Slogans, Symbols, and Legitimacy: The Case of Wang Jingwei's Nanjing Regime

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Wenguans ("Lettered Official"), Gongwuyuans ("Public Servant"), and Ganyuans ("Cadre"): The Politics of Labelling State Administrators in Republican China

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Introduction

Wang Jingwei (1883-1944) is a complex figure whose political career had many phases. All too frequently, however, scholars in China and Taiwan have contented themselves with reducing him to a caricature—an immoral traitor whose deeds and life should either be condemned or written out of the historical record altogether.¹ Not surprisingly, therefore, the efforts he and his supporters exerted to defend the establishment of their Nanjing regime of 1940-45 have seldom received serious consideration.² Wang had previously established a reputation as a savvy politician and a revolutionary patriot. He and his chief followers actually risked their lives to leave the wartime capital of Chongqing to cooperate with the invading Japanese. How did they rationalize their decision to side with Japan? How did they try to establish themselves politically when the wartime Chongqing government under Jiang Jieshi (1887-1975) was widely recognized as the only legitimate political order in China? Was the whole matter

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¹ Official yearbooks published by the Republic of China (Taiwan), for instance, simply pretend that there was no person named Wang Jingwei in modern Chinese history. He is not mentioned at all in the “History” section of The Republic of China Yearbook 1993 (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1993). In a monograph on Wang published in Taiwan in 1988, he is described in these words: “There are many treacherous and evil figures throughout Chinese history. However, a hanjian [traitor] as shameless as Wang—who regarded the enemy as kith and kin and who served the aggressors when they invaded [China] when the country was at her crucial moment of life and death—is totally unprecedented.” Wang Meizhen, Wang Jingwei zhuan [A biography of Wang Jingwei] (Taipei: Guoji wenhua shiyue youxian gongsi, 1988), inside front cover. In textbooks on modern Chinese history published in mainland China, Wang’s government is often referred to as a puppet regime (e.g., Wang wei zhengquan or kuilei zhengfu). See, for example, Zhongguo jindaishi, compiled by Beijing shifan daxue lishixi and Zhongguo xiandaishi jiaoyanshi (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1983), vol. 2, pp. 89-97, and another book of the same title compiled by five leading universities in China: Zhongguo jindaishi (Kaifeng: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1984), vol. 2, pp. 68-72.

² This situation is especially common in China and Taiwan. Credit should be given, however, to some Western scholars, such as Gerald E. Bunker, for their work on this subject. In this paper, I will analyze speeches, private diaries, and contemporary published materials. In addition to materials published before the fall of the Nanjing regime in 1945, I will use later published materials if they carry original speeches or writings produced by Wang and his supporters.
as black and white as it typically is presented in later historical works, especially those written by Chinese scholars? In this paper, I will investigate the rhetoric and inner logic of Wang and his followers’ efforts to legitimize their rule over areas occupied by Japanese forces.

Wang Jingwei was born in Guangdong province in 1883. At the age of twenty-one, he went to study in Japan as a government scholarship student. There he met Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). While in Japan, Wang supported Sun and gained popularity as a founder of the famous revolutionary body Zhongguo tongmenghui (Chinese revolutionary alliance) and as a major writer in Minbao, the official newspaper of the tongmenghui. In 1910, Wang was imprisoned after a failed attempt to assassinate the Manchu Regent in Beijing. He was released one month after the Wuchang uprising broke out in October 1911. Wang did not take an active role in politics until he joined Sun’s Guangdong military government in 1920. As one of Sun’s trusted protégés, Wang accompanied him to Beijing in 1924. When Sun was dying in March 1925, Wang was at his deathbed and was regarded as his favorite successor. On 1 July of the same year, Wang was elected Chairman of the Nationalist Government in Guangzhou. Without dependable military support, however, he eventually lost the leadership to Jiang Jieshi, then head of the Whampoa Military Academy.

With the fall of Nanjing to the Japanese in December 1937, Wang moved inland with the Nationalist government. Secret contacts between Wang and the Japanese began the next year, and in December he left Chongqing for Hanoi, where he issued the famous 29 December telegram (yandian) supporting Japan’s proposal for an immediate armistice. On New Year’s Day, 1939, Wang was expelled from the Chongqing government and sharply condemned. After numerous secret and open meetings with Japan and various “puppet” regimes set up by Japan in northern and central China, Wang’s own Nationalist

3. The assassination was planned to take place in early April 1910. However, Wang’s plan was discovered by the Qing authorities; he and his collaborators were arrested on 16 April and imprisoned on 1 May of the same year.

Government was formally established in Nanjing on 30 March 1940. In 1943, Wang’s health started to deteriorate. He was sent to Japan the next year to receive better medical treatment. On 10 November 1944—less than one year before the conclusion of the Pacific War—Wang died in Nagoya, Japan.

Almost all Chinese publications since the conclusion of the Second World War have portrayed Wang Jingwei in the same negative light. One of the few things that historians in mainland China and Taiwan agree about is that Wang is a hanjian who, when China was in the midst of a life or death crisis, shamelessly offered his services to the Japanese invaders.\(^5\) In light of the eventual defeat of Japan in 1945 and the resulting collapse of the Nanjing regime, almost all Chinese writers portray Wang’s defection as foolish as well as morally reprehensible.\(^6\)

**Five Key Terms**

The propagandists who defended Wang Jingwei’s regime tended to stress five terms. Three of these were brought together in a slogan: “Heping, fangong, jianguo” (peace, anticommunism, rebuilding the country).\(^7\) The other two were Guofu (the father of the

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5. The term “hanjian” is generally used by Chinese writers to refer to Chinese people who seek refuge with foreigners (especially those that invade China), who cooperate with them, and who, in so doing, betray the interests of the Chinese nation. According to a Qing dynasty (1644-1912) book, the term was first used in the Former Han dynasty (206BCE-24CE), when interactions between the Han court and northern nomadic peoples were frequent. See Luo Zhufeng, et al., eds., *Hanyu da cidian* [An expanded dictionary of the Chinese language] (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1990), vol. 6, p. 49.

6. Unless specified, “Nanjing regime” in this paper always refers to the Nationalist government established in Nanjing from 1940 to 1945 (headed by Wang Jingwei until November 1944, then by Chen Gongbo [1892-1946]). It does not refer to Nationalist governments from 1928 through 1937 and from 1945 through 1949, which also had their capitals at Nanjing.

7. From published versions of speeches made by Wang and other leading figures of the Nanjing regime, we see that heping and fangong were the two terms that Nanjing’s propaganda agencies transplanted directly from the slogan into daily publications. The third term, jianguo, was seldom used outside the slogan. Rather, the official term that was directly related to the modern political conception of state was *jiuguo* (saving the country), a term that had its own tradition in China since first direct contacts with the West occurred in the mid-nineteenth century.
country, that is, Sun Yat-sen\textsuperscript{8} and \textit{Zhongguo geming} (the Chinese Revolution). If the five terms are chronologically rearranged, we can see that \textit{jianguo/jinguo} (saving the country) and \textit{geming} (revolution) are the oldest in the list. These terms can be traced back to the late Qing period, when Wang himself made his political debut in the attempted assassination of the Manchu Regent. Next we have Sun Yat-sen, whose death in 1925 was followed by deliberate propaganda efforts by the Nationalist Party (Guomindang, GMD) and the 1928 Nanjing government to deify him as the founding father of the modern Chinese nation (Guofu). These hagiographic efforts transformed Sun into a powerful symbol; to identify one’s political cause with Sun (as the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] also tried to do via Song Qingling, Sun’s widow) was a strategy many groups and individuals used in their pursuit of political legitimacy in Republican China.\textsuperscript{9} This phenomenon helps to explain why both Wang and Jiang Jieshi fought to be seen as Sun’s only true political heir. Every question and concern about political legitimacy would be answered if one managed to establish oneself as the true political heir of the Guofu.

Fangong comes after Guofu in our list. In fact, anti-communist terms like \textit{taochi} (red suppression) and \textit{fanchi} (anti-red) had been used in newspapers and other publications in the late 1920s both inside and outside China by those who did not approve of the development of communism.\textsuperscript{10} Wang’s adoption of fangong can be seen as a continuation of this tradition. Heping falls at the end of the chronological order because it

\textsuperscript{8} The title Guofu was used to refer to Sun Yat-sen as soon as the Republic of China was established in 1912. On 1 April 1940, it was officially approved by the Chongqing Nationalist government.

\textsuperscript{9} Mary C. Wright, in the last chapter of her \textit{The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism}, discusses how the apotheosis of Sun Yat-sen was utilized by both the GMD and CCP in the 1920s, but with very different perspectives and purposes: “The Communist view of the alternatives before the Kuomintang late in 1926 was illustrated in a poster hung at the Peasants’ Association in a small town near Nanchang. On one side was a Confucian temple, on the other the ‘world park,’ featuring Marx, Lenin, and a vacant third position. In the center a man in Chinese Nationalist uniform was carrying the portrait of Sun Yat-sen toward the Confucian temple. The legend read: ‘Sun ought to be in the world park but Tai [Chi-t’ao] wants him in the Confucian temple‘.” Mary C. Wright, \textit{The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874} (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 304.

was not used until the full-scale Japanese invasion started in the summer of 1937.

Viewing Wang Jingwei’s efforts at self-legitimation from another angle, we can divide the five keywords in question into two categories. One group contains flexible and floating words and ideas, such as heping and fangong, which came into use as responses to specific political needs and which were used, at that time, by Wang alone. Because the Chongqing government was fighting against Japanese forces under the second united front with the CCP, it is understandable that they did not adopt these two terms in their propaganda. The other group contains words and ideas that are much firmer and older in the sense that they can be traced back to long-standing historical traditions in modern China. Guofu, geming, and jianguo/jiuguo fail into this category. Unlike words in the first group, these terms were not used in propaganda by Wang alone, nor did they come into being by reflecting any specific political issues of the late 1930s. They belonged to an older politico-ideological tradition in modern Chinese history and were used by both Wang’s Nanjing regime and the Chongqing government under Jiang Jieshi.

**Linking Wang Jingwei to the Guofu**

Wang Jingwei’s relationship with Sun Yat-sen began quite early. This relationship was something Wang’s followers emphasized in their attempts to legitimize his leadership of the Nationalist Party and of the country. In fact, upon the death of Sun in March 1925, Jiang Jieshi did not enjoy any advantage over Wang in the succession of Sun, despite what later publications by Nationalist scholars have suggested. Jiang was neither included in Sun’s entourage that went north nor appointed to take charge of things in the Guangzhou government, whereas Wang was among a trusted few that were selected to accompany Sun to Beijing.11 Wang was at Sun’s deathbed; he was the scribe who copied the famous final document that Sun dictated, which later became known as Sun’s will or Zongli’s Testament.12 Wang was elected Chairman of the Nationalist government on 1 July 1925 and, two days later, Chairman of the Military Committee. In theory, at least, he was in

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control of the Guangzhou Nationalist government. The political developments that followed, however, favored Jiang. With the military support of the Whampoa Military Academy, which he presided over, Jiang soon outmatched the charismatic but “unarmed” Wang. Even if, as Gerald Bunker claims, Wang was “undoubtedly the finest orator of his generation” as well as someone who caught people’s eyes as “a handsome, youthful, and impressive-looking man who dressed with consummate elegance and taste,” by the time massive Japanese invasions began in 1937, it was Jiang who had emerged as the leader of Sun’s party and the Chinese nation.

When the opportunity for Wang to reestablish himself in Nanjing finally came in the late 1930s, he and his followers wasted no time in challenging the supreme position of Jiang Jieshi. They reminded people of the past relationship between Sun and Wang, which in fact predated that between Sun and Jiang. In Republican China, solid links with the Guofu were a dependable source of political capital for politicians, and Wang did not miss this point. One sign of just how aware of it he was came on 28 August 1939 when, after obtaining clear approval from Japan on the issue of establishing a Nationalist regime in Nanjing under his leadership, Wang summoned the so-called “Sixth Guomindang Representative Congress” formally to bestow on him the power to organize a government. Matters related to Sun played a central role in the opening ceremony of the congress, as Inukai Ken (1896-1960)—the Japanese official who met with Gao Zongwu (b. 1906) in the series of secret meetings in Hong Kong and Shanghai that eventually led to the establishment of Wang’s regime and who served in it as an economic advisor—demonstrates in the following description:

In the front of the conference hall was a large portrait of Mr. Sun Wen [Sun Yat-sen] which was flanked by the “blue-sky white-sun red-earth” [qingtian baieri


14. Wang resigned from his public posts in December 1935 after being seriously hurt in an assassination attempt that took place in Nanjing on 1 November of the same year. On 29 February 1936, Wang left China for Europe and did not return until he heard about the Xi’an Incident of December 1936. One of the three bullets that remained in Wang’s body turned out to be a major factor leading to his death in 1944.
mandihong] national flag and the “blue-sky white-sun” [qingtian bairi] Nationalist Party flag. Under the portrait, many items collected in the summer were exhibited. In addition, various kinds of flowers were displayed. More beautiful flowers were put in bowls and arranged in the shape of Mr. Sun Wen’s appearance. The conference started at 10 o’clock in the morning. The hall was filled by low male voices singing Sun’s national anthem.  

Obviously, a strong link was suggested between Sun Yat-sen and Wang Jingwei’s new regime. But paying homage to Sun’s portrait and national anthem was by no means the end of Wang’s efforts to draw political authority from Sun. On 19 March 1940, just one day before Wang summoned the “Central Political Conference” to finalize the long preparation process of his government and eleven days before he was inaugurated, Wang and Zhou Fohai (1897-1948; a close collaborator of Wang’s and a central figure in the regime) visited Sun’s tomb in Nanjing’s Purple Mountain. The occasion was recorded in Zhou’s diary as a very sentimental one:  

On that day it was cold, windy, and rainy. On 20 November 1937, before we [Zhou and Wang] left Nanjing, we also came to visit this tomb. Now looking back on the intervening events, all seemed like a dream. Wang read Sun Yat-sen’s will and cried, tears running down. I wept too. After we visited the tomb, the sun came out. This looked to me like a good sign for a bright future.  

Ever since the 1929 relocation of Sun’s coffin from Beijing’s Biyun Temple to Nanjing, a visit to the most sacred shrine in Republican China became routine for politicians asserting their legitimacy. The timing of Wang’s visit—arranged to take place the day before the  


17. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. details the relocation of Sun Yat-sen’s tomb and its use by Nationalist leaders in an article titled “Mao’s Remains” in Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 251-89. In Wakeman’s words, Sun’s shrine in Nanjing was “a new sacred center for the Republican state: a sign of revolutionary authority that had to be acknowledged by all succeeding rulers [in China]” (p. 258).
“Central Political Conference”— was hardly a coincidence. Rather, it was designed to function as a suitable curtain-raiser for the coming Nanjing regime.

Wang’s attempts to draw political legitimacy from his relationship with Sun continued after his government had been inaugurated. In a formal party meeting held in December 1940 to review the first nine months of his rule, for example, Wang highlighted such political ideas of Sun’s as Sanmin zhuyi (three principles of the people) and xianzheng (constitutionalism) in a way that suggested his government was the only one interested in putting the Guofu’s political ideals into practice. In the meeting, shixian heping (realizing peace) and shishi xianzheng (implementing constitutionalism) were emphasized—two phrases that were later standardized in Nanjing’s official speeches. According to Wang, constitutionalism and peace could only be achieved through realizing Sun Yat-sen’s Sanmin zhuyi:

Based on Minzu zhuyi [nationalism] and Da Yzhou zhuyi [pan-Asianism], we should cooperate with other friendly states of East Asia [Japan and regions occupied by Japan]. Based on Minquan zhuyi [democracy], we should adopt constitutionalism. Based on Minsheng zhuyi [the people’s livelihood], we should solve minsheng [economic and social] problems of the people and revive the national economy. ¹⁸

But was this Sanmin zhuyi the Sanmin zhuyi of Sun Yat-sen? Apparently, significant modifications, such as pan-Asianism, had been added by Wang Jingwei to suit his own political agenda. What we see here, as in many other cases, is Wang reinterpreting Sun’s ideas rather freely, then applying them to contemporary socio-political conditions. The qingxiang (purging the countryside of communism) program of 1941 is one of the best examples of how this was done.¹⁹ In a speech given on 1 September 1940, Wang

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¹⁹. In order to strengthen its control over occupied areas, Japan, in early 1941, proposed the qingxiang program, which would be started from regions in the lower course of the Yangtze River. In response to this proposal, the Nanjing regime set up the Qingxiang weiyuanhui (Committee on the qingxiang program), which was chaired by Wang Jingwei himself. Both Zhou Fohai and Chen Gongbo entered the committee as vice-chairmen, and Li Shiquan (1905-
explained to his audience that the ultimate goal of the qingxiang program was to "build a model of constructing Sanmin zhuyi." In early 1942, the Japanese convinced the Nanjing regime to make its main rallying cry "supporting Japan to win the holy Great East Asia war," but before that time references to carry out Sanmin zhuyi were used by the regime’s propagandists to justify all of Wang’s political actions.

Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 without being able to see a constitutional China. When Wang Jingwei reestablished himself in Nanjing, the realization of constitutionalism became, at least in theory, one of the most important goals of the new regime. Besides aiming at drawing legitimacy from Sun, the emphasis on constitutionalism served a secondary purpose as an indirect attack on Jiang Jieshi’s wartime government at Chongqing. Even before he escaped from Chongqing, Wang had been regarded as a major critic of Jiang’s efforts to concentrate all power in himself. It is hardly surprising that, once outside Jiang’s dominance, Wang tried to contrast his “constitutional” government to Jiang’s “dictatorship” in Chongqing. His intention was to differentiate between the two regimes as sharply as possible, so that the people were left with the image of a Nanjing government striving for peace and constitutionalism and a Chongqing autocracy stubbornly refusing to end a devastating war against Japan.

The following quotation, from a biography published in Nanjing by Wang Jingwei’s supporters not long after his death, summarizes the kind of relationship between Wang and the Guofu the Nanjing regime tried to construct:

Chairman Wang was the only man in China who followed and realized Sun Yat-sen’s will. Wang, who was loyal to Sanmin zhuyi, devoted his whole life to [the

43), head of the Nanjing regime’s secret service (tesu), joined as the secretary. The program was started in July 1941, and Wang claimed that purged areas would become “heping fangong jianguo mofang” (model areas of peace, anti-communism, and rebuilding the country). See Chen Xulu and Li Huaxing, eds., Zhongguo Minguoshi cidian [A dictionary of the history of the Republic of China] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 445-46.


21. For first-hand materials on xianzheng, see Lin Bosheng’s Wang xiansheng shengping fendou shi [A biography of Mr. Wang: A history of struggles] (Nanjing, n.d.). This is a photoreproduction of a hand-copy book with no publication information. The book is currently located in the Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.
Chinese] revolution. He enjoyed a long relationship with Sun and contributed very much to political construction [zhengzhi jianshe] in China. Internally, Wang stuck to the Guofu’s will and tried his best to materialize Sanmin zhuyi. Externally, Wang secured China’s independence and freedom by keeping his promises to Japan. Chairman Wang was the only leader of the Chinese revolution who succeeded the Guofu.22

One indication of just how important the author considered Wang’s relationship with Sun Yat-sen is that birth and death dates are recorded in a very special way in this biography. Unlike the usual practice of using two four-digit Common Era dates or the two-digit era name (Minguo), the biography calculates the birth and death of Wang by taking those of Sun’s as a basis: “The Chairman [Wang Jingwei] was born seventeen years after the Guofu was born. He died nineteen years after the Guofu passed away.”23 The message to the audience cannot be made clearer: Wang should be perceived through his links with Sun Yat-sen.

The Nanjing regime also attempted to associate major Chinese institutions under its control with Sun Yat-sen. Thus the decision to have Nanjing’s Zhongyang yinhang (Central Bank) serve as the central bank for the regime was confirmed on 7 October 1940, after a series of meetings between Nanjing and Tokyo. The actual opening day, however, was postponed by Zhou Fohai, the Finance Minister, until 12 November of the same year, so that it would coincide with the birthday of Sun Yat-sen.24 This re-scheduling shows how much leaders of the Nanjing regime wanted to link events relatec to Wang and his regime to the Guofu.

Such efforts to legitimize the Nanjing regime outlasted Chairman Wang himself. On 10 November 1944, Wang died in a hospital in Nagoya, Japan. Even in his last will, he did not forget to associate himself with Sun Yat-sen and his political cause. In that document, dictated by Wang and copied by his wife, Chen Bijun (1891-1959), one month before his death, Wang summarized his own life as one devoted to following the Guofu

22. Wang xiansheng shengping fendou shi, pp. 1, 2, 5, 58.
and working for his political cause, the Chinese revolution. On 13 November, Wang’s coffin, draped with the “blue-sky white-sun” flag, was returned to Nanjing. Ten days later (23 November), the body was buried on a small hill located to the right of Sun Yat-sen’s shrine, a burial spot believed to have been chosen by Wang personally to show his wish to follow the Guofu and complete the revolution even after he departed from this world. At the funeral, Wang’s widow Chen insisted on having her husband treated exactly as Sun Yat-sen had been in his burial. For instance, arrangements were made to have sixty-four laborers carry Wang’s coffin—the exact number used in Sun’s funeral. The whole ritual was designed to identify the deceased Chairman Wang with the already deified Guofu.

Peace through National Salvation

Sun Yat-sen died during a jiuguo attempt carried out in Beijing during which he was trying to create a better political environment for his compatriots by negotiating with some Northern warlords. It may seem ironic in light of his later collaboration with Japan, but before his escape from Chongqing, Wang Jingwei was a major advocate of the idea of saving the nation from foreign (especially Japanese) armed encroachments. On 16 March 1937, Wang gave the following speech in a military dress parade in Inner Mongolia:

Now both our troops and people have shed their blood in the war of resistance [kangzhan]. Their lives have already been dedicated to our country and nation. Their spirits, however, will eternally live in the hearts of all of us who have devoted ourselves to fight the enemies since the war of resistance has started. Their spirits will live in the hearts of all Chinese people. Since their pure blood has been shed on our bright land, the enemies would not dare to step on even one inch of it. If everyone in our country is ready to shed their blood on our land, not only will the unlost lands of ours always remain intact, but even the lost lands will


be recovered, piece by piece, when our blood is shed on them.  

Nevertheless, when Wang was ready to ally himself with the Japanese in the late 1930s, the idea of jiuguo underwent a complete reinterpretation to suit the new political atmosphere.

Since Wang Jingwei's supporters presented him as a second Sun Yat-sen, jiuguo naturally became a keyword in the Nanjing regime's propaganda. Like those of geming (revolution), the connotations of the term jiuguo have changed considerably over the course of the last century. Also like geming, the term jiuguo often has been redefined by different twentieth-century political leaders to suit different political goals. According to Joseph T. Chen, modern Chinese nationalism was basically anti-foreign in nature because it was closely associated with the powerful political myth of wangguo (the extinction of the Chinese nation). In 1919, for instance, both ideas of wangguo and jiuguo were popular among the people when the province of Shandong was about to be lost to Japan. By the time Wang escaped from Chongqing, he emphasized the idea of jiuguo to justify his alliance with the invading Japanese. According to Wang, there was little hope that China could win the war against Japan. Therefore, instead of waiting for the moment of wangguo, he suggested an immediate armistice with Japan which would save the country from extinction:

In the twenty-seventh year of the Minguo [1938], the European situation was developing at a very fast pace. Japan, meanwhile, was dominating the Far East. No country was willing to help us but the Soviet Union, from which we received some obsolete airplanes. The main reasons [for their assistance], I ascertain, were to make us fight [against the Japanese] to the very end so they would be relieved from Japanese [military] pressure. Moreover, our country would be greatly weakened once we were involved in a war [against Japan]. To the Soviets, this was a wonderful plan. Should we Chinese, however, make a sacrifice alone and think nothing about our own survival? . . . Since the Japanese were willing to


recognize our government, which was set up inside occupied areas, as an alliance and a partner in the process of reviving East Asia, they had to take our social and economic needs [minsheng xuyao] and our governmental structure [zhengfu tizhi] into consideration. As a result, there was still a chance for our democracy. What I did [siding with the Japanese], therefore, was the only thing I could do at a time of serious national disasters [guowan]. I realized it was a bad strategy that involved my personal sacrifice for the nation’s benefits. This was what I often told my trusted comrades.29

When war was formally declared against the Allied Powers in January 1943, Wang further stressed the absolute necessity to become allied with Japan in order to fight against Western powers and to avoid the extinction of East Asian culture in general and the Chinese nation in particular. This emphasis explains why, when the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing was approaching in August 1942, Wang ordered all newspapers and magazines in occupied areas to publish articles to “strengthen people’s anti-Anglo-American sentiment, so that they [would] be warm and sincere in their efforts to defend East Asia.”30

Throughout Wang’s alliance with Japan, therefore, jiaguo and heping (peace) went hand-in-hand. The merging of these two ideas formed the core of Wang’s propaganda efforts to justify his pro-Japanese political moves in those years—peace alone could save the country, and this stance meant abandoning Jiang Jieshi’s destructive policies toward Japan. The following open letter published in Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post in April 1939 revealed how Wang, replying to an anonymous overseas Chinese reader in Southeast Asia, blended the two key terms of jiaguo and heping to form a theoretical argument for his political actions:


30. In Wang’s words, “China’s independence and liberty will never be guaranteed unless Anglo-American imperialism is overthrown. Now that the Da dong Ya [great East Asia] war has been started by our ally [Japan], this is a golden chance for us to free ourselves from Anglo-American aggressive forces.” Quoted in Shi Yuanhua, “Wang wei shi qi de ‘dong Ya lianmeng yundong’” [The East Asian Alliance Movement under Wang’s puppet regime], in Fudan daxue lishixi Zhongguo jindaishi yanjiushi, ed., Wang Jingwei hanjian zhengquan de xingwang—Wang wei zhengquanshi yanjiu lunji [The rise and fall of Wang Jingwei’s traitor regime] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1987), p. 286.
To reach peace with Japan is by no means my private wish. Rather, it is a common mentality shared by all those who love the Minguo [Republic of China]. I love the Republic which was founded by the Guofu, so I stood out to work for peace. If the war between China and Japan is allowed to continue, both countries will be fatally wounded. If they reach a truce, both countries can live peacefully together. Peace, therefore, is the only solution to the warring situation laid in front of us. That exactly is the reason why I chose not to stay in tranquility and convenience in Chongqing but rather to risk my own life to save the country. That is just what I am doing now.\footnote{31}

Wang’s aim here is to show that Jiang Jieshi’s Chongqing government, by rejecting his peace plans, was gambling with the country’s fate. According to the letter, Wang was “rescuing the dangerous situation [faced by China] and pacifying [the country’s] disorders,”\footnote{32} whereas Jiang was leading the nation toward destruction and allowing internal chaos to go unchecked. Apparently enough, the method of building one’s validity through discrediting that of others—a method that has often been used by state authorities to build national identity—was adopted by Wang.\footnote{33} After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in

\footnote{31}{Wang Jingwei, \textit{Wang Jingwei xiansheng zhongyao shengming: Fu fu huaqiao moujun shu} [An important announcement by Mr. Wang Jingwei: With a letter of reply to a certain Overseas Chinese] (Shanghai: Shanghai zhonghua ribaoguan, 1939), pp. 1-3 and 15. These materials were reprinted from the \textit{South China Morning Post} (Hong Kong), 8 and 9 April 1939. Before its founder Lin Bosheng (1901–46) was attacked by secret agents from the Chongqing government not long after Wang’s escape from the wartime capital, the \textit{South China Morning Post} was a strongly pro-Wang newspaper published daily in Hong Kong. From 1940 to 1945, Lin occupied important positions in the Nanjing regime.}

\footnote{32}{Zhang Jianglei, \textit{Wang Jingwei xiansheng xingshi lu} [A factual account of Mr. Wang Jingwei] (Nanjing: Zhonghua Minguo shiliao biankanhui, 1943), p. 7. This work, composed by Zhang and issued by Nanjing’s Shiliao biankanhui (Editorial and Publishing Committee of Historical Materials), was published just one year before the death of Wang Jingwei. Since it was prefaced by Zhou Fehai and distributed by a governmental organ, the book can be seen as an “official” biography of Wang. In this book, Wang is portrayed as an undisputed political sage who, like Sun Yat-sen, had a life-long devotion to the cause of the Chinese revolution.}

\footnote{33}{In a recent book titled \textit{Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), Thongchai Winichakul discusses how other nations (“otherness,” in Thongchai’s own words) often “serve as a token of negative identification regardless of what that nation is or does” (p. 166). In Thongchai’s argument, peoples in other nations (especially those surrounding one’s own nation) are often portrayed in negative terms so that a positive image or identity of one’s own country can be established.}
December 1941, the phrase jiutong Ya (saving East Asia) or sometimes even jiuyazhou (saving Asia) began to overshadow jiuguo in Nanjing’s propaganda. In Wang Jingwei xiansheng xingshi lu (A factual account of Mr. Wang Jingwei), an officially approved biography of Wang published in 1943 in Nanjing, Wang’s post–Pearl Harbor political operations were “praised” as efforts “to liberate Asian peoples [from European and American imperialism].” This new propaganda move of Nanjing, needless to say, was designed to echo the latest Japanese military adventures against the Allied Powers.

**Fangong as a Key Term**

In comparison to the four key terms of Guofu, geming, jiuguo, and heping, the fifth term—fangong (anti-communism)—occupied a somewhat peripheral position in Nanjing’s propaganda and ideology. I do not mean to suggest that anti-communism was unimportant to Nanjing’s propaganda strategy. Rather, I want to stress that the term fangong was used less to legitimize Wang Jingwei’s position in power than to provide ideological justification for the qingxiang project that was enforced by Nanjing’s military units in occupied areas. According to the Nanjing regime, fangong was the theory supporting the qingxiang projects, and these in turn were necessary for completing the geming of the Guofu. It was only after the countryside was cleared of communism, according to Wang, that Sun Yat-sen’s Sanmin zhuyi could be realized. In a public speech given in January 1942, shortly after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Wang highlighted the idea that to “purge communism and Anglo-American imperialism from China was something necessary for the country if the process of rebuilding [chongjian] was to be accomplished.” Included as one of the three key terms printed on a small yellow triangular pennant attached to the “blue-sky white-sun” national flag, the term fangong never fell out of regular use in Nanjing’s propaganda projects. In fact, it received particular emphasis when the qingxiang project became a priority item in the political agenda of the Nanjing regime in early 1941. Unlike the Sun Yat-sen imagery and references to geming, however, which operated on a

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deeper ideological level as attempts to legitimize the regime and which lacked direct and concrete references, the term fangong, like heping, carried pragmatic implications. Fangong and heping, in short, reminded Nanjing’s audience that not all propaganda items adopted by the regime were abstractions; some were directly tied to current political events.

**Beyond Slogans**

In addition to using written and oral texts to legitimize the Nanjing regime, Wang Jingwei and his followers also turned to visual symbols such as the “blue-sky white-sun” flag. In contrast to the wartime Chongqing government, which was accepted by many as a normal continuation of the 1928 Nanjing Nationalist government, Wang’s regime had to start from scratch in establishing its legitimacy. In terms of Weberian theory, which treats tradition as one of the three major sources of efficacy, Wang’s regime was thus at a clear disadvantage. This gave special urgency to Wang’s attempts to lay claim to the famous flag identified with both Sun Yat-sen himself and the previous Nationalist Party regime.

The most effective way for Wang to validate his new regime was to undermine the legitimacy of the rival political order based in Chongqing. As theorist Melvin Richter puts it, “disestablishing the claim of its rivals” is often the most important step a regime can take to strengthen its own position; thus, “negating its opponents” goes hand in hand with establishing its own right to rule. An opposite target has to be set up and then effectively destroyed or discredited for a political figure, his circles, and his institutions to establish themselves. An analysis of the Nanjing regime’s propaganda shows that Wang understood this kind of logic very well. The combat between Nanjing and Chongqing for the “blue-sky white-sun” national flag illustrates this point.

Wang needed the exact national flag of the Nationalist government of China; anything less than that would harm his legitimization purposes. In modern Chinese political

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ideology, the "blue-sky white-sun" flag (or, in full, the "blue-sky white-sun red-earth" flag) is always associated with the person of Sun Yat-sen, who attempted but failed to persuade the provisional parliament of 1912 to use it rather than the "five-bar" flag as the main emblem of the new Republic. When, in 1928, the GMD regime was set up in Nanjing under Jiang Jieshi's leadership, the "blue-sky white-sun" flag was formally adopted as the national flag of the Republic of China. In its short, five-year existence, the Nanjing regime never missed a chance to bring out Sun's portrait to suggest that Wang was simply following in the footsteps of the Guofu. On 1 August 1943, for example, in the ceremony celebrating the rendition of the Shanghai Concessions—boasted by the Nanjing regime as a significant diplomatic victory—a larger-than-life-size portrait of Sun served as the background for the main stage. Just as Sun's portrait was exploited, so the "blue-sky white-sun" flag was used to suggest that Wang was merely bringing the Nationalist government back to its old capital (huandu) instead of setting up a new regime. Under the huandu propaganda, Wang was left with no other choice but to use the original national flag.

Wang was not trying to build a regime of just any kind; he wanted a publicly recognized one. And if he wanted to build a government that would hold efficacy with the people, Wang realized, the national flag was not an issue on which concessions should be made. He made this clear to the Japanese in the early stages of his preparation to set up the Nanjing government. In June 1939, Wang visited Tokyo and informed Japanese leaders that his future Nationalist government in Nanjing would be the only legitimate government in China. Wang stressed that his government "must be a Kuomintang government in legal continuity with Sun Yat-sen's party and government." The emphasis on the idea of "legal continuity" indicated that Wang was clearly aware of the benefit of linking his drive for legitimacy to a political tradition that already existed.

Later developments in Wang's preparatory meetings with the Japanese showed that he was much more sensitive than his major followers to symbols of political authority. Wang was said to have been infuriated when Zhou Fohai and Mei Siping (1896-1946), two of

40. The Peace Conspiracy, p. 156.
his most trusted collaborators, reported to him that they had reached an agreement with the Japanese in which both the “blue-sky white-sun” and “five-bar” flags would be used in occupied areas after the Nanjing government was established. Wang insisted that the agreement be abolished and asserted that the “blue-sky white-sun” flag alone would be flown. To Wang, it was illogical to proclaim publicly that he had managed to bring the Nationalist government back to its old capital and simultaneously change the national flag. Indeed, it may well have been precisely because he did not want to be labeled an illegitimate ruler—or, much worse, a hanjian—that Wang was so concerned about not being forced to abandon or change the original national flag.42

In the end, both Wang and the Japanese modified their positions vis-à-vis the flag. First, the Japanese offered to allow the Nanjing regime to use the original “blue-sky white-sun” rather than the “five-bar” flag, provided that a triangular yellow pennant with the slogan “Heping, fangong, jianguo” was attached to the flag. This compromise was not acceptable to Wang, since he felt that the attached pennant would change the form and, more importantly, distort the meaning of the flag of Sun Yat-sen. There was good reason for him to be concerned. Before the inauguration of the new regime, the Italian ambassador in Nanjing told Wang’s representatives that “the pennant would discredit Wang’s claim to be continuing the old Kuomintang government and make Italian government recognition difficult.”43 Due to the diplomatic troubles he had already encountered and the ideological ones that he could foresee, Wang decided to pursue the national flag issue further, and it caused a deadlock in the preparatory talks between him and the Japanese. The problem was solved only when a new compromise was reached—Wang was granted permission to use the exact “blue-sky white-sun” flag without


42. At various times in modern Chinese history, raising the “wrong” flag could be interpreted as having an “incorrect” political stance. As early as 1893 in Shanghai, a person was condemned and referred to as a hanjian simply because he had used a Western flag during a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the city’s opening to foreign trade. See *The Jubilee of Shanghai, 1843-1893: Shanghai: Past and Present, and a Full Account of the Proceedings on the 17th and 18th November, 1893* (Shanghai: Revised and reprinted from the *North-China Daily News*, 1893), p. 45.

the yellow pennant inside major indoor governmental offices but had to allow pennants to be attached to flags flown outdoors. In 1941, nine countries—including Germany, Italy, Spain, and Hungary—recognized Wang’s Nanjing regime.

**Wang Jingwei and the Center**

One way to make sense of Wang’s efforts at self-legitimation is to view them as attempts to capture what Clifford Geertz refers to as society’s symbolic “center.” According to Geertz,

> [a]t the political center of any complex organized society, there is both a government elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of the elite are chosen or how deeply divided among themselves they may be, they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented. It is these—crowns and coronations, limousines and conferences—that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built.

Wang clearly knew that the composition of the relevant center was Guofu, geming, and jiu guo. One sign of how important these three things were is that the CCP also stressed them (Guofu via Song Qingling, etc.), as did Jiang Jieshi. These were the only three

44. Wang was certainly not the only person in twentieth-century Chinese history to fight for correct symbols to establish political legitimacy. In October 1933, when Aixinjueluo Puyi, the last Manchu emperor and the Regent of Manzhouguo, was officially informed by the Japanese that he would soon be enthroned, the very first thought to strike his mind, according to his memoirs, was the imperial dragon robe of his ancestors. Ordered to ascend the throne in Western-style military uniform in March 1934, Puyi, like Wang on the national flag issue some six years later, exhausted all resources to argue against the Japanese decision. Again, Japan compromised—Puyi was allowed to worship the heavens (part of the ceremony) in his dragon robe. See Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng* [The first half of my life] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong wentung shudian, 1964), pp. 320-25.


things the three groups agreed about. Wang paid homage to Sun’s tomb on important
occasions, displayed Sun’s portrait at important gatherings, fought the Japanese over the
issue of the national flag, and made public speeches defending his collaboration with Japan
as an attempt to save China and complete the revolution.

Centers of society, however, do not fossilize; they are dynamic and always changing.
Unfortunately for Wang, especially after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 1937, anti-
Japanese (fan Ri) sentiment was something that those seeking to capture the center had to
harness. Jiang Jieshi, according to a contemporary memoir written by Zhou Fohai, did
exactly that to legitimize his rule and suppress political competitors:

The general atmosphere in China at that time [shortly after the Marco Polo Bridge
Incident] was really distressing. People everywhere, both inside and outside the
government, sang tones that were high enough to get into the clouds [on the issue
of fighting Japan]. However, except for those who were dumb or simple-minded,
pople knew clearly that if the war was allowed to continue, there was no chance
at all for China to emerge victorious at the end. These ideas were acknowledged
by the communists, the militarists in the Gui clique, and those who disliked the
central government. Mr. Jiang [Jieshi] knew all these more clearly than anybody
in those three groups. Everybody realized that the war should not be expanded
and continued, but people all sang the high tone of a long-lasting war. This
sorrowful contradiction will never be fully comprehended by future historians. It
was well understood by the communists, the Gui-clique militarists, and the
politically disappointed that kang Ri [resisting Japan] was the only way to unseat
Jiang. It was exactly out of their desire to overthrow Jiang’s rule that those people
shouted for a long-lasting war [against Japan]. Mr. Jiang was an extremely clever
man and of course he was not deceived by such a trick. Therefore, whenever
those who opposed him sang a lofty tone, he sang one that was even higher.
According to him, his higher tone could serve two purposes. First, it would
suppress all those who were unhappy with him [politically] and deprive them of
the reasons for opposition. Second, it could show the Japanese his determination
[to fight the war] and let them know that threats alone would not conquer China.
He hoped the Japanese would re-examine their position and try to end the matter
[wars] as soon as possible.47

Clearly enough, both fan Ri and kang Ri were used by Jiang as counter-propaganda
against those who tried to overthrow him. Wang was, without a doubt, aware of the

47. Zhou Fohai, Zhou Fohai huiyi lu [A memoir of Zhou Fohai] (Taipei: Longmen
growing centrality of fan Ri symbolism, but his political stance and alliances prevented him from being able to make use of this new component of the center. Instead, he had to spend much effort to argue why he chose to go against this new component. No matter how skillful his propagandists were in playing on other key themes, Wang's pro-Japanese position made it impossible for him to appear to the Chinese people as a legitimate savior of the nation.  

Conclusion

Analyzing Wang Jingwei's speeches and other political actions he took from the time of his decision to collaborate with the Japanese, we discover that he was very sensitive about whether his Nanjing regime appeared legitimate both inside and outside occupied areas. Heping and jiuguo constituted the core of his self-legitimation efforts. These two ideas could best explain and justify why he decided to side with the Japanese when they were invading his country. In addition to these two terms, he selected Guofu and Zhongguo geming to consolidate further his claim of political legitimacy. Guofu and geming were two interdependent and closely associated political notions. In the China of Wang's time, to take over the mantle of Sun Yat-sen automatically implied the accomplishment of his political goal—the Chinese revolution. In manipulating the figure of Sun for political purposes, Wang had an advantage over most contemporary competitors and he knew it. In comparison to Jiang Jieshi, for instance, Wang was much closer to Sun when Sun died; in addition, his relationship with Sun had started much earlier than Jiang's. Throughout his Nanjing regime, Wang used Sun to strengthen his claim to political legitimacy. This phenomenon can clearly be seen in materials published under the Nanjing regime as well as in Wang's funeral after his death in Japan in 1944.

Fangong was another important keyword that was stressed constantly by Wang and his supporters (including his patrons, the Japanese). But this idea functioned in a different

48. According to a Japanese report (December 1941) conducted in Northern China, for instance, 20% of the Chinese people interviewed supported Wang’s alliance with Japan, 40% showed indifference to the issue, and 40% showed disapproval. See Liu Qikui, "Wang wei hanjian wenhua gaishu" [A general survey of the culture of Wang's traitor regime], in Wang Jingwei hanjian zhengquan de xingwang, p. 222.
way from the other four. Basically, fangong, when used by the Nanjing regime, did not help to construct the regime’s political legitimacy. Rather, it explained and justified why some political operations were carried out under the Nanjing regime. The term was strongly emphasized in Wang’s speeches when the qingxiang project was initiated by his regime in 1941.

Wang Jingwei was brilliant in his search for political legitimacy in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Guofu, Zhongguo geming, and jiuguo—the central elements of political legitimacy of the time—were all claimed by Wang. The single important element that he failed to grasp—because he could not, not because he would not—was fan Ri. His alliance with Japan removed all possibility of harnessing the fan Ri element that had become so significant since Japan’s seizure of Shandong province in 1919. When he finally decided to defect from the wartime Chongqing government late in 1938, Wang must have had confidence that he could convince his audience to support him, his regime, and his method of concluding the war by emphasizing heping, jiuguo, Guofu, and Zhongguo geming instead of the more popular anti-Japanese sentiments.
Wenguán ("Lettered Official"), Gongwuyuan ("Public Servant"), and Ganbu ("Cadre"): The Politics of Labelling State Administrators in Republican China

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Introduction: The Politics of Naming and Labelling

Words, the grist to the mill of human language and cognition, are notoriously imprecise and slippery instruments. Much to the chagrin of nineteenth-century positivists and logicians, words have continued to remain stubbornly dualistic entities, simultaneously possessing both denotive and connotative capacities. Denotation literally "notes down," "marks," "indicates," or, in logicians' terminology, is "predicated of what the thing in question objectively 'is.'" Connotation "signifies secondarily or in addition," "implies or involves as a consequence, condition or accompaniment," or, in logicians' lingo, "implies or indicates the subject in which an attribute adheres, while primarily signifying or

1. The key ideas in this opening section—that words are denotive and connotative, and that words are positively or negatively valenced—were stimulated in discussions with Martin Landau in a seminar on politics and theory he taught at the University of California, Berkeley in the autumn of 1986. At the time, I little imagined that I would ever be actively utilizing any of this material in my own research, and it is a testament to Landau's powerful insights and unforgettable teaching methods that his ideas resonate so strongly in a field far removed from his own so many years later.

2. The arguments that follow about the changing meaning of specific terms for state administrators in Republican China is based on several years of research on bureaucratic institutions, particularly on the Guomindang's Examination Yuan, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The sources for this research have included publicly available handbooks and documents produced by the bureaucratic organizations themselves, archives available in the No. 2 Historical Archives in Nanjing and in the Guoshiguan in Taipei, publications from the Republican period such as Xingzheng xiaolu, memoirs by former officials, and extensive interviews with former GMD bureaucrats in both the People's Republic and Taiwan. In some cases I offer complete citations to back up my claims. In others I will refer the reader to either my dissertation or my article on the Examination Yuan previously published in Modern China. In still other cases specific documentation will be provided in the manuscript I am currently writing entitled "Bureaucracy, Civil Service, and the Twentieth-Century Chinese State."

3. The definitions of these terms that follow are drawn from the Oxford English Dictionary, which states that the proper adjectival forms of the verbs "denote" and "connote" are "denotive" and "connotative." However, throughout this essay, I will use the alternative forms "denotative" and "connotative," which are more commonly used in the United States.
‘noting’ the attribute itself.”

Words do sometimes simply denote, providing a convenient linguistic shorthand to group and classify phenomena that objectively exist and possess concrete attributes that cause them to be so named—a bird, an apple, grain, snow. But more often words also connote, adding or implying attributes to the object denoted. These added attributes, in turn, "charge" the word in question with either positive or negative valences. So the word "chicken" can denote a particular type of fowl that is especially tasty roasted with lemon and garlic, or it can connote faintheartedness and cowardice. Some words are so heavily valenced that one uses an entirely different word to denote exactly the same phenomenon: "politicians" are bad, but "public servants" are good, and "statesmen" are even better.5

The connotations (or attributes) that accrete to words over time are often multi-layered and need not necessarily be consistent with each other; words are exceptionally plastic and accommodating to users with differing values and world views. Language is simultaneously instrumental, in that it is a major medium for social communication, as well as a symbolic arena in which different values are thrashed out. As a tool, language may provide a means for control, cultural hegemony, or resistance. As a realm of symbolic interaction, language is often one of the main areas in which different groups articulate their own positions, mobilize followers, come to terms with their heritages, and distinguish themselves from other, competing groups. Given its multiple instrumental and evocative roles, it is little wonder that language (and its basic units of currency, words) offers an attractive field of play for politics.

The Labelling of State Administrators: The Case of Republican China

State administrators are among the more important (if much maligned) actors in the


5. It was Harry S. Truman who stated somewhat acerbically that "a statesman was a politician who had been dead for ten years." Interestingly, given the current debates on appropriate use of gender in language, many groups now shun the term "statesman" altogether.
process of statebuilding, as well as in politics in general, for both practical and symbolic reasons. Practically, civil administrators are the tendons and circulatory system of the state. They hold the central state together, carry out its directives, and form the first line of interface between it and society. Without a reasonably committed set of administrators willing to accept hierarchical discipline and work for state goals and interests, a state simply cannot exist. The symbolic importance of state administrators, in my view, flows from their practical indispensability. Since administrators are so undeniably important, the ways in which the state conceives of appropriate roles and tasks for its administrative agents provide a fairly good baseline indication of how the state conceives of itself in terms of ideals, goals, and programs for action. If one looks a little farther afield to consider also the terms for state administrators that groups outside the state use, one can gauge the degree to which there is congruence or radical disjuncture between respective goals and visions of the state and those of important groups in society. Congruence can result from two processes with quite different political implications: either because the state has created a hegemonic vocabulary and set of constructs that social groups accede to or because important groups are coopted into the state, with their vocabulary and set of constructs being reproduced by the state itself.

Important as state administrators are, it usually proves quite difficult to sustain terms to describe them that retain neutral-to-positive connotations over any length of time. English, for example, has at least three commonly used terms to denote state administrators—"official," "bureaucrat," and "civil servant"—as well as two other less frequently used terms—"functionary" and "Mandarin." Of these, only one, "civil servant," retains even a kernel of positive valence, with connotations of diligence, even-handedness, and working for the public good. All the others connote red tape, delay, unresponsiveness, petty detail, and (in the case of "Mandarin") unapproachable, self-contained, generalist elitism. With the exception of "official," which has been in common English usage (originally denoting "one with a clerical or household office") since the twelfth or thirteenth century, most of the other terms came into the English language fairly late, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, usually via French. At around the time that "bureaucracy" and "bureaucrat" (which Carlyle called "the continental nuisance") came into English at mid-century, the previously fairly neutral term "official" began to acquire
unsavory and derogatory connotations as new suffixes began to be added, creating the highly negative terms "officialism" and "officialdom."6

"Civil servant" and "civil service," on the other hand, came into use towards the end of the eighteenth century, originally in reference to the non-military, covenanted servants of the East India Company, and eventually grew to denote "all non-warlike branches of the public administrative service of the state." As such, "civil service" was, relative to the "continental nuisance of bureaucracy," a home-grown concept, even if it first came into use in the context of overseas colonialism. Thus, even in English, the problem of what to call a state administrator has proven to be a subtle and tricky one: perhaps most terms will eventually tap into an Anglo-American tradition of mistrust of government and monocratic authority and suffer a corresponding decline in connotative valence.

When the focus of analysis is shifted to a place like Republican China, the complexity inherent in the labelling and naming of state administrators increases enormously, because political institutions and political language during this period were, to put it mildly, non-standardized. Political elites in the second quarter of the twentieth century in China were the heirs to a now-crumbled but previously long-existing, indigenous tradition of imperial statecraft that had historically accorded very high status to government officials. Needless to say, the late imperial state's weaknesses in dealing with foreign pressure, its difficulties in accommodating the demands of activist provincial elites for more formal recognition of their political roles, and its inability to put together a strong central state in the first decade of the twentieth century called many of its values and norms into question once the Qing fell in 1911. Unfortunately, the Qing was not replaced by a stable successor regime. The first fifteen years of the Republic were characterized by a crisis of governance: the failure of civilian institutions, increasingly large scale but illegitimate militarization and political fragmentation, elite disenchantment, and increasingly vocal anti-imperialist nationalism that was hard put to find a state on which to pin its nationalist sentiments.

By the mid-1920s, revolutionary mobilization was in full swing and from this time up until 1949 literally all the important questions as to China's future were up for grabs:

how China's revolution would be successfully defined, how the state would be reconstituted, and on what basis the state would interact with society. The Communists and the Left insisted that the only revolution worthy of the name had to involve class struggle and social revolution from the bottom up, while the center and right wing of the Guomindang ultimately moved to a minimalist definition of China's revolution as unifying the country, revoking imperialist privileges, and promoting rapid economic development. Initially, the center and the right wing of the Guomindang seemed to prevail over the Communists with the White Terror of 1927. In fact, the purge of the Left in 1927 left two much-weakened parties, each of which considered itself to be revolutionary, to figure out what revolution and state building meant in practice. Not only was there keen political and military competition between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party, but each had to deal with internal divisions as well.\footnote{The Chinese Communist Party was a little less obviously internally divided than was the Guomindang during most of the Republican period.}

The twin processes of intra-party standardization and inter-party competition motivated both the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party to form state (or quasi-state) governments. The Chiang Kai-shek-dominated Guomindang established its state apparatus in Nanjing, while the Chinese Communists—after being pushed out of the cities in 1927—regrouped to establish revolutionary base areas first centered in the marginal hill country of Jiangxi, then, after the Long March, in the equally poor and even more remote far northwest. At various points in time, both revolutionary parties possessed concrete territories that needed administering. Although the Guomindang regime attacked the issue of state reconstitution and civil service with relish while the Chinese Communist Party only very hesitantly and backhandedly admitted the need for administrators at all, both ultimately had to generate vocabularies of state and administrative service. In so doing, the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party reflected two main influences: China's own historical legacy of state and administrative service and the respective foreign models that each explicitly turned to for legitimation and support in the 1930s and 1940s. These two sets of factors recombined in unusual ways during the remainder of the Republican period, solidified in the orthodoxies of each side of the Taiwan Straits after
1950, and would experience vigorous historical afterlives during the liberal reform period of the 1980s in the People’s Republic of China.

**Guan, Guanli and Wenguan: The Late Imperial Legacy**

In imperial China, state administrators were generally denoted as guan, occasionally as li, and often by a ci that combined the two as guanli. These terms, alone or in combination, are conventionally translated into English simply as "official." Often guan were given the additional modifier of wenguan (or "lettered official"), so that those in the high status civil bureaucracy might be clearly distinguished from wuguan (or military officials), who were much lower in status. As the products of a quite unique interaction between the late imperial agrarian state and society, wenguan in imperial China not only implemented the usual functions typical of administrators in pre-modern states but also carried a set of particular connotations that set them apart from officials and bureaucrats elsewhere in the world.\(^8\)

Guan in imperial China were the agents who held the thinly stretched agrarian empire together. As a general rule, guan were recruited into state service by sitting for horrendously difficult but "open" state-given examinations that tested for the individual’s mastery of Confucian texts and composition.\(^9\) The relative numbers of those who passed these Confucian-based civil service exams were small. Those who passed, of course, were usually from fairly well-off families who had the spare resources to invest in the requisite years of education and private tutors for their sons; serious preparation for these

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9. Other ways into state service certainly existed in late imperial China. Degrees were granted by imperial favor and, especially in times of dynastic decline, degrees and offices were sold outright. But these methods into the bureaucracy were widely felt to be "irregular," and lacking the prestige of the regular path of examination followed by appointment.
examinations typically took an astonishing twenty or so long years of rote memorization.

Functionally, this system presupposed that virtue (de) and talent (cai) could be ascertained on the basis of memorizing key texts and composing eight-legged essays. This was often demonstrably not true and, in fact, the contents of the examination system were often singled out for sharp attack as irrelevant for the administrator's subsequent career. But the social uses of the examination system went far beyond its technical functions in ensuring a supply of administrators to the imperial state; the myth of an impartial and open system whereby any studious and conscientious individual could succeed acquired tremendous currency and legitimacy in society at large, as did the correspondingly highly valued "career open to talent."

Guanli stood at the very apex of China's late imperial society. They were certified by the state as having come through a series of examinations all knew to be extraordinarily difficult, and they were on the sole career track that elite society recognized as being of any general prestige. What guanli did when in office, however, was another matter. Especially at local levels, imperial administrators were undersalaried, overburdened with financial and judicial administration for which their Confucian training often ill-prepared them, and heavily dependent on both sub-bureaucracies of even worse salaried local clerks and the cooperation of local gentry.

In this social environment, the term guan carried multiple connotations. Guan comprised a status group of enormous prestige which was, however, validated on the universalistic criteria of examination success. Guan were generalists who, on the basis of their Confucian humanist education, were presumed to have the capacity to "see into the heart of any situation," like the model wise official Baogong. As such they were expected to serve as models of rectitude and proper behavior for the people. As the writings of Huang Liuhong in the late seventeenth century and of the early nineteenth century "statecraft school" in the Huangchao jingshi wenbian make clear, guan at their administrative best quickly acquired on-the-job training and practical experience in "handling affairs." Generalist literati training did not automatically select for incompetent aesthetes, and those who were overly bookish or politically naive did not fare well in the bureaucratic system. On the other hand, guan were poorly regulated and audited, particularly at local levels of government. The lack of adequate salaries combined with
enormous administrative demands structurally constrained even the most honest to take extra fees to make up the chronic shortfalls, and the line between "legitimate" fee-taking and "illegitimate" "squeeze" was thin and ill-defined. Despite the fact that many of imperial China’s better administrators gravitated towards de facto areas of special competence, the ethic of guanli stoutly resisted overt specialization (i.e., by not incorporating "practical" subjects into the civil service examinations), endlessly repeating Confucianisms that "men are not tools" and that if rule by utility were to replace rule by virtuous example, all would be lost.

Guan in late imperial China were, then, characterized by the following multi-layered connotations: high social status, a career open to talent, walking incarnations of good Confucian norms and values, resolute generalism, and, negatively, corruption and "squeeze." Their cultural and structural position in society was perhaps best summed up by the popular four character expression, shengguan facai ("become an official and get rich"). But the Confucian generalist ideals that undergirded the conception of guan were increasingly called into question in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, made irrelevant by the Qing dynasty’s xinzheng reforms in the first decade of the twentieth century, and then by the collapse of the imperial system itself in 1911. Given the close association between guanli and the late imperial state, and the failure of the latter, the connotations of officialdom encapsulated in the popular expression shengguan facai were hardly a set of characteristics to recommend themselves to the new generation of vigorously modernizing, revolutionary elites that emerged out of the chaos of the warlord era in the 1920s.

**The Decline of Guan**

With the rise of Leninist revolutionary mass parties in the 1920s, the term guan, in all its permutations (guanli, li, and wenguan), began to go out of favor. Guan was fairly consistently used for the remainder of the Republican period as an epithet for status-conscious, lazy, parasitic, and self-serving officials, while guanliao (bureaucracy, bureaucratic) took on connotations of weak, passive, unresponsive, and failed government. In late 1921, Sun Yat-sen equated the early Republic’s failure with its "bureaucracy," rhetorically asking "for whom has there been a Republic [literally: "people’s government,"
minguo] for the past ten years? [On the contrary, China has been] a country for bureaucrats: revolutionary thought didn’t move forward, the goals of the revolution were not reached, the revolution existed only in name and not in reality." In another speech given in October of 1923, revealingly titled "Party members cannot cherish the intention of becoming officials" (Dangyuan buke cunxin zuoguan), Sun Yat-sen warned against the tendency of Guomindang Party members to pervert the revolution by hankering after the status and opportunities for personal gain inherent to "becoming big officials" (sheng daguan). Sun saw revolutionary spirit and officialdom to be mutually exclusive categories: if one

wanted to do great things, one couldn’t want to become a big official: if one cherished the intention of becoming a big official, then the true spirit of Party membership would be lost . . . [for] Party rule [dangzhi] does not mean that Party members [dangyuan] will rule the country: but that Party ideology [dang zhuyi] will rule the country.11

In the early to mid-1920s, however, even seasoned revolutionaries who decried bureaucracy and officialism did not have much in the way of synonyms to positively or neutrally connote state administrators on the rare occasions when addressing the issue of state service and government organization was necessary. In the Jianguo dagang (Fundamentals of national construction) of 1924, in which he outlined his vision of modern China, Sun, having little vocabulary other than guan to denote state administrators, slightly softened the term by adding the suffix yuan, producing the term guanyuan.12 Yuan individualized and partially neutralized some of the more negative status connotations of guan, with guanyuan meaning, literally, "official individual" or "one who is an official." And just to make the make the positive connotations of guanyuan absolutely clear, Sun then linked the appointment of guanyuan specifically to the most

legitimate aspect of the entire complex of imperial officialdom: the holding of state-sponsored, open civil service examinations as the primary mechanism into state service.

After the mid 1920s, guan, both alone and in combination form, survived for the remainder of the Republican period—often as a term of opprobrium, but sometimes with more neutral connotations. Strangely, the term guan persisted at the very top levels of the Guomindang state and in the most prestigious state organizations as well as at the very bottom of the bureaucratic pyramid, in local administration and low-level military organization, where its usage connoted anything but prestige. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, administrative reformers in the newly constituted Guomindang state attempted, without great success, to institute an American-style hard-and-fast division in the state bureaucracy between political appointees (zhengwuguan), who would invariably be Guomindang Party members, and "career" or "functional" appointees (shiwuguan), who, chosen on the basis of their technical or practical knowledge, might well not be Party members.13 Admirers of Western civil service systems who wished to see a

13. The attempted institutionalization of a distinction between zhengwuguan and shiwuguan was felt by many to be an important component of the institutionalization of the Guomindang state in the 1930s, including the Guomindang's own Examination Yuan, administrative reformers, and opposition academics such as Quan Duansheng. The Examination Yuan's Ministry of Personnel repeatedly drew distinctions between political appointees and "regular" bureaucrats. For examples, see assorted regulations in the Quanxu bu nianjian (1931) and the Ministry of Personnel's Law on civil service appointments (1933), reproduced in English in Kwei Chungshu, ed., The Chinese Yearbook (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), pp. 268-69. In addition, the 1930s saw the coalescence of an informal group of individuals, both in and out of government service, whom I dub the "Administrative Efficiency School." This loose coalition of individuals, composed of Gan Naiguang, his immediate protégés, an ever-widening circle of academics and specialists on public administration, and a few members of the Examination Yuan itself, wrote for a series of publications in the mid-1930s. Revealingly titled Xingzheng xiaolü [Administrative efficiency], the series appeared bi-weekly in 1934-36 with a companion volume in English called The Chinese Administrator, which was published irregularly in the mid-1930s. In mid-1936, the publication switched its name and format to Xingzheng yanjiui yuekan [Administrative studies monthly] and came out as a monthly between mid-1936 and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. The "Administrative Efficiency School" was very much influenced by prevailing currents in American public administration and was therefore, among other things, very much concerned with the institutionalization of a separation between "politics" (and political officials, zhengwuguan) and "administration" (xingzheng, to be implemented by shiwuguan). These sentiments can
depoliticized, technically oriented, examination-qualified set of state administrators also upon occasion translated Western civil service systems as *wenguan zhidu*, thus subtly linking a prominent feature of the progressive, modern West with a positively valenced political institution indigenous to China.\(^{14}\)

But in general, for the remainder of the Republican period (and indeed after 1950) the term *guan* continued to be used for specific titles in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that most prestigious and most elitist of Guomindang central government ministries. General officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were generally referred to as *waijiaoguan*, who were internally distinguished from consular officials (*lingshi guan*).\(^{15}\) Of all the regular central state organizations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exhibited the greatest degree of continuity during the transition from Beiyang to Nationalist rule. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs managed to carry over almost all of its staff from the Beiyang period as well as a personnel system almost entirely separate from the rest of the Nationalist

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be found in most of the articles in these publications. For a more detailed review of the activities of the "Administrative Efficiency School," see my paper "The Cult of Administrative Efficiency: Myth and Statecraft in the Chinese Republic, 1912-37," unpublished. See also Qian Duansheng's (Chi'en Tuan-sheng) acerbic comments on the lack of a separation between political and administrative offices in *The Government and Politics of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 220-21 and 243-44.

14. The use of *wenguan zhidu* as the term to translate Western civil service and examination systems was by no means standard, either in the Republican period or in the 1980s in the People's Republic of China. The term *gongwuyuan zhidu* ("public servant system") was used at least as often—sometimes consciously, and often subconsciously, as the terms have never been totally standardized with respect to their denotations. For specific examples of the usage of wenguan zhidu and gongwuyuan zhidu to denote Western civil service, see multiple articles in *Xingzheng xiaolü* and *Xingzheng yanju yuekan*, passim.

15. The Guomindang state's own acceptance of the differences between its "regular" bureaucracy and the separate (and elitist) Ministry of Foreign Affairs was formalized in the Guomindang's incorporation of the Ministry's own denotations of its members as *lingshi guan* and *waijiaoguan* in the Ministry of Personnel's Law on civil service appointments (1933), which replaced these terms. See also Chen Tiqiang, *Zhongguo waijiao xingzheng* (Kunming: Shangwu Press, 1942), pp. 141-61 and Julia Strauss, chap. 8 in "Bureaucratic Reconstitution and Institution Building in the Post-Imperial Chinese State: The Dynamics of Personnel Policy, 1912-45" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1991).
government—complete with its own ranks, grades, promotion procedures, and salary scales. Given this institutional strength, it is no wonder that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs preserved its distinctive system of denotations for different sorts of positions within the organization. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at least, the continued use of guan (via waijiaoguan and lingshiguan) hearkened back to a number of the positive connotations of guan in imperial China: exclusiveness, prestige, status, and resolute generalism.

But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a highly atypical organization in Republican China and could, in view of its extremely high prestige and drawing power, institutionally "afford" to swim against the tide in terms of linguistic denotations as well as a host of other areas. The persistence of guan in a highly exclusive organization like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was paralleled by its much more widespread usage at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy. When not referred to by a specific title such as xianzhang (county head), local government administrators were typically called difangguan (local officials). Difangguan, in turn, were often linked to the negative attributes of laziness, perfunctoriness, and lack of education.¹⁶ Military officials in the post-1927 Republic, even ones associated with the National Revolution, were invested with titles that often incorporated the character guan as well. In 1934, Chiang Kai-shek defined the "commanding administrative officers of each province" (gesheng xingzheng zhangguan) as "officials close to the people" (qinmin zhiguan) and then, perhaps inadvertently, linked the commanding administrative officers of each province with that most traditional of clichés: "the people's father and mother" (minzhi fumu), which almost exactly replicated the late

¹⁶. These sentiments were shared by administrative reformers and Chiang Kai-shek alike. Virtually every issue of Xingzheng xiaolü contained at least one article that discussed at some length the poor training and lack of commitment of difangguan as one of the major factors in the weakness of local government. Chiang Kai-shek, for his part, resorted to morally based exhortations for difangguan to clean up their acts. See Chiang Kai-shek's speech of July 12, 1932, "Xianzhang shi zhengfude jiben liliang" [County chiefs are the base strength of government], in Zhang Qijun, ed., Xianzongtong Jianggong quanji, vol. 1 (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua daxue, zhonghua xueshuyuan, 1984), pp. 646-52.
imperial concept of the district magistrate as a "father-mother official" (fumu guan). Further, the term jiaoguan (literally "teaching official"), denoting the numerous and relatively low-status military instructors in the National Revolutionary Army and in organizations involved with military training, came into widespread usage from the mid-1920s on.

Thus, during the post-1927 Republican period, the term guan bifurcated in both its denotative and connotative aspects. As far as revolutionaries and progressives were concerned, guan tended to connote laxity, status consciousness, unresponsiveness: in short, everything that was regressive and weak from the imperial legacy. As a general rule, state institutions that continued to use guan as a denoter of administrative personnel were either of low status or held office at local levels of government administration. It was only very strong, elite institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that could continue to use old denotations without fearing a loss of positive connotative valence. Although Sun himself fell back on the uneasy amalgam of guanyuan to denote state administrators in 1924, very shortly thereafter a whole host of other terms would come to be preferred to denote the middle to upper ranks of the state administrative bureaucracy.

The Attempt to Establish Weberian Bureaucracy: Gongwuyuan and Friends

Although guan did not fall out of usage entirely, its connotations were sufficiently negative that alternate denotations for administrators in the middle to upper ranks of Guomindang central state organizations proliferated in the late 1920s and early 1930s: zhiyuan (literally "one who is in a post," with the connotation of "official" post), xingzheng renyuan ("administrative personnel"), gongzuo renyuan ("working personnel"),

17. Chiang Kai-shek, "Xiandai xingzheng renyuan xuzhi" [What modern administrative personnel need to know], speech given on 20 March, 1934. In Xianzongtong Jianggong guanji, vol. 1, p. 827. The images of officials, be they military or civil, as "the father and mother of the people" was further elaborated by Chiang a year later in a speech given on 7 September 1935, titled "Xingzheng renyuan tuanjing ganbu zhi diwei yu zeren" [The positions and responsibilities of administrative personnel and police corps cadres]. In this speech, administrative personnel were explicitly called renmin de fumu, while cadres of the police corps were denoted as minzhongde daoshi (leading teachers for the masses). In Xianzongtong Jianggong guanji, vol. 1, p. 998.
renyuan ("personnel" in general), and gongwuyuan ("public servant"). Which terms were used most varied according to style and personal preference. Guomindang Party documents usually refer to state administrators as zhiyuan, Chiang Kai-shek favored the term xingzheng renyuan, the Ministry of Finance referred to its personnel as caizheng renyuan, and administrative reformers tended to use gongwuyuan. But each of these denotations was invested with a strikingly similar set of connotations, and they were often used interchangeably. First, all these terms were relatively new inventions, created by adding the suffix yuan to the modifier in front. In contrast to guan, which connoted status, position, authority, and (later) corruption and ineffectiveness, yuan was a neutral marker to indicate a person or individual, and in combined form subtly underscored the presumptive neutrality, interchangeability, and technical competence of the state administrator in question. In addition, these terms substantially deflated the status of state administrators by consistently linking them to the concept of "service" (fuwu)—service to the people, service to the Revolution, or service to the country.

Although zhiyuan, xingzheng renyuan, renyuan, and gongwuyuan were all in use from the late 1920s through the 1940s, gongwuyuan (literally "public things person," or, more loosely, "public servant") was the term that acquired the most currency in government and quasi-government circles. Gongwuyuan was particularly, though not exclusively, favored by two important groups deeply involved with the effort to institutionalize a national personnel policy for government administrators: a group of loosely affiliated non-office-holding academics, commentators, and reformers within the Ministry of the Interior, whom I elsewhere call the "Administrative Efficiency School," and those in the Guomindang's Examination Yuan and Ministry of Personnel, who attempted to establish and enforce a

18. See previous references to Chiang Kai-shek's speeches, especially "Xiandai xingzheng renyuan xuzhi," and various drafts of the Quanzu bu renyongfa (The Ministry of Personnel's Law on civil service appointments). For Guomindang Party usage of these terms, refer to Zhongguo Guomindang lici huiyi xuanyuan ji zhongyao jueyi huibian [A selected compilation of the Guomindang Party plenary speeches and important resolutions] (Chongqing: n.d. [1939?]). For the Ministry of Finance, see Kong Xiangxi, Caizheng bu shininlai zhi caiwu renyuan [Finance personnel in the Ministry of Finance over the past ten years] (Chongqing: Ciazheng bu, 1943), references throughout.

national set of standards for government personnel in the Guomindang state at large.\textsuperscript{20} Administrative efficiency reformers both inside and outside the state agreed on a program that called for, in effect, the establishment of a strict Weberian bureaucracy: a depersonalized and defactionalized administration separate from party organizations, control over the administrative bureaucracy via the standards and guidelines established by the Ministry of Personnel, recruitment into the state bureaucracy and the promotion of technocracy via Examination Yuan–administered open civil-service examinations, and the promotion of efficiency and effectiveness through the implementation of scientific administration.

Within a discourse that presumed a "public" administration and scientific management to be positive goals in themselves, the term gongwuyuan, with its connotations of service, obedience to political masters, impartiality, and technocratic expertise, was resorted to quite often. But even among administrative reformers, the lack of generally accepted standard terms made for some rather interesting crosscurrents. In addition to using the aforementioned zhiyuan and renyuan, administrative reformers and those in the Ministry of Personnel also used *shiwuguan* ("functional or career officials") and *shiwu renyuan* ("functional or career personnel") to distinguish "regular" career administrators from political appointees (zhengwuguan). Further, at least in discussions involving the importance of establishing civil service systems (a topic of much concern to administrative reformers in the 1930s and 1940s), gongwuyuan never completely ousted wenguang: when administrative reformers resorted to citing the examples of Western civil service systems as partial models for China, both wenguang zhidu and gongwuyuan zhidu were used to denote foreign civil service systems.

But some felt compelled to make a clear distinction between wenguang and gongwuyuan. To cite just one example, in *Xingzheng yanjiu yuekan* (Administrative research monthly), an administrative reformer by the name of Xie Tingshi wrote in 1936:

\begin{quote}
In modern China, guan are called gongwuyuan. Although gongwuyuan
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{20} For a fuller description of the Examination Yuan and the Ministry of Personnel, see my "Symbol and Reflection of the Reconstituting State: The Examination Yuan in the 1930s," *Modern China* 20 (April 1994): 211-38.
servants] are the equivalent of guan [officials], they [gongwuyuan] are different because of their set functions and responsibilities. . . . [G]ongwuyuan exist on the strength of their vocation [yewu], while fengjian guan [feudal officials] exist on the strength of their power and position [quanli]. . . . [I]n order to implement a modernized and professionalized system of officials we must implement classification on the basis of function, work, responsibilities, and qualifications.21

Gongwuyuan prevailed in other ways as well. Of all the terms in common usage from the late 1920s through the late 1940s to denote state administrators, gongwuyuan was the one that was eventually incorporated into the Guomindang state's own formal representation of itself. The two most important laws on public personnel to come out of the 1930s were the Ministry of Personnel's Gongwuyuan renyongfa (Law on the appointment of public servants) of 1933 and the Gongwuyuan kajifa (Law on the assessment of public servants), promulgated in 1935.22 The former law attempted to establish minimal criteria for standardization of ranks and quality control; the latter tried to depersonalize and defactionalize inner Ministry workings by instituting "objective," "scientific," numerically assessable criteria for work performance as the basis for promotions. Although both of these laws were but weakly implemented, the language they employed reveals a great deal about the wing of the party-state that captured policy on national administrative personnel: virtually all state administrators of any prestige (with the exception of wajiaoguan and lingshiguan, who were given their own separate section) were generally denoted as gongwuyuan—thus connoting science, objectivity, functional application, and service as the bases upon which the Guomindang state wished, at least in theory, to reconstitute itself.

Did this ideal of functional, depersonalized, "scientific" administration ever translate into reality? Certainly, most contemporary observers thought not. Guomindang state administration was roundly criticized for being faction riven, corrupt, and ineffective—and the administrative efficiency reformers were among the most vociferous in these

21. Xie Tingshi, "Lun wenguan guandeng guanfengde gaiding wenti" [On the problems of reforming civil service grades and salaries], Xingzheng yanjiu yuekan 1 (1936).

22. These laws are reproduced on virtually every scrap of paper that the Ministry of Personnel issued from the mid-1930s on. For a fairly recent compilation, see Quanxu faigui huiban (Taipei: Kaoshi yuan, 1979), pp. 329-32 and pp. 719-22.
complaints. But at least in pockets of the Guomindang state, the ideas of objectivity, technical competence, and de-politicization took hold and began to be implemented in the mid-1930s. Technically oriented ministries and commissions, such as the Ministry of Finance, voluntarily availed themselves of the Examination Yuan–held examinations to staff new departments and seem quietly to have institutionalized norms of technical competence and on-the-job performance for personnel up until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.23

By the end of the 1930s, those administrators in the Guomindang state with any claim at all to some sort of technical or functional expertise were invariably denoted by a label that stood in implicit opposition to "politics" and partification: gongwuyuan, gongzhi renyuan, zhiyuan, shiwu renyuan, xingzheng renyuan. Although it was preferred for legal usage, gongwuyuan did not establish hegemony over these other, similar terms. But when taken as a set of relatively new terms with nearly identical connotations, gongwuyuan and related terms effectively replaced guan and its derivatives for a very important tier of the Guomindang state: those in middle to upper middle positions in the fairly prestigious central government organs. Although certainly serving that function, gongwuyuan et al. did not merely connote a wish list of positive attributes for Weberian, depersonalized bureaucracy bandied about by a small group of administrative reformers. New recruits into the Guomindang state organizations in the late 1930s were very much aware of a real gap between generalists and politicos (wenguan and zhengwuguan) on the one hand, and technical or functional specialists (gongzhi renyuan and shiwu renyuan) on the other.24

Thus, these new, still non-standardized terms also denoted a new breed of technocratic administrator that was increasingly important in the central state administration of the Guomindang state in the 1930s and 1940s, one that quietly staked a claim to a quasi-autonomous, professional sphere of expertise.


24. These specific terms, and their opposition to each other were cited by Wu Chengming in my interview with him on 21 May 1988, Beijing.
Heroic Administrators: The Evolution of Ganbu

Since the term ganbu (cadre) later acquired such clear hegemony over all other terms to denote party and state administrators in the People's Republic of China, there is a strong tendency anachronistically to project its dominance in leftist and revolutionary circles backwards in time to at least the early 1920s, if not before. In fact, there is a great deal that is unknown and elusive about ganbu: there is no agreement as to the exact route by which the term came to China, and, even more surprisingly, its usage in the 1920s was rare. Virtually all sources agree that the word ganbu originates with the French cadre, but there the consensus ends. The *Hanyu wailai ci cidian*, the standard reference on foreign terms that found their way into Chinese, states quite clearly that ganbu came into Chinese via the Japanese term kanbu (a word in which the kanji is identical to the Chinese characters); the Japanese term kanbu, in turn, had its origins in the French "cadre." A number of other sources, however, insist equally adamantly that the term came into China through the Soviet Union.\(^{25}\)

The connotations of ganbu are equally ambiguous, ranging from the quite restricted to the extremely broad. In the Chinese Communist lexicon, ganbu has been variously used to denote the "backbone" (or core) of the Party (usually in the context of revolutionary activism), "leader(s)" (in the Party: with or without administrative position), and, in its broadest and most common usage, "all those who are working personnel in Party, State, or military units with a definite culture, a level of specialization and capability . . . exclusive of soldiers, handymen, and workers of that sort."\(^{26}\) Ganbu's shift in denotation from minimalist (the "backbone" of the Party) to maximalist (encompassing virtually all personnel with authority or expertise in Party, state, army, or units of economic production, be they Party members or no) was a very large denotative leap indeed, and the


\(^{26}\) This set of connotations is drawn from the definitions of ganbu as listed in Yang Youwu and Wang Zhenchuan, *Zhongguo gongwuyuan baixie cidian*, *Xinmingci cidian* (Shanghai: Shanghai chunming chubanshe, 1955), and *Zhongguo wailaici cidian*. 
evidence indicates that the Chinese Communist Party only reluctantly came to the broadened connotations of the term over the course of the 1930s and early 1940s.

Surprisingly, ganbu was seldom used in the 1920s, nor does it appear to have been a term primarily associated with the Chinese Communist Party. Sun Yat-sen used the term once or twice in the early 1920s, and those in both the CCP and the GMD, as the respective heirs to Sun Yat-sen’s legacy of nationalism and revolution, occasionally called their party members and activists ganbu. But ganbu appeared to be closely associated with no particular side during the 1920s, and it was used but infrequently by both. Sun, the Guomindang, and the Chinese Communist Party much more regularly used other terms to refer to party members and activists during this decade of revolution and counterrevolution. The Guomindang’s official documents issued at the conclusion of Plenary Sessions of Party conferences from January 1924 through March 1938 without fail employ the term dangyuan (literally, "party member") to refer to those in the Guomindang, and until the early 1930s, dangyuan and tongzhi (comrade) were the preferred terms in the Chinese Communist Party as well. On the extremely rare occasions during the 1920s when it was necessary to refer to state administrative personnel (as opposed to party members and activists), the terms employed by the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang were remarkably similar: renyuan, zhiyuan, and, in the case of Mao’s writings from the late 1920s and early 1930s, gongzuo renyuan ("working personnel") and zhengfu gongzuo renyuan ("government working personnel").

As a revolutionary party locked in mortal combat with a rival party that had gone on to establish a party-state (complete with organs of civil administration), the CCP was clearly uncomfortable with the concept of government administration, except perhaps as an epithet to hurl at the Guomindang, and for as long as possible it avoided directly incorporating the concept into revolutionary language as a neutral or positive term. The Chinese Communists’ distaste for anything that smacked of the status and institutionalized inequality of "officialdom" and "bureaucracy" went even further than that of Sun Yat-sen.

27. I base this supposition on the contents of Zhongguo Guomindang lici huiyi xuanyuan ji zhongyao juye huibian. This three-volume set contains all of the official conclusions of GMD Party plenary sessions from January 1924 through March 1938.
Mao Zedong was perhaps extreme in his condemnations of bureaucracy, but nonetheless extraordinarily influential:

We must not be bureaucratic in our method of work in mobilizing the masses. . . . This great evil, bureaucracy [guanli zhi yu], must be thrown into the cesspool, because no comrade likes it. . . . [O]ne of the manifestations of bureaucracy is slackness in work due to indifference or perfunctoriness: another manifestation is authoritarianism. Superficially, authoritarians are not slack in their work and seem to be hard working. Actually, to develop co-operatives in an authoritarian way will bring no success; even if they are apparently developed for the time being, they cannot be consolidated. . . . What we need is energetic agitation to convince the masses and, according to specific circumstances and the real feelings of the masses, to develop the co-operatives, promote the subscription to the bonds, and do all kinds of work for economic mobilization.28

Although the long years of struggle tended to collapse revolutionary and military roles, the political necessity of consolidating the Jiangxi base area in the early 1930s called for economic and civil construction. Economic and civil construction, in turn, required that Party members, comrades, and fighters in the Red Army also begin to take on a de facto third role of administrator, which required new labels and explicit ideological and practical training (xunlian). It was at about this time that the term ganbu began to appear regularly along with tongzhi (comrade) or dangyuan (party member) to denote those in the Chinese Communist Party. But during the Jiangxi Soviet period, there was still a great deal of confusion about who exactly was a ganbu and what ganbu-dom involved. Significantly, in the early 1930s the CCP was much clearer about its military organization than its nascent civil administration. When Party training courses for ganbu were set up in the early 1930s, the term ganbu was still so vague that draft training manuals had to classify ganbu grades (as upper, middle, or lower) by using military rank as the common frame of reference. Middle-level cadres were the equivalent of platoon commander (paizhang) to assistant company commander (fuizinghang), while upper-level cadres were equated with the ranks of company commander (yingzhang) up to assistant regiment commander

Even while taking on administrative functions, ganbu continued to be linked very closely (if not conflated entirely) with heroic leadership in both the Party and the Red Army.

Mao himself used ganbu with regard to economic construction during the Jiangxi period: after warning against the pernicious effects of bureaucracy and authoritarianism, in the essay cited above, he then went on to note briefly the importance of ganbu as well as to stress that with proper values and training, anyone could become a cadre:

They [the cadres] are the commanders on the economic front, while the broad masses are the soldiers. People often sigh over the shortage of cadres. Comrades, is there really a shortage of cadres? ... Give up your erroneous viewpoint and you will find cadres standing right in front of you.30

But even as ganbu acquired currency during the early 1930s, it was not used exclusively for Soviet administrators, and still less did it replace tongzhi as a general term of address or reference to the Party faithful. Even in the arena of economic construction, zhengfu gongzuog renyuan was used as late as January 1934 in Mao’s essay "Our Economic Policy": "Financial expenditure must be governed by the principle of economy. ... [W]e should make it clear to all government personnel [zhengfu gongzuo renyuan] that corruption and waste are the greatest crimes."31

After the Long March and the establishment of the Shaan-Gan-Ning base area, ganbu increased in usage and was deemed important enough as a category in the Communist lexicon to have long sections of speeches devoted to its clarification in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Ironically, as the CCP explicitly turned to Stalin’s oft-cited dictum that in a revolution "cadres are everything" to establish the term’s revolutionary pedigree and impeccability, it sinified and expanded the connotations of ganbu far beyond its original

29. These distinctions are laid out in a short document from the Jiangxi Soviet period titled "Ganbu zhengzhi jiaoyu jihua cao’an" [A draft plan for cadre political education] (n.d. [early 1930s]), Chen Cheng Collection Reel 8, Document 31.


connotations in the Russian. In "The Question of Cadres" from the speech "Strive to Win Over Millions" of May 1937, Mao clearly laid out the specific connotations of ganbu-dom:

To guide a great revolution, there must be a great party, and many excellent cadres. . . . [T]hese cadres must understand Marxism-Leninism, they must have political insight and the ability to work, they must be full of the spirit of self sacrifice, capable of solving problems independently. They must remain firm in the midst of difficulties and work loyally and devotedly for the nation, the class and the Party. . . . [T]hese people must not be tainted with selfishness, individual heroism or vaingloriousness, indolence or passivity or arrogant sectarianism: they must be the selfless heroes of the nation and the class. . . . [B]eyond a doubt we ought to acquire these qualities in order to remould ourselves into better people and raise ourselves into better people and raise ourselves to a higher revolutionary level. . . . [O]ur revolution depends on the cadres, just as Stalin has said, "cadres are everything."

A year later, as the Sino-Japanese War widened and the Communist leadership continued to stand by the ideal of a broad anti-Japanese united front, Mao further widened the concept of ganbu to encompass those outside the Party and to warn that the line of "employing only the worthy" ought to prevail over the erroneous line of "employing only

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32. In Russian, the term for "cadre" connotes "core group" and also "personnel" in the general plural (as opposed to an individual). The speech of Stalin's most often cited as justification for the importance of cadres in a Communist system was the "Address to the Graduates from the Red Army Academies," delivered in May 1935. The second most cited of Stalin's references to cadres was a brief mention in the "Report on the Work of the First Central Committee to the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," delivered in March of 1939. These speeches can be found in *The Complete Works of Josef Stalin*. I suspect that these remarks of Stalin's were at least in part taken out of context: beyond these two relatively minor mentions, Stalin does not usually wax poetic about cadres or, in fact, refer to them much at all. However, Stalin's precedent in using the term was extremely important for the CCP in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and enabled the Chinese Communist leadership to begin to standardize the term around a much broader set of connotations than existed in Russian.

the near and dear. But even while using Stalin as to justify the importance of ganbu, Mao ironically re-invested the term with several of the key norms that had animated the imperial ideal of guan: lack of overt functional specialization, the implicit belief that understanding of key texts would enable the individual to solve problems independently, and the assumption that individual ganbu would stand as walking models of virtue and correct thoughts. In other respects, of course, ganbu stood in stark contrast to imperial guanli: the content of the sacred texts of Confucianism and Marxism-Leninism could not have been more dissimilar, and the Maoist variant of Marxism-Leninism remained deeply suspicious of hierarchy and status differentials.

But resistance to overt specialization and functional divisions of labor and status and a corresponding tendency to collapse all revolutionary roles and actions into one term (or one individual, since ganbu referred to particular individuals as well as to a collective group) paradoxically hobbled the Chinese Communist Party after it actually took power in the early 1950s. Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, ganbu had expanded enormously in denotative scope, from a small group of "backbone" Party activists to well over half of those employed by the Party, state, army, or CCP-dominated units. But ganbu’s set of revolutionary connotations remained stubbornly unchanged. The concept of ganbu continued to require purity of thought, knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, practical application, and continuous revolutionary heroism. The unchanged demand that ganbu be simultaneously heroic revolutionaries and practically oriented administrators (or "Red" and "Expert," in Schurmann’s formulation) without accompanying indications of how two such disparate roles might be combined once the revolutionary tasks of winning the civil war and consolidation were accomplished put ganbu under a tremendous amount of uncertainty and stress in the late 1950s and again in the decade of the Cultural Revolution.

34. Even during the Yan’an period that the CCP later perceived as its "Golden Age," the CCP had to contend with a basic contradiction that plagued both the imperial state and the Guomindang: the age-old conflicting imperatives of a state that required norms of universalistic merit vs. a society grounded in particularistic norms of ganqing (human feeling) and giving absolute priority to caring for those near and dear. In "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," a report given to the Central Committee in October, 1938. Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, vol. 1, p. 252 and Mao Zedong xuandi, vol. 1, pp. 514-15.
Interestingly, during exactly the same period that ganbu was being standardized and expanded in the CCP (the late 1930s and early 1940s), the ideological opposites of the CCP on the far right wing of the Guomindang attempted to bring the term back into regular usage through the xunlian (training) movement to partify and reinvigorate Guomindang Party, state, and military organizations. After the shocking defeats of the summer and fall of 1937, the Guomindang’s subsequent retreat to the far interior, and the accompanying loss of its economic heartland and political base in the Jiangnan, the domestic political balance of power in China was decisively altered, and the Guomindang found itself in an infinitely weakened and highly stressed position vis-à-vis both semi-independent military commanders and the Chinese Communist Party. Given this position of relative weakness, the Guomindang Right tried to ensure the loyalty of questionable military units through short- to medium-term Party training courses (xunlianban) that combined Party indoctrination with some amount of military and physical training. The xunlian program, however, did not end with the military. It swiftly expanded from military units to Party organizations and then eventually passed to state units as well.

The attempt to bring xunlian into the Guomindang state in the late 1930s and 1940s sharply reversed the norms of technical competence, depoliticization, and Weberian bureaucracy that had been quietly institutionalizing in parts of the Guomindang state over the course of the previous decade. The xunlian program—which conflated Party loyalty and discipline, nationalist resistance, "practical" application, physical training, and military mobilization—was astonishingly similar to the rhetoric and policies of the Chinese Communist Party during the same period. Like most language during the Republican period, the vocabulary of xunlian was not standardized: the targets of xunlian were variously referred to as both shou xunlian renyuan ("personnel receiving training") and xunlian ganbu. However, the language surrounding the Guomindang Right’s xunlian was remarkable for its revival of ganbu, which took on a set of connotations very close to the contemporary CCP usage of the term. Thus, Wang Dongyuan, the chief figure associated with central Party training for high-level military and civil administrators during the Sino-Japanese War, wrote in a 1939 pamphlet titled Ganbu xunlian wenti ("Questions on cadre training"): 
Why do we need cadres [ganbu]? Upon whom, then, will our mission of reviving the race and building up a new country depend [if not cadres]? Without a doubt, it is necessary to have a large number of leading cadres . . . to provide leadership, to unite our forces, to rid ourselves of difficulties and obstructions, and to carry out national construction . . . [C]adres are the leaders of the revolution . . . and although we currently lack cadres, we must look for cadres from party, state and army . . . to lead and organize the broad masses of people. 35

Such sentiments were virtually indistinguishable from those of Mao Zedong at nearly the same point in time.

Although the Guomindang’s xunlian program has not yet been fully investigated and evaluated, it appears that its exercises in partification and indoctrination fell far short of their intent. Although some upper-level administrators in party, state, and army units were temporarily detached from their organizations to attend centrally run xunlianban, the vast majority of the xunlian programs were devoted to the units themselves, thus allowing for party, army, and state organizations, if so inclined, to dilute or deflect large parts of xunlian, to conform with the letter of the order to carry out xunlian while minimizing its spirit, or even to turn the xunlian process into an arena for factional politics. The highly uneven implementation of xunlian in the assorted units of the Guomindang party-state apparatus is at least in part reflected in the different names adopted by organizations undergoing xunlian.

Central state ministries, particularly those with large numbers of technical personnel, tended to keep some version of renyuan or gongwuyuan in the titles of their xunlian courses, while provincial and local party and military organizations often incorporated ganbu into their respective designations for xunlian. The Ministry of Communications convened a Jicotong jishu renyuan xunliansuo (Training group for communications technical staff), the Ministry of the Interior a Weisheng renyuan xunliansuo (Training group for hygiene personnel), the Army and Government Ministry (Junzheng bu) a Kuaiji renyuan xunliansuo (Training group for accounting personnel). The Ministry of Finance organized the Quanguo caiwu renshi xunliansuo (National training group for finance

personnel), for which it ultimately produced its own set of guidelines, titled the Caiwu renyuan xunlian dagang, suggesting that at least the Ministry of Finance fought hard and successfully to maintain control over the process of xunlian. Military and party units at provincial and local levels, on the other hand, exhibited no such consistency in terminology. A fair number brought the term ganbu into their xunlian organizations: for example, the Xi'an xibeijiyi ganbu xunlianban (Training group for southwest and northwest guerilla cadres), the Yunnan dangwu ganbu renyuan xunlianban (Training group for Yunnan Party affairs cadre personnel), the Guangdong difang xingzheng ganbu xunliantuan (The training league for Guangdong local administrative cadres), and the Anhui zhengzhijunshi ganbu xunlianban (The training group for Anhui political and military affairs cadres). Other local and provincial military and party organizations stuck with the more neutral-sounding renyuan or gongwuyuan designation: the Guangxi xianzheng gongwuyuan xunlianban (The training group for Guangxi County government public servants), which was closely identified with the semi-independent and progressive general, Bai Chongxi, and the Fujian xianzheng renyuan xunliansuo (Training group for Fujian County government personnel).36

In periods of extreme stress, when the right wing of the Guomindang was able to move out from its base in propaganda units to capture the national personnel agenda for party, army, and state, there was little that state organizations could openly do to stem the onslaught. But the weak institutional capacity of the Guomindang Party to implement vigorously either xunlian or ganbu-ification throughout all the units nominally under its hegemonic control meant that at least some technocratically inclined state organizations like the Ministry of Finance were able quietly to insulate the organization from the worst excesses of partification and xunlian. Regardless of how much the far right of the Guomindang would have liked to "cadre-ify" its military, party, and state organizations during the politicized 1940s, ganbu (with its accompanying set of connotations) never succeeded in fully replacing renyuan, gongwuyuan, and zhiyuan, and in many units it made insubstantial headway. The parallel evolution and usage of ganbu and gongwuyuan

36. This list of xunlian organizations was drawn from several sources, including Ganbu xunlian wenti and Shiniannai zhi caiwu renyuan.
in the Republican period mirrored the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s and 1940s and encompassed double paradoxes that would only become clear in the post-1949 era. Strangely, the weakness that led to the Guomindang’s downfall in the civil war of the late 1940s also permitted the survival of concepts and terms allowing for professional quasi-autonomy of technocratic state administrators that would prove to be instrumental in the consolidation of the Guomindang party-state on Taiwan. And the organizational strength and cohesion that enabled the Chinese Communist Party to collapse so many uneasily reconciled connotations and values into ganbu as it made that term the standard for administrators hamstrung the post-1949 People’s Republic into demanding simultaneous high performance in the oil-and-water roles of revolutionary hero and objectively competent, technically proficient administrator.

**Historical Afterlives: Wenguang, Gongwuyuan, and Ganbu in the 1980s**

Although it is tempting to consign the politics of labelling state administrators in Republican China to the category of the historically interesting but contemporarily irrelevant, the reform era of the 1980s in the People’s Republic of China unleashed a series of debates about the nature of the state, the efficacy of state administration, and the potential reform of state personnel systems that echoed a similar set of discussions in the 1930s and 1940s. In the increasingly open climate of the mid- to late 1980s, as political and structural reform began to be discussed openly, academics, advisors, and even working groups within the Chinese Communist Party turned to topics that had been taboo since 1949: the ineffectiveness of the existing cadre system, the need to implement a genuinely "public" administration, bringing scientific management into state organs and enterprises, and the unlinking of state (administration) from party (politics).

Journals, handbooks, policy documents, and monographs on public administration and reform of state personnel policy suddenly began to be published in large numbers in the late 1980s.\(^{37}\) Much of this new wave of publication was uncannily reminiscent of the

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\(^{37}\) This sudden proliferation of published material is far too vast to allow a complete bibliography. Some representative publications include: *Zhongguo xingzheng guanli*
debates surrounding state service and personnel policy in the Republican period.

Administrative reformers in the 1980s revived language, terms, and concepts that had lain dormant since the late 1940s. The sheer number of publications from the late 1980s that contain the term gongwuyuan on the title page indicates the revival of gongwuyuan as a positively valenced denoter for state administrator (in subtle opposition to ganbu).

Wenguan was also brought back in and used variously to refer to civil service systems abroad (its meaning during the Republican period) as well as for historical discussions of the Guomindang personnel system during the 1930s and 1940s. Drawing on a mix of foreign models and the glories of China's indigenous tradition of statecraft, administrative reformers in the 1980s openly pushed for programs for civil service reform that, while radical in the context of politics and administration in the People's Republic of China, exactly replicated those of their Republican predecessors in the 1930s and 1940s. The themes thus raised included the need to ensure fairness and de-politicization in state service, security of tenure, unbiased and "scientific" methods of evaluation and promotion, and the desirability of instituting open and public civil service examinations as the prime method of entry into state service in the first place.

As was the case in the Republican period, the mid- to late 1980s in the People's
Republic of China saw language and terminology in a tremendous state of flux in which old, previously standard terms for administrators (ganbu in the 1980s, guan and its derivatives in the 1930s) were still used, but increasingly took on negative connotations of status differentials, obstruction, corruption, and lack of responsiveness. The frequent use of gongwuyuan on the part of administrative reformers in the mid- to late 1980s in the People’s Republic of China was not accidental. This group subtly challenged the viability of the whole concept of ganbu (and, by extension, the entire political system of the People’s Republic of China) by consistently using an alternate term in conjunction with programs for reform which all could agree were badly needed. But ganbu and the authority (and ultimately, the military) structure that stood behind it were still powerful enough in the 1980s that the term was not usually taken on by the administrative reformers directly. In fact, in the new dictionaries of terms, ganbu and its combinations were allotted as much in terms of space and explication as was gongwuyuan. Further, Party conservatives showed themselves entirely capable of fighting back and defending ganbu by sticking with the Dengist line of the early 1980s: conceding the need to reform the ganbu system itself through repeated recourse to the rhetoric of "younger, better educated, and more technically proficient cadres," thus appropriating the program the administrative reformers wished to apply to a new personnel structure of gongwuyuan outside the status quo system of cadres.38

In the aftermath of 1989, discussions and materials that openly suggested the replacement of cadre reform with public servant reform were shelved along with all other open discussions of political and structural change. But gongwuyuan, with all of its connotations, lives on even in post-1989 editions of dictionaries of terms, and it remains to be seen how it will fare in its post-Deng afterlife. Given the stubbornly intractable problems associated with state service and administration and the Chinese Communist

38. See particularly Xiandai ganbuzue, for the conservative, Dengist position on reform within the cadre system and, Zhongguo gongwuyuan zhidu jianghua, for as close to an open challenge as one could get on the need to reorganize the existing cadre system into public servant system (gongwuyuan zhidu)—involving such unheard of elements as open examinations, position classification, evaluations and bonuses on the basis of legally established standards, and promotion on the basis of evaluated achievement.
Party’s inability to deal systemically with those problems through ganbu, it is a fair guess that gongwuyuan and associated terms will re-ascend and be an important conceptual component of any structural and administrative reform that China undergoes in the future.
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