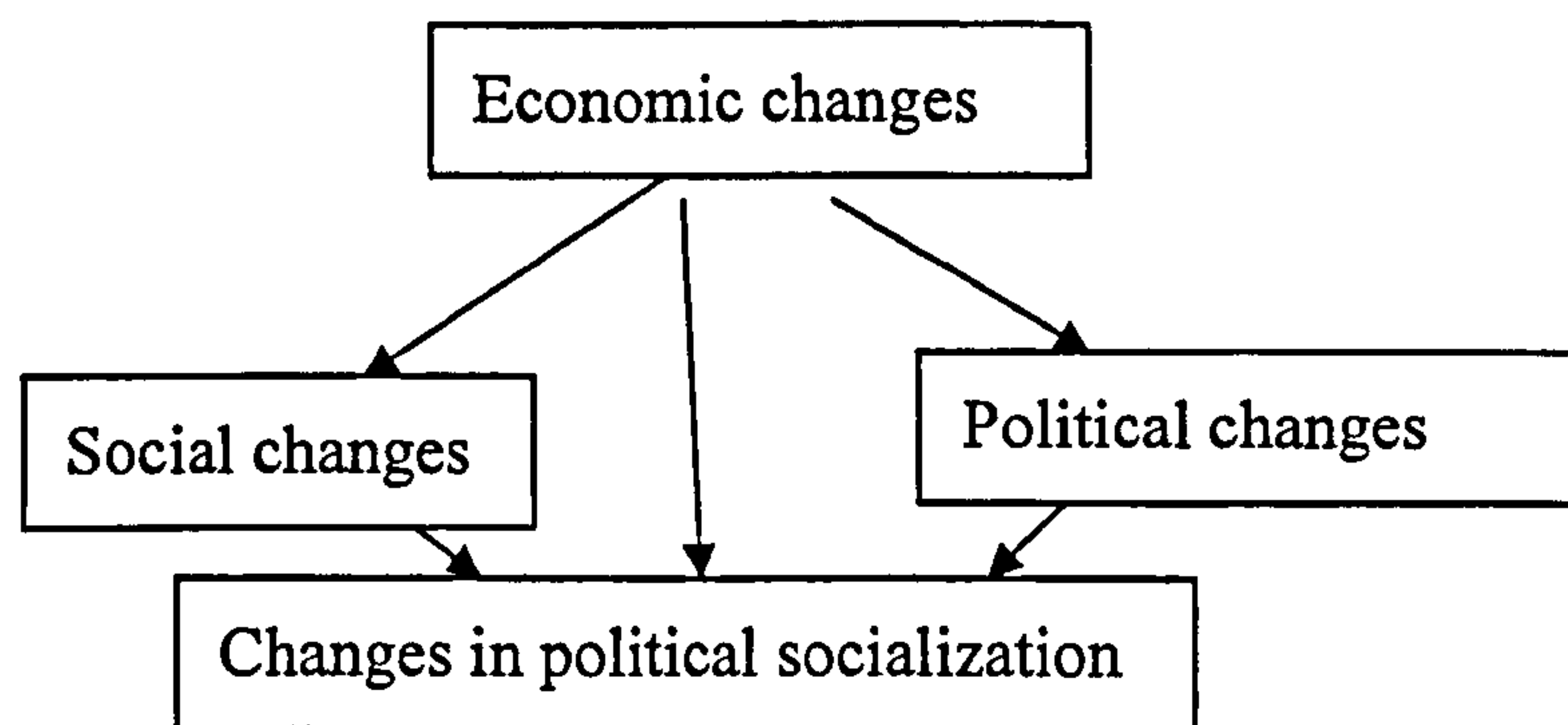


Figure 9.5: Changes of political socialization initiated by economic changes (the 3,4,5 case)

The 3,4,5 case shows the power of the economy in affecting governance process and shaping political socialization in the modern globalised world. As Saich (2000) points out, “China wishes to derive the macroeconomic benefits of globalization, but it is uncomfortable with the costs of social, political, and cultural readjustment.”⁵⁸¹

This study further demonstrates the readjustment of the Chinese government in ideopolitical-moral education in face of rapid social transition and dysfunctional political control mechanisms led by economic liberalization. Chinese culture and Western values were officially denounced in the Maoist period. Nonetheless, selected Chinese culture (such as “filial piety”) and selected Western values (such as “democracy”) were introduced to ideopolitical-moral education while the market values of socialist values decreased (Figure 9.6).

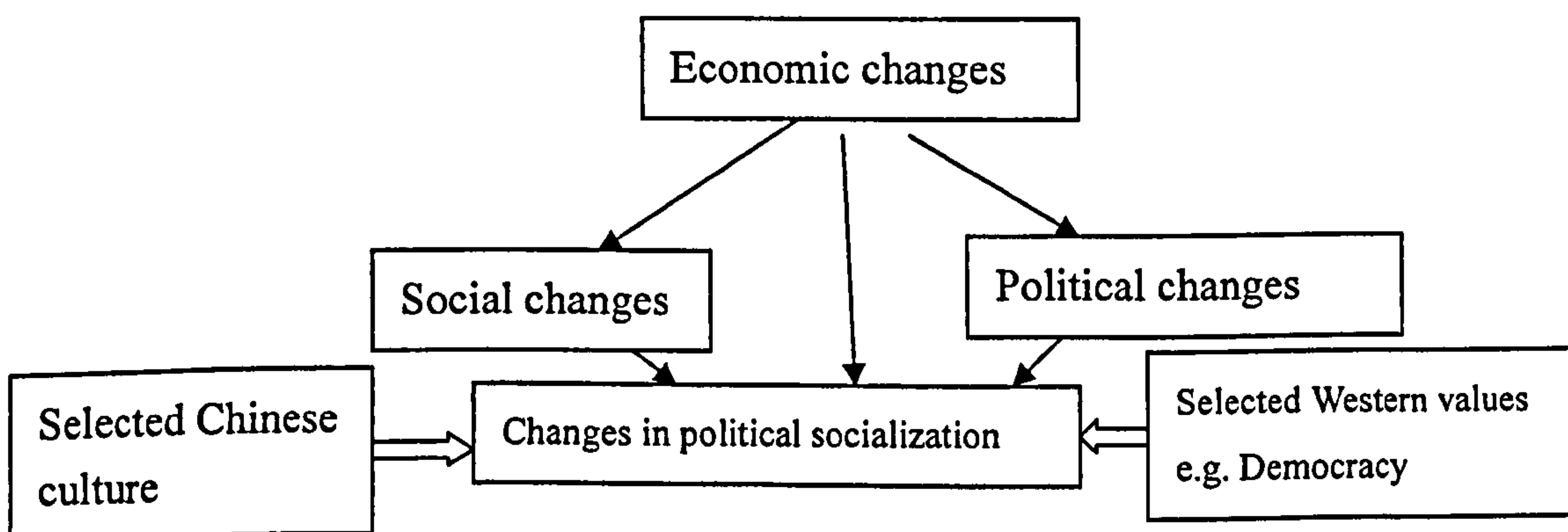


Figure 9.6: New political-cultural context in ideopolitical-moral education

⁵⁸¹ Saich, T. (2000) Globalization, Governance and the Authoritarian State: China, in J.S. Nye Jr., and J.D. Donahue, (Eds.) *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Washington, D.C.: Brooking Institution Press, p.209.

9.8.5 Moral education in the post-communist regime

Nationalism became a major international issue in the wake of the fall of communism in 1989.⁵⁸² Many writers noticed a rise of nationalism in many post-communist societies in the early 1990s.⁵⁸³ Kliucharev and Muckle reported a rise of patriotism signalled by a re-emergence of the love of heritage, traditional religion, language and literature and so forth in Russia.⁵⁸⁴

The PRC is the only remaining communist superpower. But many writers like Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro depict a growing nationalism in China following the collapse of communism. They further predict that increasing economic strength will take China along a course intended to dominate Asia and bring it into conflict with the United States.⁵⁸⁵

Zhao (2000) suggests that the CCP government used nationalism as “an instrument to block western influences and shore up its waning legitimacy in the post-Tiananmen era.”⁵⁸⁶ Zhao’s suggestion is supported by the *New Three Character Classic* which upheld traditional and national themes to foster national pride among readers. Nonetheless the *New Three Character Classic* also aimed to foster such values as “righteousness” and “enthusiasm for learning” in view of the rising problems of

⁵⁸² Delanty, G. and O’Mahony, P. (2002) *Nationalism and Social Theory: Modernity and the Recalcitrance of Nation*. London: Sage Publications, p.xiii.

⁵⁸³ Zhao, S.S. (2000) “We are Patriots First and Democrats Second”: The Rise of Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s, in E. Friedman, and B.L. McCromick, (Eds.) *What if China doesn’t democratize? Implications for War and Peace*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, p.21; Leshchenko, N. (2004) A fine instrument: two nation-building strategies in post-Soviet Belarus, *Nations and Nationalism*, 10(3), pp.333-352.

⁵⁸⁴ Kliucharev, G. and Muckle, J. (2005) Ethical values in Russian education today: a moral maze, *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(4), p.475.

⁵⁸⁵ Fewsmith, J. (2001) *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.2.

⁵⁸⁶ Zhao, S.S. (2000) “We are Patriots First and Democrats Second”: The Rise of Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s, in E. Friedman, and B.L. McCromick, (Eds.) *What if China doesn’t democratize? Implications for War and Peace*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, p.23.

money worshipping and spoiled (single) children. “Nationalistic (patriotic) education” was also closely associated with a common perception of moral decline in the society.

The 3,4,5 case thus reveals the temporal limit to nationalistic education in a post-communist regime like China. Nationalism gradually waned in official discourse in the late 1990s. It was replaced by the emphasis on personal and social values.

Zhao (2000) attributed the decline of nationalism in China to its “double-edged sword” nature as it would hinder China from stepping into the international world⁵⁸⁷. It is true that strident nationalism could lead to instability which would adversely affect the communist legitimacy. The government has thus been careful to set limits to the ramifications of a strident nationalism that might challenge its own position. For example, the government initially supported the anti-US demonstrations in May 1999 but quickly stopped them once they began to criticize the ineptitude of the government’s response.⁵⁸⁸

However, the decline of nationalism in official discourse is also related to the recent economic and social development in China. China has more actively participated in international organizations in the late 1990s, signalled by the entry into the WTO. All these events have boosted national pride among the public. Saich (2000) adds that the current Chinese leadership’s legitimacy to rule is tied to its capacity to develop its economic strength.⁵⁸⁹ Apparently, the common concern in China is economic growth

⁵⁸⁷ Zhao, S.S. (2000) “We are Patriots First and Democrats Second”: The Rise of Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s, in E. Friedman, and B.L. McCromick, (Eds.) *What if China doesn’t democratize? Implications for War and Peace*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, p.41.

⁵⁸⁸ Saich, T. (2004) *Governance and Politics of China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.308.

⁵⁸⁹ Saich, T. (2000) Globalization, Governance and the Authoritarian State: China, in J.S. Nye Jr., and J.D. Donahue, (Eds.) *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, p.211.

but not revolutionary ideals.

Ideopolitical-moral education in China is indeed moving away from the Soviet model of ideological education, as demonstrated by the development from the *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students* to the *New Three Character Classic*, and to the *Guangdong Maxims*. According to Kant, maxims are rules, but subjective rules which proceed from the understanding of man. Kant calls for the formation of character through maxims as the child “should learn to act according to ‘maxims,’ the reasonableness of which he is able to see for himself”.⁵⁹⁰ The collection of Chinese maxims in the *Guangdong Maxims* thus demonstrates the government’s efforts to attain a balance between freedoms and obedience which Kant suggested.

Nevertheless, the government is still cultivating officially endorsed values among the public through “student-centred” ideopolitical-moral education. There is still distance from moral education in the western democracies which is concerned with the moral development of an individual rather than passing on a set of values to the individual.

Between the pendulum of the Soviet ideological education and Western democratic education, ideopolitical-moral education in China looks increasingly like the character education (*renge jiaoyu*)⁵⁹¹ which has recently been advocated in the USA, and other Western democracies. There are two similarities between character education and recent ideopolitical-moral education in China. First, both educations are closely related to a perception of crisis. As the informants pointed out, recent ideopolitical-moral education in China signalled by the publication of the 3,4,5

⁵⁹⁰ Kant, E. (1992) *Education* (translated by Churton, A.), London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., pp.83-5.

⁵⁹¹ Character Education was also called *pinge jiaoyu* in Chinese.

literature emerged from a perception of moral deregulation, money worshipping and the problem of single spoiled children. Character education is closely associated with a worry about youth problem in the United States.

Second, both educations focus on virtue. Recent ideopolitical-moral education in China is concerned with traditional Confucian ethics, including personal and social values. Character education aims to guide the young toward more appropriate behaviours with “core values”. As Davies et al. notice, character education embraces all of moral education, and also non-moral aspects such as civic or cultural qualities.⁵⁹² Seemingly, traditional Confucian ethics are included as “core values” suggested by Lickona.⁵⁹³ There is in fact a notable surge of literature in China to discuss characteristics of character education, its significance in education, and implementation in China (Cui 2006, Yan and Xue 2006, Ma 2006),⁵⁹⁴ showing increasing concern for character education in the academic field of China.

9.8.6 Set texts in ideopolitical-moral education

Apple and Christian-Smith point out that school texts are the results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises, and are published within the political and economic constraints of market, resources, and power.⁵⁹⁵ The 3,4,5 case illustrates the influences of economic, social and political factors in the

⁵⁹² Davis I, Gorard, S. and McGuinn, N. (2005) Citizenship Education and Character Education: Similarities and Contrasts, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 59(3) (September 2005), p.342.

⁵⁹³ Hunt, T. and Mullins, M.M. (2005) *Moral Education in America's Schools: The Continuing Challenge*, Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Publishing, pp. 190-1; Lickona, T. (1991) *Educating for character: how our schools can teach respect and responsibility*, New York: Bantam.

⁵⁹⁴ Cui, B. (2006) zhongmei qingshaonian rege jiaoyu lishi bijiao [A historical comparison of Character Education in China and the USA], *Theory and Practice of Education*, 26(3), pp.28-30; Yan, H.Y. and Xue, Y.P. (2006) jiaqiang rege jiaoyu cujin xuesheng quanmian fazhan [Strengthening Character Education, Enhance Students' All-round Development], *Studies in Ideological Education*, 7(133), pp.41-2; Ma, D.N. (2006) qiantan jiaqiang dangdai daxuesheng rege jiaoyu zhi tujing [Ways to strengthen Character Education among Chinese College Students], *Journal of Weinan Teachers College*, 21(3), pp.89-90.

⁵⁹⁵ Apple, M.W. and Christian-Smith, L.K. (1991) (Eds.) *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York and London: Routledge, pp.1-2.

production of para-government texts. The 3,4,5 case further shows that set texts were also a result of the compromise between political, economic, cultural powers as explicated by the previous discussions.

Set texts share some characteristics of school textbooks. They are also value-laden. Nonetheless, set texts enjoy greater flexibility than school textbooks. Our teacher informants reported that the 3,4,5 literature was taught in schools on a voluntary basis. As the literature does not inform teachers how to teach and the government did not issue any directive in regard to the teaching of the 3,4,5 literature, classroom teaching of the literature was flexible. Some teachers invited the students to recite the rhymes while others read the stories embedded in the literature. Some organized class activities for the teaching while others designed a new teaching kit with the text. The majority of our teacher informants regarded the text as a supplementary teaching material to formal Ideology and Moral Character classes. Teachers widely accepted the text for its ability to arouse students' interests. The teachers' usage of the text largely depended on students' response. If students' response to the literature was positive, they taught more, and vice versa. When the literature became unattractive to the students, teachers adopted other teaching materials.

Set texts were not restricted by the curriculum. The government (provider) was also flexible in issuing set texts in accordance with specific political, social, economic and educational needs. The 3,4,5 case proved the capacity of set texts to contribute to curriculum reform. The unique characteristics of set texts in China are worth noting. They represent a form of ideopolitical-moral education that is more or less related to the legitimacy of the government. They constitute a more sensitive instrument to reflect government's response to changing political, social and economic

circumstances than school textbooks. Previous values studies have concentrated on textbooks. The 3,4,5 case nevertheless shows that set text can be treated as an alternative base for future values studies.

9.8.7 Rhyme literature in moral education for the young and the old

The 3,4,5 case demonstrates the significance of rhyme literature in moral education. Rhyme literature has a long history in China but it can still attract students' interest and popularize moral education today.

As the students and even adults enjoyed reciting rhymes, and playing with words, rhyme literature is widely regarded as an instrument to secularize political socialization. The 3,4,5 case shows the wide application of rhyme literature from moral education to other areas such as literature, and philosophy, from the government to grassroots. It is deep rooted in Chinese culture and is never likely to die out. This is evidence that even if the slogan has died, the spirit is still there.

Most previous studies of political socialization of Chinese children took "story" as their base of research. Nevertheless, the 3,4,5 case clearly shows that rhyme literature can also be a useful genre for political socialization for its easy-memorized verse. It can tell a story or explain an idea with precise words. Rhyme literature can be considered as an alternative source for future values studies.

9.8.8 Research methodology Review

This study once again indicates the role of government documents in the investigation of official emphases and their shifts in ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC. The application of thematic analysis illustrates the subjectivity of the changes.

In addition, the effectiveness of the method of content analysis in identifying shifts in value orientation is also demonstrated by the analyses of the 3,4,5 literature, previous literature and subsequent literature. The methodology of content analysis is found to be useful in investigating the values embedded in the para-government documents like the 3,4,5 literature and other related documents.

Thirdly, the research methodology in the interviews helped the informants to recall their experience in participation in an activity even after a period of time. Another point of concern is that the interviews in this study illustrate that ideopolitical-moral education is no longer a sensitive topic in the PRC. The informants participated in the interviews without pressure.

9.9 Conclusion

This study introduces a government-initiated reform in ideopolitical-moral education, a topic which is crucial to the legitimacy of the CCP. The production of the 3,4,5 literature indicated the effort of the provincial government to popularize orthodox ideopolitical-moral education with fewer political themes but more traditional themes, national themes, personal values and social values. It indicates a shift in values orientation and implementation strategies for ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC. It suggests that moral education in China is looking back to the nation's tradition but marching forwards towards the world.

In the 1990s, the Chinese were in search of new morality to fill a moral vacuum created by the rise of "moral deregulation." The publication of the 3,4,5 literature was widely regarded as a "breakthrough" in moral education in China. The interviews suggest that it also reflected the recognition by the government and the intellectuals of

moral degeneration, youth problems and a spiritual vacuum.

The discussion chapter deals with the content of the 3,4,5 literature and its rise and fall in the context of the interplay of the social and political development of China in the recent decade. The relationship between the 3,4,5 literature and the national policy and practice in ideopolitical-moral education has been shown. The case of the 3,4,5 literature not only indicates political, social and economic changes in the period of economic reform and opening up but also demonstrates how Guangdong acts as laboratory of China's moral education reforms as well as her economic reform. The discussion also concerns the possible directions of values studies, particularly with Chinese subjects, with reference to the findings of this study.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

*When spring has warmed the stream, ducks are the first to know. (Su Shi)*⁵⁹⁶

The ducks know the coming of the spring by the warmth of the stream. This study attempts to play the role of duck in the poem, i.e. to detect changes in ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC from the surprising spread of “*New Three Character Classic Heat*” in the recent decade (a period of strengthening economic reform).

Ideopolitical-moral education in China has been closely associated with ideology and politics since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. The government created “new socialist men” and maintained its legitimacy through ideopolitical-moral education. Nonetheless, this study identifies the emergence of some salient changes in ideopolitical-moral education since the adoption of economic reform and the opening up programme in 1978 through a case study of the 3,4,5 literature, a moral education text in Guangdong province, a focal point of recent economic reform and the opening up of China.

The *New Three Character Classic* upheld traditional and national themes to foster patriotic sentiment among students. The *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* mark the turning of ideopolitical-moral education to the education of moral qualities with a high percentage of personal and social values in a period of strengthening economic reform.

⁵⁹⁶ <http://spaces.huash.com/bbs/archiver/tid-121595.html> [Accessed 6 January, 2007]

The changes in political and ideological orientations are closely related to the economic, social and political changes. The *New Three Character Classic* signalled the climax of the patriotism movement in the aftermath of the 1989 students' demonstrations. Traditional themes were advocated to boost patriotic sentiments among the students. In addition, the text also aimed to solve the problems of moral decline, money worshipping, and spoiled single children with personal and social values. The subsequent *Four Character Song* and *Five Character Rhyme* emerged at a time when nationalism was gradually less mentioned in official discourse. These two publications emerged from a perception of declining social and family ethics.

The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature seemed to be closely related to the decreased authority of socialist values and inadequacy of orthodox socialist moral education. While the market value of socialist values decreased, traditional Confucian ethics were reinvented to secularize moral education among the public, especially young children. In addition, the old poetic genre of the *Three Character Classic* was borrowed to popularize moral education among the public.

The 3,4,5 literature was generated in Guangdong, a SEZ in southern China, and soon created a national moral education movement signalled by tens of hundreds of replication and emulations in the country, including cosmopolitan Shanghai and capital Beijing. The 3,4,5 movement is a moral education reform which took Guangdong, a region with the highest economic intensity but the lowest political sensitivity as a testing base after successful economic reform. The bold reform of the 3,4,5 literature aroused heated national discussion on ideopolitical-moral education. Guangdong played a major role in the recent economic reform and opening up in China. In the case of the 3,4,5 literature, the role of Guangdong as a laboratory to test

various reform policies and the political limits of such reform policies was once again demonstrated. This is another “one-step ahead” for Guangdong province in the recent reforms of China. This study provides evidence of the decentralization and regionalization of ideopolitical-moral education. It also shows the advantage of localization of moral education in responding to local needs arising from rapid marketisation, which might be a solution to Daun’s (2002) worry on the limitations of national bureaucracy.⁵⁹⁷

The 3,4,5 literature also played a pioneering role in ideopolitical-moral curriculum reform in which personal and social values were advocated. It is found that both the subsequent para-government literature that emerged in Guangdong province and the newly developed moral education curriculum focus on the cultivation of moral qualities and individual well-being as illustrated by the high percentage of personal and social values. The stress on moral qualities in recent ideopolitical-moral education is apparently related to the increasing opening of China.

The deepening of marketization required that China had more frequent contact with outside world. China’s entry to the WTO in 2001 indicated her greater integration with the international world. Rapid advances in internet world also played a role in widening the horizon of the Chinese youth. As China became increasingly open through the process of marketization, some new themes emerged in the government agenda for ideopolitical-moral education, including education for democracy and law education, duties and rights, psychological health and moral qualities; all focus on the significance of individual well being in the society. The addition of these themes into

⁵⁹⁷ Daun, H. (Ed.) (2002) *Educational Restructuring in the Context of Globalization and National Policy*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, p.xvi.

ideopolitical-moral education fits the increasing needs of a fast changing society at a time of economic reform and opening up policy, leading to integration with the international world.

In addition, this study shows a clear trend for moral education to be dissociated with politics and ideology, with the shift of ideopolitical-moral education in China from idealism to pragmatism, from state-centred to student-centred, from politically-oriented to culturally-oriented in a stage of rapid marketization. It also demonstrates professionalism of ideopolitical-moral education in face of changing economic, social and political circumstances through the introduction of “innovation” and “diversity in teaching methods” in “student-centred” and “relevant” ideopolitical-moral education in the late 1990s. The emergence of the 3,4,5 literature also signals a secularization of ideopolitical-moral education in the PRC which aimed at responding to actual needs of the public rather than creating revolutionary successors.

The production of the 3,4,5 literature revealed a de-politicization of ideopolitical-moral education from its previous to its subsequent literature. Political and ideological elements were gradually removed from ideopolitical-moral education whilst ‘morality’ became the major element. Ideopolitical-moral education in China is moving away from the Soviet model of ideological education. The importance of political themes has been increasingly replaced by personal and social values. “Ideopolitical-moral education” has been redefined as “moral education”, which is closer to the “character education” which has recently been debated in Western democracies. In addition, the subsequent *Guangdong Maxims* shows a fading of heroic models but a rise of maxims in ideopolitical-moral education. It indicates the

turning of ideopolitical-moral education from creating new socialist men to striving for the balance of freedoms and obedience which was suggested by Kant.

Sigel suggested that changes in political socialization were led by the changes in political system.⁵⁹⁸ Nonetheless, this study outlines an alternative path of development of political socialization by illustrating the impacts of the economy on political socialization. The opening up and economic reform programme implemented in 1978 liberalized economic activities and also led to changes in ideological orientations and social conditions which in turn affected the policy making and implementation of ideopolitical-moral education. Although China still claims herself to be a socialist regime, her political socialization has been changed with economic liberalization. The findings further hint at the increasing impact of the economy on politics and government in an increasingly globalised world.

This study clearly shows the capacity of traditional Confucian ethics in unifying the public in the current Chinese society. The re-introduction of traditional Chinese ethics to moral education on the one hand illustrates the failure of totalitarian socialist moral education but on the other hand indicates the inability of official attempts to change human character by political measures. This study supports Smith's suggestion on the power of cultural heritage such as historical memories in ethnic building.⁵⁹⁹ It further expands Nye Jr.'s concept of soft-power⁶⁰⁰ by illustrating the significance of soft-power in the governance of post-communist regime likes China as the market values of socialist values decreased. If the government can make good use of

⁵⁹⁸ Sigel, R. (1970) Learning Political Values, in E.S. Greenberg. (Ed.) *Political Socialization*, New York: Atherton Press, pp.20-1.

⁵⁹⁹ Spencer, P. and Wollman, H. (2002) *Nationalism: a critical introduction*, London: SAGE Publications, p.67.

⁶⁰⁰ Nye Jr., J.S. (2004) *Power in the Global Information Age: from Realism to Globalization*, London and New York: Routledge.

soft-power, like traditional ethics in China, it can boost its legitimacy and also moral authority (leadership) in the international world.

Many writers have noticed the rise of nationalism in post-communist regimes. This study on one hand supports the rise of nationalism in the PRC signalled by the emergence of the *New Three Character Classic* in the mid-1990s (after the Tiananmen demonstrations in China and the collapse of the Soviet bloc) but on the other hand reveals the temporal limitations to nationalistic education. Soft-power is more favourable for China's integration into the international world than nationalism which stressed the greatness or humiliation of the motherland.

This study also shows some signs of political liberalization signalled by decentralization of moral education, and mass participation in the policy making process in economic free-areas like Guangdong. Although China still claims to be a socialist regime and the progress of democracy is always questioned by the West, the production of the 3,4,5 literature showed some signs of democratization.

In regard to value studies, this study supplements previous studies of Chinese textbooks by showing changing officially-endorsed values and government policies in ideopolitical-moral education with a study of set-texts. Set-text can be a more flexible instrument for the government to respond to ever-changing economic, social and political needs. It will play a more significant role in ideopolitical-moral education as China develops at an even faster pace and becomes increasingly globalised. It can also be used in future studies as a sensitive barometer to detect socio-economic and political impacts on moral education in China.

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APPENDIX 1

Cover of the *New Three Character Classic*

[Editorial Committee of the *New Three Character Classic* (Ed.) (1995) *Xin Sanzijing* (*The New Three Character Classic*), Guangdong: Guangdong Education Press.]



APPENDIX 2

Cover of the *Four Character Song*

[Editorial Committee of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics* (Ed.) (1996)
Shehui Gongde Sizige (*The Four Character Song of Social Ethics*), Guangdong:
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APPENDIX 3

Cover of the *Five Character Rhyme*

[Editorial Committee of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics* (Ed.) (1996)
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APPENDIX 4

Data base for Content Analysis

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APPENDIX 5

Instrument for Content Analysis

| Theme/values | Categories |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Political themes | CCP structure |
| | CCP priorities |
| | CCP ideology |
| | CCP slogans |
| | CCP leaders |
| | CCP models |
| | PRC achievement |
| Personal Values | Benevolence |
| | Civilized behaviour |
| | Hygiene |
| | Righteousness |
| | Simplicity |
| | Self |
| | Diligence |
| | Enthusiasm for learning |
| Social Values | Filial Piety |
| | Familial love |
| | Familial equality |
| | Familial responsibility |
| | Family education |
| | Occupational ethics |
| | Take good care of public property |
| | Environmental protection |
| | Concern for the society |
| | Devotion |
| | Unity |
| | Law-abiding |
| | |
| Traditional themes | Historical figures |
| | Historical achievements |
| | Historical events |
| National theme | Geography |
| | Nationhood |
| | Patriotism |
| Global Values | Concern for the world |

APPENDIX 6

Data base for Documentary Analysis

1. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee (1996) Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang shehui zhuyi jingshen wenming jianshe ruogan zhongyao wenti di jueyi [*Resolution on Some Important Issues related to Strengthening the Construction of Socialist Spiritual Civilization*], 10 October (ratified in the sixth plenum of the 14th Central Committee), http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/video/2004-11/29/content_2273313.htm [Accessed 16 January 2006].
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6. People's Republic of China Ministry of Education (PRCMOE) (1998) *Guanyu putong gaodeng xuexiao 'liangke' kecheng shezhi de guiding jiqi shishi gongzuo de yijian* [*Notice of Opinions in Relation to Two Lessons Curriculum Regulations and Implementation*], <http://www.moe.edu.cn/edoas/website18/info4278.htm>, [Accessed 12 October 2005].
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school], 17 October, <http://www.edu.cn/20041118/3120755.shtml> [Accessed 16 January 2006].

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9. People's Republic of China State Education Commission (PRCSEC) (1991a) Guojia jiaowei guanyu banfa xiaoxuesheng richang xingwei guifan di tongzhi [Notice on the promulgation of *Daily Codes of Behaviour for Primary School Students*], 20 August, in Department of Educational Foundation, State Education Commission (Eds.) *The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* [zhongxiaoxue deyu gongzuo wenjianzilio bidu], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.114-7.
10. People's Republic of China State Education Commission (PRCSEC) (1991b) Guojia jiaowei guanyu banfa zhongxiaoxue jiaqiang jindai xiandaishi ji guoqing jiaoyu di zongti gangyao (chugao) di tongzhi [Notice on the promulgation of the overall outline of strengthening education of history of contemporary China, modern China, and China condition], 27 August, in Department of Educational Foundation, State Education Commission (Eds.) *The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* [zhongxiaoxue deyu gongzuo wenjianzilio bidu], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.124-126.
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aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu di tongzhi [*Notice on the Making Use of Excellent Films for the National Patriotic Education in Primary and Secondary Schools*], 12 September, in Department of Educational Foundation, State Education Commission (Eds.) *The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* [zhongxiaoxue deyu gongzuo wenjianzilioa bidu], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.159-166.

15. People's Republic of China State Education Commission (PRCSEC) (1994) Guojia jiaowei guanyu guanche aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu shishi gangyao di tongzhi [*Notice on the Promulgation of the Outline on the Implementation of Education in Patriotism*], 23 August, in Department of Educational Foundation, State Education Commission (Eds.) *The Essential Document Information of Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* [zhongxiaoxue deyu gongzuo wenjianzilioa bidu], Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, pp.140-151.
16. People's Republic of China State Education Commission (PRCSEC) (1995a) Zhongxue deyu dagang [Outline of moral education in secondary school] (Revised edn.), 27 February, in China Education Yearbook Editorial Board (ed.) *Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian 1996* [China education yearbook 1996], Beijing: People's Education Press, pp.891-898.
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APPENDIX 7

Interview questions for different categories of interviewees**(A) Interview questions for moral educators/ professors:****1. "Life history"**

- a) What you think about the developments in ideopolitical-moral education since China opened to the outside world?
- b) Can these developments match the needs of the society? In what ways?
- c) Some people say that nowadays social conduct (*shehuifengqi*) is bad. Do you agree with this? Why?
- d) Some people say that nowadays moral standards are deteriorating. Do you agree with this? Why?
- e) Some people say that marketization is one of the reasons for "bad" social conduct? Do you agree with this? Why?
- f) Are you aware of the series of the 3,4,5 literature?

2. 3,4,5 experience

- g) Some people regard the writing of the 3,4,5 literature in the 90s as a successful campaign in ideopolitical-moral education. Do you agree? Why? In what aspect(s)?
- h) Why was the 3,4,5 literature successful/unsuccessful?
- i) What is the relationship of the 3,4,5 literature to ideopolitical-moral education?
- j) How does the 3,4,5 literature compare to the central moral education textbooks?
- k) Why do you think the 3,4,5 literature was written?
- l) What are the focus messages of the 3,4,5 literature?
- m) Who were their targeted readers?
- n) To what government documents or directives do the 3,4,5 literature echo?
- o) How do you think the central government responded to these documents? Were they tolerated or encouraged?
- p) Are you aware of another version of the *New Three Character Classic*, e.g. Beijing version? What is the difference between different versions?

3. 3,4,5 reflection

- q) What are the most impressive things you can think of in relation to these documents?
- r) As a scholar, how do you evaluate these documents from the perspectives of ideopolitical-moral education?
- s) Do you think teaching materials on ideopolitical-moral education similar to the 3,4,5 literature will appear again in China in future? Why?

(B) Interview questions for teacher informants (primary school teachers/secondary teachers):

1. "Life history"

- a) Have you taught ideopolitical-moral education in school? If yes, how long have you taught this subject? How do you teach this subject?
- b) What materials have you always used in teaching ideopolitical-moral education? Do you use teaching materials stipulated by schools? Can you use other teaching materials? Is there any stipulated teaching material in ideopolitical-moral education?
- c) Are you aware of the 3,4,5 literature series?

2. 3,4,5 experience

- d) Some people regard the writing of the 3,4,5 literature in the 90s as a successful campaign in ideopolitical-moral education. Do you agree? Why? In what aspect(s)?
- e) Why was the 3,4,5 literature successful/unsuccessful?
- f) Have you used the 3,4,5 literature in schools? When and how?
- g) In what way can the 3,4,5 literature help you in classroom teaching?
- h) What are the focus messages of the 3,4,5 literature?
- i) Do you and your students enjoy reading the 3,4,5 literature?
- j) As a teacher, how do you think these documents compared with the central moral education textbooks and teaching materials?
- k) In school, who makes the decision on the adoption of moral education teaching materials?
- l) What do you think are the reasons for the adoption/non-adoption of the 3,4,5 literature in your own school?

3. 3,4,5 reflection

- m) What are the most impressive things you can think of in relation to these documents?
- n) As a teacher, how do you evaluate these documents from the perspectives of ideopolitical-moral education?
- o) Do you think teaching materials on ideopolitical-moral education similar to 3,4,5 literature will appear again in China in future? Why?

(c) Interview questions for authors of the 3,4,5 literature:

1. "Life history"

- a) What do you think about the developments of ideopolitical-moral education since China opened to the outside world?
- b) Can these developments match the need of the society? In what ways?

- c) Some people say that nowadays social conduct (*shehui Fengqi*) is bad. Do you agree with this? Why?
- d) Some people say that nowadays moral standards are deteriorating. Do you agree with this? Why?
- e) Some people say that marketization is one of the reasons for “bad” social conduct? Do you agree with this? Why?
- f) Are you aware of the 3,4,5 literature series?

2. 3,4,5 experience

- g) Some people regard the writing of the 3,4,5 literature in the 90s as a successful campaign in ideopolitical-moral education. Do you agree? Why? In what aspect(s)?
- h) Why was the 3,4,5 literature successful/unsuccessful?
- i) Why was there an initiative to write the 3,4,5 literature?
- j) What was the objective of writing the 3,4,5 literature?
- k) Can you tell us something about the process of writing the 3,4,5 literature?
- l) Who invited you to participate the writing of the 3,4,5 literature? [publishers? Cadres (for ideopolitical-moral education)?]
- m) When deciding to accept the invitation, what were you thinking of?
- n) What is the composition of the writing team? How many interests do they represent?
- o) Why did the 3,4,5 literature adopt the format of the *Three Character Classic*? Was it a good choice? Why?
- p) Who were your targeted readers?
- q) When you were writing the 3,4,5 literature, what values/messages did you want to instil on the readers?
- r) Did you refer to any government documents or directives in writing the 3,4,5 literature?
- s) Are you aware of another version of the *New Three Character Classic*, e.g. Beijing version? What is the difference between different versions?
- t) Since the publication of the documents, have you been approached by any people who responded to the documents in either positive or negative way?

3. 3,4,5 reflection

- u) What are the most memorable things you can think of in relation to these documents?
- v) As a writer, how do you evaluate these documents from the perspectives of ideopolitical-moral education?
- w) Do you think the writing of teaching materials on ideopolitical-moral education similar to 3,4,5 literature will appear again in China in future? Why?

(D) Interview questions for policy makers of ideopolitical-moral education**1. "Life history"**

- a) What you think about the developments of ideopolitical-moral education since China opened to the outside world?
- b) Can these developments match the need of the society? In what ways?
- c) Some people say that nowadays social conduct (*shehuifengqi*) is bad. Do you agree with this? Why?
- d) Some people say that nowadays moral standards are deteriorating. Do you agree with this? Why?
- e) Some people say that marketization is one of the reasons for "bad" social conduct? Do you agree with this? Why?
- f) Are you aware of the 3,4,5 literature series?

2. 3,4,5 experience

- g) Some people regard the writing of the 3,4,5 literature in the 90s as a successful campaign in ideopolitical-moral education. Do you agree? Why? In what aspect(s)?
- h) Why was the 3,4,5 literature successful/unsuccessful?
- i) Why was there an initiative to write the 3,4,5 literature?
- j) Was there any change in policy i.e. education policy, moral education policy, government policy regarding economic or political development, that relates to the emergence of the 3,4,5 literature?
- k) What do you think are the focus messages of the 3,4,5 literature?
- l) How does the 3,4,5 literature compare with the central moral education textbooks?
- m) Who were their targeted readers?
- n) What was the composition of the writing team? How many interests did they represent? What was the government "role" in forming the writing team?
- o) Has there been any consultation process before the writing of the 3,4,5 literature?
- p) Why did the 3,4,5 literature adopt the format of the *Three Character Classic*?
- q) What values/messages did you want to instil in the readers through the writing of the 3,4,5 literature?
- r) Did the writing team refer to any government documents or directives in writing the 3,4,5 literature?
- s) **How do you think the central government responded to these documents? Were they tolerated or encouraged?**
- t) What was the relationship between the local and central government in the development of moral education teaching materials?
- u) Are you aware of another version of the *New Three Character Classic*, e.g.

Beijing version? What is the difference between different versions?

- v) How did the 3,4,5 literature relate to the schools in the promotion and implementation of moral education?

3. 3,4,5 reflection

- w) As a policy maker, how do you evaluate these documents from the perspectives of ideopolitical-moral education?
- x) Do you think teaching materials on ideopolitical-moral education similar to the 3,4,5 literature will appear again in China in future? Why?

APPENDIX 8

Role models employed in three versions of *New Three Character Classics*

| Models | Guangdong version | Beijing version | Shanghai version |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Mencius's mother | X | X | |
| Yue Fei's mother | X | | X |
| Huang Xiang | X | X | X |
| Kong Rong | X | X | X |
| Su Qin | X | X | X |
| Zu Ti | X | | |
| Che Yin | X | X | X |
| Sun Kang | X | X | X |
| Liu Shaoqi | X | | |
| Zhou Enlai | X | X | |
| Zhu De | X | | |
| Lei Feng | X | X | X |
| Jiao Yulu | X | X | X |
| Guan Zhong | X | X | X |
| Bao Shuya | X | X | X |
| Sima Guang | X | X | X |
| Yang Zhen | X | X | |
| Su Wu | X | | X |
| Wei Zheng | X | | |
| Fan Zhongyan | X | X | X |
| Bao Zheng | X | | X |
| Yue Fei | X | X | |
| Wen Tianxiang | X | X | X |
| Qi Jiguang | X | X | X |
| Zheng Chenggong | X | X | X |
| Lin Zexu | X | X | X |
| Deng Shichang | X | | |
| Kang Youwei | X | | |
| Liang Qichao | X | | |
| Sun Yatxin | X | X | |
| Mao Zedong | X | X | |
| Deng Xiaoping | X | X | |
| Confucius | X | X | X |
| Mencius | X | X | |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| Laozi | X | X | |
| Zhuangzi | X | X | |
| Mozi | X | | |
| Han Feizi | X | | |
| Sun Wuzi | X | X | X |
| Qu Yuan | X | X | X |
| Sima Qian | X | X | X |
| Li Bai | X | X | |
| Du Fu | X | X | |
| Su Shi | X | X | X |
| Xin Qizhi | X | X | |
| Guan Hanqing | X | X | |
| Wang Shifu | X | X | |
| Lun Xun | X | | |
| Guo Moruo | X | X | |
| Shen Yanbing | X | | |
| Zhang Heng | X | X | X |
| Zu Chongzhi | X | | |
| Hua Tuo | X | | |
| Huang Daopo | X | | |
| Li Shizhen | X | X | X |
| Xu Xiake | X | X | |
| Hua Luogeng | X | X | |
| Sun Yefang | X | | |
| Qian Xuesen | X | X | |
| Li Siguang | X | X | |
| Tang Tai Zong | X | | X |

APPENDIX 9

Composition of the editorial board of the 3,4,5 literature

(1) The Editorial Board of the *New Three Character Classic*

| Post | Name | Title | Category |
|---------------|----------------|--|----------|
| Consultant | Huang Huahua | Vice-secretary of Guangdong province | Official |
| | Lu Zhonghe | Vice-secretary of Guangdong province | Official |
| | Yang Ziyuan | Cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| Chairman | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| Vice-chairman | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Xu Renzhi | President of Guangdong Education Bureau | Official |
| | Huang Tianji | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| Committee | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong provincial propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Xu Renzhi | President of Guangdong Education Bureau | Official |
| | Liu Sifen | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Liu Zhanxin | Cadre of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| | Zhang Chenggan | Experienced teacher | Teacher |
| | Li Jinquan | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| | Li Xihuai | Professor at South China Normal University* ¹ | Scholar |
| | Wu Qicheng | Professor at South China Normal University* ² | Scholar |
| | Yang Zhijian | Cadre of Guangdong Education Bureau | Official |
| | Xu Huanzhou | Scholar | Scholar |
| | Cao Sabin | Teacher | Teacher |

¹ See website <http://mail.tku.edu.tw/chingyao/TXT25.htm>

² See website <http://mail.tku.edu.tw/chingyao/TXT25.htm>

| | | | |
|--|--------------|--|----------|
| | Huang Tianji | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |

* information from website or other sources

(2) Composition of Editorial Board of the *New Three Character Classic* :

| Post | Officials(no./%) | Scholars(no./%) | Teachers(no./%) | Unknown(no./%) |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Consultant | 3(100%) | | | |
| Chairman | 2(100%) | | | |
| Vice-Chairman | 2(66.7%) | 1(33.3%) | | |
| Committee | 7(50%) | 5(35.7%) | 2(14.3%) | 0 |

(3)The Editorial Board of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*

| Post | Name | Title | Category |
|---------------|----------------|--|----------|
| Consultant | Huang Huahua | Vice-secretary of Guangdong province | Official |
| Chairman | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| Vice-chairman | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Huang Tianji | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| Committee | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Liu Zhanxin | Cadre of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| | Zhang Chenggan | Experienced teacher | Teacher |
| | Zhang Jianru | ??? | ??? |
| | Chen Hancai | Professor at South China Normal University | Scholar |
| | Li Zonggui | Cadre of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zheng Weiming | Professor at South China Normal University | Scholar |

| | | | |
|--|--------------|---|----------|
| | Gu Zuoyi | Cadre of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Xu Huanzhou | Teacher | Teacher |
| | Huang Tianji | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |

(4) Composition of Editorial Board of the *Four Character Song of Social Ethics*:

| Post | Officials(no./%) | Scholars(no./%) | Teachers(no./%) | Unknown(no./%) |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Consultant | 1(100%) | | | |
| Chairman | 2(100%) | | | |
| Vice-Chairman | 1(50%) | 1(50%) | | |
| Committee | 6(50%) | 3(25%) | 2(16.7%) | 1(8.3%) ³ |

(5) The Editorial Board of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*

| Post | Name | Title | Category |
|---------------|---------------|---|----------|
| Consultant | Huang Huahua | Vice-secretary of Guangdong province | Official |
| | Huang Qicao | Vice-chairman of Chinese Women Federation * ⁴ | Official |
| | Zhang Guoying | Vice-chairman of Chinese Women Federation | Official |
| Chairman | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| Vice-chairman | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Shi Shuhua | Chairman of Chinese Women Federation | Official |
| Committee | Yu Youjun | Director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Zhu Fan | Poet | Scholar |

³ According to author A, Zhang Jian-ru was either a teacher or university professor. He should not be an government official

⁴ See, website <http://202.112.118.50:916/web/FL/WY2/11-004.html>

| | | | |
|--|----------------|--|----------|
| | Chen Xiaojuan | ??? | ??? |
| | Shi Shuhua | Chairman of Chinese Women Federation | Official |
| | Zhang Hanqing | Top-ranked cadre in Guangdong province | Official |
| | Zhang Chenggan | Teacher | Teacher |
| | Lin Xianjian | Professor at Fo Shan Science and Technology College | Scholar |
| | Lin Weisu | Vice-chairman of Chinese Women Federation | Official |
| | Gu Zuoyi | Cadre of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Lan Hong | Vice-director of Guangdong propaganda bureau | Official |
| | Xiong Shaoyan | Vice-director of the Educational and Research Institute of Guangzhou | Scholar |
| | Cai He | Professor at Sun Yat-sen University | Scholar |
| | Li Qiang | ??? | ??? |

(6) Composition of Editorial Board of the *Five Character Rhyme of Family Ethics*

| Post | Officials(no./%) | Scholars(no./%) | Teachers(no./%) | Unknown(no./%) |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Consultant | 3(100%) | | | |
| Chairman | 2(100%) | | | |
| Vice-Chairman | 2(100%) | | | |
| Committee | 6(46.2%) | 4(30.8%) | 1(7.7%) | 2(15.4%) |

