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Gospel of the Body, Temple of the Nation: The YWCA Movement and Women's Physical Culture in China, 1915-1925

Elizabeth A. Littell-Lamb*

Abstract

This article examines how the Young Women's Christian Association (基督教女青年會) used the YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education (體育師範學校) to advance the YWCA movement in China in the decade and a half after the 1911 revolution. The Normal School was a modern educational institution, run by women that provided girls with professional training. It argues that while the YWCA leadership pragmatically used the school to secure a place in the missionary community, gain recognition from reform-minded Chinese educators and participate in the emerging public world of Chinese women. The Normal School also served the goals and aspirations of Chinese women who wished to contribute to China's state building project but also "go public" as new

* Assistant Professor, Department of Government, History and Sociology, University of Tampa, USA.

近代中國婦女史研究　第 16 期 (2007 年 12 月)

women of China.

Key Words: Young Women's Christian Association, Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education, physical education, new women, Abby Shaw Mayhew, Chen Yingmei, Phoebe Hoh, Chen Yongsheng

Introduction

During the critical decade and a half after the 1911 revolution, the Young Women's Christian Association (基督教女青年會) advanced the YWCA movement in China by opening a Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education (體育師範學校). Its leadership believed the Normal School would spread the "gospel of the body"[1] and that the school's graduates would "give knowledge of physical and spiritual regeneration to thousands of girls, girls with education who will be the influential wives and mothers of new China."[2] The goals of Strengthening the body to save the soul and strengthening women to save the nation resonated with the YWCA's holistic mission to women that linked the well-being of the mind and body to the salvation of the soul. They resonated with the reform discourse of China's leading reformers, who recognized that China needed strong women to bear and nurture strong citizenry. Finally, the goals resonated with China's "new women" (新婦女) who desired to contribute to their country but also wanted to determine their own life paths.

Behind YWCA leaders' high-sounding rhetoric, they recognized that they

1 "Y-W-C-A," 1917, pp. 6-7, reel 50, National Archives of the YWCA of the USA, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College (hereafter YWCA USA).

2 Abby Shaw Mayhew, "Physical Education in China," *The Association Monthly* 10:11 (December 1916), p. 492.

faced a number of difficulties in advancing their movement in China. First, they had to find a niche in a missionary community suspicious of a non-denominational organization run entirely by women. The YWCA found that niche by becoming involved in educational work, an avocation closely identified with women's "natural" nurturing role. The Association also had to distance itself from the missionary community because of its association with, even dependence on, foreign imperialism. The Association partially resolved that difficulty by participating in the transformation of women's physical culture that Chinese reformers linked to the transformation of Chinese body politic and the salvation of the nation. Preserving their autonomy as a women's organization was the final difficulty the YWCA leadership faced. They solved that dilemma by becoming involved in the emerging public world of women in China, an involvement that eventually dominated the Association's work.[3]

The public world of women in China, as in other parts of the world, was an arena of action women used to free themselves from the constraints of patriarchy and contribute to society. It has been argued that in the United States female institution-building did more to advance women than their political activism.[4] Female institution-building and the creation of a public world of women had similar implications in China. Chinese women used all-female institutions to define "new" identities, negotiate new power relations with state and society, and address social issues men failed to prioritize. What it means to be "modern" is a subjective reality embedded with cultural meanings.[5] Arguably "going public" epitomized modernity for

3 *Zhu Hu Binxia*朱胡彬夏, *Zhongguo nü qingnian hui xiaoshi*中國女青年會小史 (A Brief History of the Chinese YWCA), 1923, 3, Record group #120-0-1[1], *Shanghaishi dangan guan*上海市檔案館, Shanghai, PRC (hereafter SMA).

4 Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," *Feminist Studies* 5:3 (Fall 1979), pp. 512-529.

5 For a discussion of the meaning of "modernity" in turn-of-the-century China, see

Chinese women because Confucian gender ideology had denied women public lives. The public world of women provided China's "new women" with the ability to contribute, either as individuals or a group, to the Chinese state and society while enabling them to determine their own life paths. As a women's institution, it was logical that the Association came to see contributing to the expansion of the public world of women as its primary purpose.

What did the Normal School mean to China's "new women"? China's "new women" never constituted a homogenous group or represented a single idea of what it meant to be "new." Moreover, who "new women" were, what they believed in or did, changed over time. The generation of "new women" born before 1900 came mainly from elite backgrounds or progressive families, received Western-style educations, and often earned college degrees abroad. Many belonged to China's new urban middle class, embraced maternal feminism, briefly pursued careers before marrying and centering their lives around their homes and civic activism. "New women" born after 1900 matured during the May Fourth era and, imbued with iconoclastic fervor, often followed more radical life paths. They delayed or rejected marriage, pursued life-long careers and engaged in political activism or revolution. Despite their differences, "new women" from both generations found that the Normal School provided them with ways to live their own ideal of being "new."

This study examines the YWCA Normal School for Hygiene and Physical Education from its founding in 1915 to its amalgamation with Ginling College in 1925 in order to understand its importance to the YWCA movement in China during those formative years in the Association's history. It argues that the Association leadership used the school in three ways. First, they used it to find a niche in the missionary community suspicious of a women's

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Barbara Mittler, "Defy(N)ing Modernity: Women in Shanghai's Early News-Media (1872-1925)," *Jindai zhongquo funüshi yanjiu* 近代中國婦女史研究 (*Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*), Vol. 11 (December 2003), pp. 215-259.

organization by emphasizing education. Second, the Normal School helped distance the Association from its inherent association with imperialism because of its Western origin and Christian identity by providing the YWCA with the ability to participate in the transformation of China's national body. Third, the school enabled the Association to maintain its autonomy. As a separate female-run institution, it provided China's "new women" with an education that made it possible for them to both contribute to Chinese state and society and to fulfill personal goals. In the final analysis, the Normal School helped the YWCA define its own institutional identity as an integral part of China's public world of women.

This study contributes to the scant literature on the history of the YWCA in China. Early scholarship primarily used the archives of the YWCA of the USA and thus prioritized the role of American secretaries (幹事) sent to China.[6] An exception is Karen Garner's carefully researched intellectual biography of American secretary Maud Russell.[7] The only study that focuses on the YWCA Normal School is a chapter on Abby Mayhew, the school's first director, in a dissertation on the Sargent School for Physical Education that Mayhew attended.[8] Two recent histories using a broader source base that includes Chinese materials are the first to actually examine the YWCA in

6 The only monograph is Nancy Boyd, *Emissaries: The Overseas Work of the American YWCA 1895-1970* (New York: The Woman's Press, 1986). Robin Porter included a chapter on YWCA industrial work in *Industrial Reformers in Republican China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1994). Emily Honig discusses YWCA industrial work *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986). The most recent published work is Elizabeth A. Littell-Lamb, "Ding Shujing: the YWCA Pathway for China's 'New Women'" in Carol Lee Hamrin and Stacey Bieler, eds., *Salt and Light: Lives of Faith that Shaped Modern China* (Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008), pp. 79-97.

7 Karen Garner, *Precious Fire: Maud Russell and the Chinese Revolution* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

8 Debbie Cottrell "Women's Minds, Women's Bodies: The Influence of the Sargent School for Physical Education" (Ph.D. diss.: University of Texas, 1993).

China as a Chinese organization. One is an institutional history and the other a social history of the Chinese Association's formative decades.[9] This is the first independent study of the YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education and the first study of the intersection of the YWCA movement, the transformation of women's physical culture and the lives of China's "new women."

Choosing Physical Culture[10]

Missionaries were gravely concerned about the Chinese physique. They viewed Chinese men as frail and effeminate and Chinese women crippled because of their bound feet and perceived sedentary lives.[11] In one sense, missionary concern grew out of their Orientalist view of Asian peoples. However, it also grew out of the Christian ideal of "muscular" Christianity which considered the health of the body a reflection of the health of the soul.[12] Because Chinese women's physiques so alarmed missionaries, they especially linked women's physical well-being to their spiritual development. Abby

9 An Zhenrong, 安珍榮撰 *Zhonghua jidujiao nüqingnianhui yanjiu* 1916-1937 中華基督教女青年會研究 (1916-1937) (*A Study of the Chinese YWCA 1916-1937*), (台北: 國立台灣師範大學歷史研究所, 2001) National Taiwan Normal University, Graduate Program in History, 2001; Elizabeth A. Littell-Lamb, "Going Public: The YWCA, 'New' Women and Social Feminism in Republican China," (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2002).

10 For English language studies of physical culture, sports and nationalism in twentieth century China, see Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

11 Gael Graham, "Exercising Control: Sports and Physical Education in American Protestant Schools in China, 1880-1930," *Signs* 20:11 (Autumn 1994), pp. 30-32.

12 Andrew D. Morris, "Cultivating the National Body: A History of Physical Culture in Republican China" (Ph.D. diss., University of California-San Diego, 1998), pp. 75-77.

Mayhew, the first director of the YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education, made the following observation shortly after the school opened:

> The National Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association of China early saw that the tone of its very first ways of service must be to the inactive, weak bodies, of these millions of women and girls; that in order to produce sane and vigorous Christians who could 'put on the whole armour of God' and fight to the end, we must help them first, as did Christ, to build up strong and health [sic] physical lives as the foundations for the spiritual superstructure.[13]

Missionary women's fixation with female health also sprang from their own struggle in the nineteenth century Anglo-West where debates over weak, wilting, and hysterical women centered a discourse directly related to women's demand for social and political equality. Male physicians claimed women were unfit for strenuous activity; they needed to conserve energy to ensure the health of their reproductive organs. Women doctors claimed men wanted to thwart women's ambitions for life outside the domestic sphere. If women appeared weak, they wrote, it was because of practices like corseting forced them to lead sedentary lives.[14] Women missionaries, including YWCA women, brought this debate to China.[15] Western women, recently freed from some of their own physical constraints (such as corseting), thus brought a gendered perspective on female health with them to China.

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13 Abby Shaw Mayhew, "Physical Education, A Vital Part of the YWCA Programme in China," *International Quarterly* (October 1916), p. 7.

14 Readings on those debates include John S. Haller, Jr. and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974); Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989).

15 Gael Graham, "Exercising Control," pp. 29, 32-34.

It is uncertain whether or not the YWCA leadership knew of or understood the entirety of Chinese reform discourse on physical education (*tiyu* 體育). While reformers accused Chinese men of being the "sick men of the Orient," they objectified women as the "weakest of the weak" and the root cause of China's national dilemma. Using knowledge of science, biology, and eugenics theory, they saw women's health as a dangerous but solvable problem and vital to China's interests, as women would be the mothers of strong citizens who collectively would constitute a strong nation.[16] Even if she was not familiar with the specifics of their writings, Abby Mayhew would have agreed with Chinese reformers as she had also been influenced by eugenics. Writing in America in 1892, she argued that to prevent "race suicide" in the United States, the female body needed to be strengthened.[17]

It is more likely that whatever the YWCA knew of Chinese reform discourse came indirectly from the larger and more successful Young Men's Christian Association (YM), which was committed to changing men's physical culture. YM secretaries dominated sports organizations and headed many of the physical education departments at Chinese universities. To meet the demand for physical education instructors, the National YM brought M. J. Exner to Shanghai in 1908 to establish training classes for physical directors. After Exner's arrival, Grace Coppock, then General Secretary of the Shanghai city YWCA, asked the American YWCA to send a physical education expert to China, believing that physical education programs would attract women to the YWCA as they were attracting men to the YM.[18]

The YWCA's interest in physical culture thus reflected Christian ideals,

16 Andrew D. Morris, "Cultivating the National Body," pp. 60-61.

17 Abby Shaw Mayhew, "Shall Delicate Girls Take Physical Education?" *The Evangel -- A Young Women's Magazine* (November 1892), pp.5-6, cited in Debbie Cottrell, "Women's Minds, Women's Bodies," pp. 353-354.

18 "News from China," 1909, 1, File reports 1907-1909, Box 396, China Files, World YWCA Archives, Geneva, Switzerland (hereafter World China).

debates over women's role in state and society on two continents, and the need to attract members in order to advance the YWCA movement in China. The Association was thus making a place for itself in the missionary community, the Chinese state, and the emerging public world of Chinese women.

Finding a Place

The YM organized the first YWCA National Committee in China as early as 1899. That was not the first time the YM had sought a fraternal relationship with the YWCA movement as both expanded to non-Western countries. The fledgling Chinese women's organization, however, sought autonomy and allied itself with the World YWCA and its national constituents, especially the YWCA of the USA. The missionary map of China was drawn along national and denominational lines and its various institutions dominated by men. Thus the missionary community was uneasy about a non-denominational women's association that freed itself from the oversight of its male counterpart by allying with an international women's organization.

But that was not the only reason the mission community questioned the YWCA. At the turn of the century, the mission community was being reshaped by two developments: the feminization of the mission field and the professionalization of extra-evangelical work. Both developments grew out of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) founded by John R. Mott in 1888. The SVM sought to Christianize the world in one generation by recruiting a younger, college-educated generation for mission work. In its first twenty years, the SVM enlisted over 8,000 zealous volunteers, many of whom were women.

The "feminization" of the mission field changed its social dynamics. The ratio of missionary women to men grew from 55% in 1889, to 57% in 1900, and to 60% in 1914. Moreover, many more single women than single men

were coming to China. In 1910 there were 1,402 male missionaries, 957 missionary wives, and 829 single women in China. Two years later, there were 1,908 men, 1,322 wives, and 1,500 single women. The number of single female missionaries had nearly doubled and the ratio of single women to single men had increased from around 2:1 to a little less than 3:1.[19] For a missionary community that had originally eschewed sending even single men let along single women overseas, this was a disconcerting development.

The missionary community was also changed by the professionalization of extra-evangelical work, such as education and medicine, which brought zealous young female missionaries to China who had more in common with Progressive-era reformers than pious missionary wives. Although they adopted the rhetoric of domesticity, their lives provided Chinese women with an example of how to live independently and contribute to society meaningfully.[20] YWCA secretaries epitomized both trends. They were young, college-trained professionals who worked for a separate, all-female organization. Although initially the YWCA insisted its secretaries formally join a church, they did not care which church. Thus, while these young women were part of the mission community, they also stood apart from it because of their independence and ecumenism. Some missionary women were so threatened by YWCA secretaries that they resisted the secretaries' attempts to start student YWCAs in the schools they ran.[21]

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19 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1929), p. 406; H. G. W. Woodhead, ed., *The China Year Book* (Tientsin and Shanghai: North China Daily News & Herald, 1916), p. 464. For an analysis of the cultural implications of the increase in female missionaries for both American and Chinese women, see Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

20 Gael Graham, "Exercising Control," p. 43.

21 Clarissa Spencer, "Mission and Gentry Schools," 1907, Folder-Reports 1907-1909 /Clarissa Spencer, Shanghai, Private, 1907, Box 396, World China.

At the same time these changes were occurring, the missionary community felt a new sense of legitimacy. The 1900 Boxer uprising, both shocking to foreigners and misunderstood by them, was a catalyst for long delayed reform by the Qing court. The new educational system and the increasing importance of the mass print media, both with roots in the missionary establishment, and the acceptance of Western political and social institutions, confirmed the missionary view that they were bringing civilization to China. They viewed the overthrow of the *ancien régime* in 1911 as a rejection of autocratic rule in favor of democracy.[22] As President Yuan Shikai curried the favor of missionaries and included Chinese Christians in his government, little could shake missionary confidence that they had a vital role to play in the young Republic.[23]

The YWCA movement thus developed in an atmosphere of a tacit acceptance of Western institutional forms and a marginal acceptance of Christianity. But it first had to overcome the suspicions of the missionary community. During her tour of China, World YWCA General Secretary Clarissa Spencer convinced the 1907 Centenary Missionary Conference to support YWCA student associations over separate mission clubs so that there would be a single Christian student movement in China. However, conference delegates suggested the real work of the Association should be reaching girls in government schools.[24]

Reaching government school students, however, proved difficult because

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22 Estelle A. Paddock, "Shanghai—A Sketch," *The Association Monthly*, National Board of The Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America, 5:11 (December 1911), p. 435. "Editorial: The Revolutions and Chinese Missions," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 43 (February 1912), p. 65; "Signs of Progress– A Symposium," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 44 (January 1913), pp. 19-32.

23 H. G. W. Woodhead, ed., *The China Year Book, 1916*, p. 458.

24 Spencer, "Mission and Gentry Schools" and "The Centenary Conference," 1907.

of the slow development of female education and the latent conservatism of school officials who hardly welcomed Christian girls' clubs. The Normal School provided the YWCA entry into Chinese women's education. Because Confucian gender ideology proscribed women from social intercourse with men other than male relatives, women were considered the most appropriate teachers for girls, especially adolescent girls. The school would train Christian-educated female physical education teachers to meet the increasing demand for experts in that field. As government school teachers, graduates would become "an opening wedge" and "a strong link between the schools in which they teach and the Association." They would exert a Christian influence on their students, inspiring them by example.[25]

The school also helped the Association define a place in the emerging public world of women. The creation of separate female-run institutions provided spaces outside of the patriarchal household and male-dominated public sphere where women defined new identities and negotiated new power relations. But while the national YWCA emphasized its relationship to the world of public women, in 1915 it had city associations only in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangdong. The actual dues paying membership was still very small. The creation of the Normal School with its female administrators, expert faculty, progressive curriculum, modern facilities and professional programs was thus an important addition to the YWCA in China.

Advancing the YWCA Movement

The decision to open the Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education was made in 1913. The school opened in 1915 in borrowed facilities.

25 Mayhew to the Foreign Department, "Extracts from Letters," 1919, reel 51.1, YWCA USA.

The YWCA used the Normal School to situate itself in the missionary community, the Chinese state and an emerging public world of women. To advance the YWCA movement, the school not only had to bridge those worlds but also meet their different expectations. The missionary community expected the YWCA to exert a Christian influence on government school students. Chinese reformers wanted trained physical education teachers to strengthen the national body. Chinese women wanted diplomas that would lead to careers.

The YWCA stated the Normal School's purposes in clear and certain terms. Addressing the mission community, the English version of the school's first formal catalog in 1917-1918 stated:

> The Young Women's Christian Association recognizes the unity of all life and so in establishing its work for women aims to develop the physical, mental, social and spiritual phases of life. It therefore provides courses in hygiene and physical education for the development of strong, healthy, and efficient Chinese women; and has established a Normal School of Physical Education to train teachers who shall go out to teach women and girls.[26]

The Chinese catalog's carefully crafted statement elaborated on themes that had a broad appeal, even to the social conservatives who still dominated Chinese women's education. Using formal language, it emphasized that although women's education now incorporated both Chinese and Western methods, physical education was still being overlooked. This reinforced old view that women were physically weak and incapable of considering serious matters. However, the YWCA was correcting through the Normal School program. Their students would graduate and go out into society as good teachers, and help educate kind wives and able mothers who would change old

26 "General Statement," Young Woman's Christian Association of China Catalog of the Normal School of Physical Education, 1917-1918, U121-0-15-[1], SMA.

customs by introducing new standards.[27] For whatever reasons, this separate appeal to Chinese educators quickly disappeared. The Chinese statement of purpose in the 1923-1924 catalog was a direct translation of the English quoted above.[28]

The school catalogs also featured faculty, curriculum, facilities, and graduation rates. The hallmark of the Normal School was its professional faculty. The school initially combined the expertise and experience of Abby Shaw Mayhew (梅愛培) and Chen Yingmei (陳英梅). Mayhew graduated from Wellesley in 1885. She entered the Sargent School for Physical Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1891 but left to become the physical education director for the Minneapolis YWCA. In 1897, she took over the physical education program for women at the University of Wisconsin. At the core of Mayhew's philosophy was the belief that physical education was a spiritual profession, a way of continuing Christ's work on earth. Coppock met Mayhew at the YWCA Training School in New York City in 1911 and knew she was the type of dedicated Christian educator needed in China.[29] Chen Yingmei was born in Guangzhou in 1890 and attended McTyeire School (中西女校) in Shanghai before traveling to the United States in 1906. After spending several years on preparatory schooling, she entered Wellesley College in 1909. After graduation, she remained an additional year

27 *Bianyan*弁言 (Forward), *Jidujiao zhonghua nü qingnian hui tiyu shifan xuexiao zhangcheng zhonghua minguo liunian*基督教中華女青年會體育師範學校章程，中華民國六年 (Young Woman's Christian Association of China, Catalog of the Normal School of Physical Education, 1917-1918), U121-0-15-[1], SMA (hereafter Catalog, 1917-1918).

28 *Bianyan*弁言 (Forward), *Jidujiao zhonghua nü qingnian hui tiyu shifan xuexiao zhangcheng zhonghua minguo shiernian* 基督教中華女青年會體育師範學校章程，中華民國十二年, 5 and "General Statement," Young Woman's Christian Association of China, Catalog of the Normal School of Physical Education, 1923-1924, 1 U121-0-15-[1], SMA (hereafter Catalog, 1923-1924).

29 Debbie Cottrell, "Women's Minds, Women's Bodies," pp. 343-362.

to earn a professional certificate in physical education. The YWCA hired her in 1913 to assist Mayhew. Until the Normal School opened, she taught in a half dozen local schools. A 1915 brochure made sure Chen's qualifications were known by picturing her in full academic regalia.[30]

Chinese language versions of school catalogs initially emphasized faculty qualifications. While the English versions provided only the faculty's names and positions, the Chinese catalogs included faculty nationalities, listed their educational and career accomplishments, and their teaching positions. Mayhew's entry noted both her degree from Wellesley and her tenure as head of physical education at the University of Wisconsin. Chen Yingmei's listing included her degree from Wellesley and her professional certificate in physical education.[31] The difference between English and Chinese catalogs suggests the YWCA assumed that the missionary community knew its faculty were qualified while they wanted Chinese reformers, educators and potential students to know exactly how qualified they were. After 1920 Chinese catalogs eliminated faculty nationality and educational information. The reason is uncertain. Perhaps the Association believed the Normal School had established its reputation. Given the political climate, perhaps they wanted to de-emphasize the school's foreign faculty.

The school's curriculum was equally important in establishing the

30 YWCA brochures spell her name "Chun." They also give her married name as "Lin." Chen Yingmei, *Youmei tongxue lu* 遊美同學錄 (Who's Who of American Returned Students) (Peking: Tsing Hua College, 1917; reprint San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, Inc., 1978); "The Late Mrs. D. Y. Lin," Record Group 8, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Emily Case Mills, China Records Project, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, Connecticut (hereafter CRP/YDL), p. 30; "Gateway to Progress for Women, A Report of the Work of the Young Women's Christian Associations of China," (YWCA of China, Shanghai, 1915), pp.11-12, File 222-1708, Record Group 46, CRP/YDL, 35; *The China Year Book 1928*, "Chapter XXIV: Who's Who," Ling Tao-yang (hereafter Chen Yingmei biographies).

31 Catalog, 1917-1918 (Chinese).

Normal School as a leader in its field. Both English and Chinese catalogs listed the school's courses in physiology, biology, and chemistry, as well as a wide range of technical, professional, and pedagogical courses. Mayhew knew the importance of such courses in establishing the school's reputation. When she investigated Chinese physical education schools after her arrival in 1913, she found only three. One was in Guangdong and the other two were in Shanghai, the Patriotic Girls' School (愛國女校) and the China Women's Gymnastic School (上海中華體育學校). Each gave either a six-month or a one-year course. According to Mayhew, these programs failed to teach pedagogy or provide instruction in anatomy and physiology and thus were "starting even farther back than we were fifty years ago when the interest in physical education was just being aroused in this country [USA]."[32]

At the beginning of its second year, the Normal School extended its curriculum to two years. According to Mayhew, that brought the school to the attention of Chinese educators. Every normal school in Jiangsu province sent candidates to the 1916 class. Mayhew quoted from a letter written by the principal of Jiangsu First Provincial Girls' School: "We must have a girl in your school. I have picked out four. If the first does not suit, we want you to see the others. I want you to have our best."[33] School catalogs supported what otherwise read as hyperbole. Three girls from Jiangsu schools were part of the first graduating class in 1918. One was from Jiangsu First Provincial Girls' Normal School and returned there to teach.[34] All school catalogs listed the

32 Mayhew, "The Need for the School and its Influence," 1920, reel 52.2, YWCA USA.

33 Mayhew to the Foreign Department, "Extracts from Letters," 1919, reel 51.1, YWCA USA.

34 *Jidujiao zhonghua nü qingnian hui fushu tiyu shifan xuexiao zhangcheng, Zhonghua minguo banian* 基督教中華女青年會附屬體育師範學校章程，中華民國八年改訂 [Young Woman's Christian Association of China, Catalog of the Normal School of Physical Education, 1919-1920;], p. 9, U121-0-15-[1], SMA 9 (hereafter Catalog, 1919 -1920).

graduates' first teaching position. Like the qualifications of its faculty, the success of its graduates was important to the school's image.

Also important to the Normal School's image were the spaces that made the female body visible. The "visibility" of the female body had enormous cultural resonance. A 1915 brochure titled "The Gateway of Progress for Women" included many photographs of Chinese women and girls, including one of a young Chinese woman standing on a tennis court, racket in hand, her gaze boldly meeting the camera.[35] Two years later American secretary Jane Ward Shaw, in her account of her first year in China, made special note of watching Chinese women play tennis on the grounds of the YWCA compound: "Now that we know more of Chinese life and custom we may view with some surprise this tennis court for women. What more natural? Ah, but a tennis court for *Chinese* women -- to one who knows old China the thing would be unthinkable!"[36]

Although Shaw wrote for a foreign readership, and perhaps saw through the lens of Orientalism, she still captured the "spectacle" of China's new physical culture which made the female body visible not as "still life" but as "body-in-motion." School administrators realized the potency of that message and used photography as a means to capture the female body in motion in order to promote the school. School catalogs frequently pictured girls engaging in sports or gymnastics. The 1923 catalog showed girls trying out for the volleyball team that would represent China at the upcoming Far Eastern Games. As Shaw noted, the mere idea that young women would represent China at an international sports event had once been "unthinkable."[37]

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35 "Gateway to Progress for Women," p. 36.

36 Jane Shaw Ward, *Shanghai Sketches* (New York: The Women's Press, 1917), pp. 35-36. Although in 1927 Ward was in her first years in China, she was one of about a half dozen American secretaries who remained there for several decades until forced to leave during the War of Resistance with Japan.

37 *Yuandong yundong zhongquo duiqiu xuanshou zai benxiao caochang yusai* 遠東運動中

Women were able to play tennis on the YWCA grounds because in March 1916 the Normal School moved to its first real campus. The Association rented a vacant compound on Kunshan Road (崑山路) from the Southern Methodist Mission to house the national, Shanghai city association offices and the Normal School.[38] The 1917-1918 Chinese catalog described the new facilities in great detail. It gave the exact dimensions of the gymnasium and listed the types and quantities of every single piece of gymnastic and sports equipment. It even noted that the sand tennis court dried quickly after a rainfall.[39] The two-year curriculum and a new well-equipped facility meant the school had few if any equals in its special field in China.

As impressive as the new facility was, the school quickly outgrew it. In 1919 the YWCA National Committee borrowed money to buy land and build a separate campus for the Normal School on Jingzhou Road (荊州路) at the east end of Tangshan Road (塘山路). Nothing could have indicated the school's importance to the Association, or how central it was to its vision for advancing the YWCA movement in China than taking this extraordinary step. It invested in a new campus for the Normal School even though it still rented or borrowed buildings to house its national headquarters and six city associations.

Completed within a matter of months, the new campus consisted of three buildings surrounding a center courtyard. The main structure was an administration building with class rooms and four offices on the first floor, and dormitory rooms on the second. The second building was a two-story gymnasium with offices and a dressing room on the first floor and a four-room infirmary on the second. The third building was a residence hall with a large

國隊球選手在本校操場預賽 [Volleyball Tryouts for the Far Eastern (Olympic) Games on the School's Athletic Field], Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese).

38 Mayhew, "Annual Report of the YWCA of China," 1915, p. 8, U121-0-19-[1], SMA. English documents spell it Quinsan Road. It was between Range Road and Boone Road in the northeast quadrant of the International Settlement.

39 Catalog, 1917-1918 (Chinese).

living room, a small library, and dining room on the first floor, and dormitory rooms on the second. The two dormitories accommodated fifty-six girls. On the grounds were two tennis courts and a hockey field.[40]

The new facility reflected the Association's confidence that the school was fulfilling its goals. In 1919 Grace Coppock wrote "It is looked upon generally as by far the best school of its kind in China."[41] But how successful was the school? The following table provides key statistics.

Year	Enrollment	Graduation Numbers
1915-1916	6	6 (one-year certificate)
1916-1917	26	no graduates (first year of 2-year program)
1917-1918	32	8
1918-1919	34	18
1919-1920	24	11
1920-1921	30	12
1921-1922	35	16
1922-1923	30	14
1923-1924	30	no statistics

Table 1: Normal School Enrollment and Graduation Statistics [42]

Table 1 suggests the Normal School met with some success. It had consistently good enrollment rates, although it never maximized its dormitory capacity. Though there was some attrition, the school graduated the majority

40 Ada Gabrill, "Buildings at Kinchow Road, YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education," reel 52.2, YWCA USA.

41 Grace Coppock to Clarissa Spencer, May 19, 1919, Box 396, World China.

42 Statistics vary. "National Physical Training School: History," n.d. (1919); Gabrill, "YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education," 1920; "Normal Physical Training School in Shanghai," n.d. (1920); Hester Carter, "Annual Report for 1920," April 21, 1921; Vera V. Barger, "YWCA Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education," *Report of the YWCA for 1921*, *Supplement III* pp. 13-20; *Jidujiao zhonghua nü qingnian hui tiyu shifan xuexiao zhangcheng zhonghua minguo shiernian* 基督教中華女青年會體育師範學校章程,中華民國十年 [YWCA of China, Catalog of the Normal School of Physical Education, 1921-1922], reel 52.2, YWCA USA; Catalogs for 1917-1918, 1919-1920, 1923-1924.

of its senior students. How does this compare with other institutions? The only possible comparison is with Ginling College, the union college for women in Nanjing also founded in 1915. Although the Normal School was a two-year institution and Ginling would eventually become a four-year institution, this partial comparison helps situate the Normal School in the emerging sphere of women's higher education.

During their second year of operation when both schools had first and second year students, Ginling had a total of 13 students and the Normal School had 26. In 1917-1918, Ginling had three classes (freshmen, sophomore, junior) totaling 23 students and the Normal School first and second year students totaled 32. In 1918-1919, Ginling enrolled its fourth freshmen class. Now a full-fledged four-year college, Ginling had 33 students and the Normal School 34. In spring 1919 Ginling graduated 5 girls, the Normal School 18.[43] Of note is the fact the overall enrollment in both schools was small. The graduation rate at the Normal School was higher, as should be expected in a school with a two-year as opposed to a four-year course of study. However, as will be discussed below, up until 1919 the Normal School's entrance requirements were skewed to favor mission school graduates; Ginling's applicants were almost all mission school graduates and from the beginning it had more stringent requirements, including some knowledge of English. Nonetheless, this comparison suggests that the Normal School had made a relatively sound beginning in Christian higher education for women.

The Normal School's enrollment and graduation statistics need to be examined in a broader context. Admission standards kept enrollment at moderate levels but guaranteed high graduation numbers. However, initial standards were not the same for mission and government school applicants. The English version of the 1917-1918 and 1918-1919 catalogs stated that

43 Ginling catalogs for 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922, Folder 1168, "Ginling College Alumnae Statistics, November 1949," Box 4, Group 11, CRP/YDSL.

mission school applicants needed two years of high school at a mission school but government school students must have completed a course of study and have a diploma. Chinese catalogs did not mention the requirements for mission school students but stated the requirements for government school applicants in more stringent terms: applicants were required to have middle school diplomas and the qualifications to study at the normal school or college level. Both English and Chinese catalogs noted that government school applicants were required to present two letters of recommendation, one from their principal and the other from some person known to a YWCA secretary.[44] Those differences were eliminated when the Normal School raised admission standards around 1920, requiring applicants to have middle school diplomas and also pass entrance examinations in Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry and basic English.[45] In 1923, Normal School Director Norah Jervis (哲美得) noted that new entrance examination standards resulted in the school turning away ten out of twenty-six applicants, leaving an entering class of only sixteen.[46]

The clearest indicators of the school's success was the fact its graduates found teaching positions. All but one student from the first graduating class found jobs as physical education teachers, and that student married. Most graduates returned to their former institutions to teach because those schools had given them scholarships.[47] Thus the Normal School could claim it had fulfilled its primary goals of placing at least some of its graduates in government schools, increasing the number of competently trained physical education teachers, and providing young women with the ability to choose their own life path, or at least a small step on that path.

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44 Catalog, 1917-1918; 1918-1919 (English, 2; Chinese, 3).

45 Catalog, 1921-1922 (English, 2; Chinese, 4-5).

46 Norah Jervis, "1923 Report," reel 52.2, YWCA USA.

47 Catalog, 1919-1920 (Chinese, 9).

The initial success in placing graduates in teaching positions, however, was only part of a larger picture. The biographical account of 1920 graduate Chen Yongsheng (陳詠聲) in the final section of this study, suggests that personal ambition motivated graduates and that careers and marriage could conflict. In 1921, two of the eight 1918 graduates had married, one was a YWCA secretary, two taught at mission schools and three at government normal schools. Two years later, only four of the 1918 graduates still worked, one as a YWCA secretary and three as teachers, two of whom taught in government schools.[48] Information on the employment of the school's sixty-five graduates from the first five graduating classes is given below.

Year	# of Graduates	Places of Employment				
		YWCA Secretary	YWCA Normal School	Chinese Normal Schools	Middle Schools	Colleges
1918	8	1		2	1	
1919	18		3	2	4	3
1920	11	1		3	3	
1921	12	1		4	7	
1922	16	1		3	10	
	65	4	3	14	25	3

Table 2: Employment of Normal School Graduates, Fall 1923[49]

Whether or not these graduates fulfilled the goals of interjecting Christian values into government school culture, whether or not they strengthened young women's bodies so they could become "Republican mothers," and whether or not they were exemplars of new womanhood cannot be fully known. YWCA reports were almost always positive. They occasionally noted the "splendid work" graduates did leading quiet Christian lives and "reaching

48 Catalog, 1921-1922 (Chinese, 12); Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese, 18).

49 Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese, 18-23).

girls."[50] The fact that in 1923, forty-nine out of sixty-five graduates were employed, two-thirds in government or private schools, suggests that the Association rightly considered the school a success. However, statistics provide only a partial picture. School catalogs had stopped listing the positions graduates were hired to fill, and, as Chen Yongsheng's life story will suggest, graduates who chose to pursue professional careers often found gainful employment in whatever field they could.

The school and its graduates thus advanced the YWCA name, if not the movement per se. Graduates taught in major cities across China, with the majority teaching in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin and Nanjing.[51] Statistics, however, are static. Every time a graduate moved or changed jobs, the name of the Normal School became better known.

The Gospel and the Student Body

As heightened anti-imperialist and anti-Christian activities altered China's sociopolitical climate after May 1919, the school maintained its enrollment figures but with notable changes. In 1920, ten entering students came from normal schools, seven from government schools and only four from mission schools. Only nine of the thirty-five students were Christian.[52] That these figures had not been included in earlier reports suggests that some noteworthy change was being noticed by the school's administrators. The numbers for 1921-1922 were similar. Fourteen of the eighteen entering students came from government or non-mission schools and only six of the thirty-four students attending the school in 1921 were professed Christians.[53]

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50 "Normal Physical Training School in Shanghai."

51 Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese, 18-23).

52 Carter, "Annual Report for 1920."

53 Barger, "YWCA Normal School," 14, 18.

A major reason for this development was the new admission standard that no longer privileged mission school students. As well, Christian girls could attend a Christian college whose entrance requirements were similar but led to a four-year degree. Although in 1920s there were only two independent women's colleges, Ginling in Nanjing and Huanan in Fuzhou, seven other Christian universities had opened their doors to women.[54]

Since one of the Normal School's primary goals was training Christian educators, the increasing numbers of non-Christian students complicated that goal but provided an expected opportunity for evangelical work. Although their efforts may be criticized as "cultural imperialism," the religiosity of YWCA women was never one-dimensional. While Christianity centered their lives, how it centered their lives differed. Some felt obliged to win souls for Christ, some simply sought to live Christ-like lives, and still others embraced Christian social activism. Further, not all YWCA secretaries who came to China remained professing Christians.

Normal School faculty presented their evangelical efforts in terms of education rather than indoctrination, seeking to guide rather than pressure young girls into a new spiritual awakening.[55] School administrator Ruth Parker wrote with great sensitivity about the dilemma girls faced when they converted to Christianity:

> The strains of living in two worlds, the old and the new, which so often chokes and sometimes wrecks the lives of converts to Christianity, is something which is almost too staggering for us Westerners to understand. Often I think of the parables of Jesus about counting the cost. These remarks are very telling. First, the author drew on contemporary discourse that often of discipleship.

54 "Colleges and Universities," *The China Year Book 1924/5* and "Enrollment of Women's Students," *The China Year Book 1926/1927*.

55 Gabrill, "The Y.W.C.A. Normal School."

> Certainly these girls are in the way of a much deeper understanding of these warning words than those brought up in an environment where conventional Christianity is the expected thing.[56]

These remarks are very telling. First, the author drew on contemporary discourse that often invoked the image of Chinese women straddling traditional and new China and applied that image to the effort to bridge two cultural traditions.[57] Second, Parker's words suggest the school's faculty discussed the struggles of new converts to understand the Christian message and practice their new faith in a hostile environment. They almost became hesitant to accept any but the most ardent communicants.

Thus the Normal School faculty recognized that true conversion was a lengthy process. They even made up a new term, "not-yet-Christian," to describe girls who they believed had internalized the Christian message but who were not yet ready to profess.[58] In 1921 bible teacher Phoebe Hoh (郝映青) wrote:

> It is difficult for us, whose contact with Christian truths and Christian principles began with our earliest breath, to realize how utterly foreign in every sense Christianity and its forms of worship seem to those who are for the first time experiencing them. This means surely that we should be exceedingly scrupulous to avoid urging a premature decision, while at the same time we continually fan the flame of interest and try to strengthen every

56 Ruth L. Parker, "Annual Report of Ruth L. Parker, National Training School of Physical Education," January 1922, 1, Folder-Minutes and Reports 1922, Box 398, World YWCA China Files.

57 For example, see Hu Binxia, "The Women of China," *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, January 10, 1914 (the substance of an address given to women students at Cornell University on November 12, 1913).

58 Gabrill, "The Y.W.C.A. Normal School".

impulse of the soul toward Jesus Christ.[59]

Vera Barger (柏恪非), the school's director from 1921-1923, expressed the same concern: "Unless we develop the spiritual life of these girls we have no right to call this a Christian school. Two years is a very short time indeed to get girls interested and to know enough of Christianity to be willing to become Christians."[60]

The mix of students with different religious perspectives made bible class unusually "stimulating." Students asked "Why should we moderns study this old history which is so hard to understand? Why is there no modern Bible?" "I have two questions: first, what is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? God will take care of us; why should we become Christians? Second, if we try to do good and be good, is not that enough? Why join the Christian society?" There were so many misunderstandings of the Old Testament the faculty considered eliminating its study. They thought to replace it with a comparative course based on the religious background of the girls so that "it may be possible to make a real study of the spiritual heritage and religious practices with which our students are familiar." [61] Student questions may have reflected curiosity, genuine engagement or youthful challenge to authority. Whatever motivated them, the school responded by creating a department of religious education during its final years. It also divided the first year Bible class into two divisions. The first division, for non-Christians, was a general study of religion in China with a view toward creating an interest in religion as a "force in human life" while "developing an interest in Christianity. The second division, for Christian students, was a study of the history and evolution of

59 Barger, "1921 Report," 17.

60 Barger, "Report for May and June 1923, Normal School of Hygiene and Physical Education," 3, Folder - Minutes/Reports 1923, Box 400, World YWCA China Files.

61 Parker, "Annual Report," pp. 2-3.

Old Testament religion, along with the nature of leadership and the "right way of using the Bible."[62]

Changing Times, Changing Priorities

In 1923 the YWCA national committee began discussing affiliating the Normal School with a four-year college. The decision to affiliate was surprising given the Association's investment in the new campus and the school's relative success. There were a number of reasons for that decision which, when taken collectively, suggest a fundamental reorientation of the YWCA's priorities.

The first reason was a reevaluation of the school. While on furlough in the United States, Abby Mayhew found that colleagues at Mills College and the University of Wisconsin questioned the school's two-year program and suggested the school was not adhering to very high standards.[63] As a result, the school's faculty grew concerned that they provided students with only a rudimentary knowledge and barely adequate professional training.[64]

The YWCA had hoped the school's graduates would be an "opening wedge" with government schools. After1923, the increasingly anti-Christian atmosphere made training Christian educators for government schools, with the hope that they would exert a Christian influence, a questionable goal. Then in the early 1920s, the Chinese YWCA embraced Christian internationalism. After World War I, the World YWCA claimed the causes of peace and social justice as women's issues. Among its priorities was plight of industrial workers, and world YWCA leaders urged member associations to campaign

62 Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese 3, 10-11; English, 6, 12).

63 Mayhew to Miss Margaret Mead, Chairman Foreign Section, May 8, 1922, reel 51.3, YWCA USA.

64 Norah Jervis, "First Semester, 1923," reel 52.2, YWCA USA.

for legislation to remediate industrial evils.[65] Grace Coppock, who in 1919 had praised the success of the Normal School, attended the 1920 World YWCA Council Meeting and was inspired by that message. Just as she brought Abby Mayhew to China in 1912 to promote physical education, in 1921 she brought over Agatha Harrison to lead industrial reform. By 1923 the Chinese YWCA had made industrial reform a priority. Another message coming out of the 1920 World Council meeting was to cooperate with other groups in the spirit of "disinterested service." The National Committee was thus receptive to the idea of merging the Normal School with another institution. Ginling College was interested in affiliation for its own reasons. Evidence suggests Ginling president Matilda Thurston had wanted to see the Normal School move to the Ginling campus years earlier and now that she had her chance she negotiated an agreement favorable to the college.[66] In early 1924, the YWCA national committee approved a preliminary agreement with Ginling College and the Normal School began its ninth year on Ginling's campus.

This is not to say everyone agreed. Several secretaries thought the Association was risking its identity by emphasizing "disinterested service." Publication Department head Helen Thoburn stated in no uncertain terms that she believed the YWCA had cooperated "until no one knows what the YWCA proper is," referring specifically to the affiliation of the Normal School with Ginling and to the various industrial projects.[67] Some YWCA women at the headquarters of the YWCA of the USA also questioned the decision. They had

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65 *World YWCA Statements of Policy: 100 Years of Forward with Vision*, *Adopted at Legislative Meetings,* Vol. I: 1894-1994 (n.d.) (World Young Women's Christian Association), pp. 97-99.

66 Report from Matilda Thurston to Ginling College Board of Control regarding upcoming May 13, 1924 Board Meeting, written April 28, 1924, 2, reel 52.2-National Program/ Physical Education, YWCA USA.

67 "Annul Report of National Committee, December 1, 1925, Helen Thoburn, General Report," 4, Folder-China Reports 1925-1926, Box 403, World China.

a vested interest in the school because so many American secretaries had been recruited to serve on the school's faculty. Mayhew answered those critics by stating the school was "another instances the Association having done a piece of pioneer work and having brought that work to a place where it could be better done through another agency, is glad to turn it over and help in a union work."[68]

The Normal School and the Lives of Chinese Women

This study's final question concerns how Chinese women used the school, what choices they made and why they made them. Material on women's lives is limited. What exists suggest that while women exercised considerable agency, China's ever-shifting sociopolitical landscape did not allow them to live their lives completely on their own terms.

The Faculty

The Normal School faculty ranged from seven teachers in 1917-1918 to eleven during its final year. During that time, a dozen or so Chinese women and a little over half-dozen American women taught at the school; the longest any women stayed was three years. Bowing to traditional gender distinctions, men always taught Chinese literature and Chinese boxing. Women taught all other courses.[69] School catalogs provided faculty names and some other

68 Draft "Why Unite the Normal School of Physical Education and Hygiene with Ginling College," reel 52.2, "Combining the Normal School of Physical Education and Hygiene with Ginling College," June 1924, reel 51.1, YWCA USA.

69 Alice Huie (許雅麗) was the second daughter of Huie Kin, the pastor at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in New York City and Louise Van Arnan, the daughter of a Dutch American manufacturer. She graduated from Columbia with a degree in physical education. Huie taught at the Normal School from 1919 until her marriage to James Yen (晏陽初) in 1921. Although born in New York City, she was listed as a Chinese faculty

information. Of the Chinese faculty, the most biographical data exists on Chen Yingmei and Phoebe Hoh.

Chen Yingmei exemplified the type of professionally trained woman the YWCA wanted to hire, but also the dilemma it faced when such talented women married.[70] Chen assisted Mayhew in establishing the school and served as its director and teacher until her marriage to Ling Daoyang (凌道揚), a graduate of Massachusetts Agricultural College and Yale Forestry School, in 1918. The Lings had four children. Chen Yingmei resigned when she married, but remained in Shanghai as an advisor to the School while her husband worked in Nanjing. School catalogs listed her as a school advisor until tue affiliation with Ginling in 1924, but after 1920 that position was honorary. In 1920 the Ling's moved to Qingdao where Ling Daoyang served as Commissioner of Forestry. Chen resumed her career part-time, taking a job as physical education director of a girls' school. She also served as a non-resident member and vice-chair of the YWCA national committee from 1922 to 1923. The Ling's moved back to Nanjing in 1929 when the Ministry of Industry named Ling Daoyang Director of Forestry. Ginling College President Wu Yifang (吳貽芳) hired Chen to direct a short course in physical education. She also served on the National Board of Physical Education, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, editing textbooks and organizing track and field meets. In 1934 and 1935, she chaired the Nanjing YWCA governing board.

In 1936 Ling Daoyang became Director of Agriculture and Forestry for Guangdong province. Chen Yingmei helped train women to direct physical educational projects for the province, although where and in what capacity is not clear. After the outbreak of the war, she became involved with women's war relief as a member of at least five women's organizations, including the

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from Guangdong Province in the 1919-1920 Chinese Catalog.

70 See Chen Yingmei biographies.

Canton YWCA. She entered the hospital with heart problems and died in August 1938.

Slightly less is known about Phoebe Hoh. She was not a trained physical education teacher. Her main qualification appears to be that she was a college graduate. Hoh served as the Normal School vice-principal and taught bible classes from 1921 to 1923.[71] Little is known about her early life except that she was born in Wuchang and attended a mission school run by Swedish Lutherans, to whom she expressed deep gratitude. Hoh enrolled in Ginling in 1916, and thus was a member of the college's second freshmen class. She was thus not that much older that the students she would later teach at the Normal School. After graduating from Ginling in 1920, she studied in Beijing for a year, came to the Normal School in 1921, and then left two years later to teach Chinese literature at Ginling.

In January 1927 the Ginling College Executive Committee appointed Phoebe Hoh vice-president, making her, rather than WuYifang, the first Chinese woman named to a significant leadership position at Ginling. However, she never assumed that office because of the Nanjing Incident. Hoh helped protect Ginling's foreign staff from marauding soldiers. One account described how she faced soldiers at the college gate and, with a rifle pointed at her chest, refused to hand over the remaining foreigners who were hiding in the buildings behind her. In appreciation, so that account goes, the college sent her to the United States to fulfill a longstanding dream of earning a doctorate in social welfare. Hoh apparently had a nervous breakdown while at Columbia Teachers College but eventually returned to teach at Ginling. She helped administer the college during its wartime exile in Chengdu and also

71 This biography based on Hoh, Phoebe Y. T., Student Transcripts, Folder 2652, Box 129; Matilda Thurston to Board of Control, February 15, 1927, Folder 2612, Box 126; Narola Rivenburg to Mrs. T. D. Macmillan, January 27, 1935, Folder 2756, Box 137, UBCHEA.

participated in the college's rural development program.

The differences between Chen Yingmei and Phoebe Hoh's training and life choices make comparison difficult. Certainly, educational work centered their professional lives, and both women remained attached to major Christian women's institutions, Chen directly with the YWCA, Hoh directly with Ginling College. Whether they conceived of themselves as leading lives of service or fulfilling personal ambitions cannot be ascertained from their fragmentary and, in Chen's case laudatory, biographies. However, it is likely that they thought of service and personal ambition as complementary rather than contradictory.

The Students

School catalogs provide the names of all graduates, their home towns, the middle or normal schools they attended before enrolling in the Normal School, and the schools that hired them. These statistics indicate that the Normal School attracted students from all over China, although the largest number came from Jiangsu province. The school also placed the majority of graduates in professional positions. Comparing early and later catalogs provides some information on graduates' employment history. Annual reports and correspondence letters provide additional information.

It is clear Normal School students were not a quiescent group as they were swept up in the May Fourth movement of 1919. They participated in demonstrations, organized a student union branch, and went on strike along with students across China. When their strike extended into June, Mayhew cancelled the 1919 graduation ceremonies and mailed students their graduation certificates. She later commented "We regretted the strike but were in sympathy with its object. The strike brought some good results and made

students even more strongly organized for doing splendid things."[72]

When students returned to classes in the fall, they continued to participate in the student movement through the school's student union branch. As their involvement continued into the winter months, one faculty member commented that the students' involvement was "perhaps too much." On April 14, 1920 the students joined a new strike. At the end of the week, the YWCA executive and physical education committees met and officially expressed sympathy with the strike's aims and approved Normal School students participating as long as they studied part-time at hours arranged so as not to interfere with strike work. Classes were scheduled in the evening and all nonprofessional classes were eliminated. Students followed this revised curriculum for a month then the two YWCA committees met again. As students had been unable to handle their course work effectively because of the demands of strike work, the committees reversed themselves and re-instituted regular classes requiring students to return full time or be dismissed. Three seniors and six juniors refused. Two of the juniors later petitioned for and were granted readmission.[73]

The closest we have to a complete story of a Normal School student comes from Wang Zhang's interview with Chen Yongsheng for her book *Women and the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories.*[74] Chen was born in Changsha in 1900 to a progressive family. Her father refused to allow his daughters' feet to be bound. He also sent them to school. At the age of sixteen, Chen decided not to marry and, after an unsuccessful attempt to arrange a match, her parents acquiesced and allowed her to continue her

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72 Mayhew, "Annual Report, December 31, 1919," reel 51.3, YWCA USA.

73 Carter, "Annual Report for 1920."

74 Except where otherwise noted, biographical information on Chen Yongsheng is from Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 259-286.

studies. Her reason was she wished to be patriotic and serve China. Chen went to live with an uncle in Shanghai to study physical education because "a strong nation depends on a strong race, to have a strong race, women's education and the health of women's bodies are important …… That is why I wanted to devote myself to physical education."[75]

Chen wanted to study at the China Women's Gymnastic School but, as it was closed when she first arrived in Shanghai, she attended the Patriotic Girls' School. When the Gymnastic School reopened, she transferred. After graduating, she remained to teach for one semester. In 1918 she entered the YWCA Normal School. Her name was listed with other 1918 first year students in the 1919-1920 school catalog.[76]

Chen said little about her studies at the Normal School except that she participated in the May Fourth movement and was a member of the communication department of the Shanghai Student Union. Her commitment to her education was her priority. While she must have participated in the 1920 strike, she heeded the call to return to classes for her name is listed with other 1920 graduates.[77]

Chen may have conceived of an "ideal" job for she changed jobs several times in the first years after graduation, always having a reason why the job did not work out or was not the "right fit." Her job changes explain why for no job is listed for her in the 1923-1924 school catalog.[78] Chen eventually returned to Shanghai where a Normal School classmate helped arrange a scholarship for her through the Baptist Church to study at Baylor College for Women. She graduated from Baylor in 1927 with a major in English and a minor in education. After returning to China, she again moved from job to job,

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75 Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, p. 262.

76 Catalog, 1919-1920 (Chinese, 11).

77 Catalog, 1923-1924 (Chinese, 20).

78 *Ibid.*

sometimes teaching physical education, other times taking up administrative positions. She even served as General Secretary of the Hangzhou city YWCA but left that job because she hated the endless fundraising. When Liu Zhan'en, (劉湛恩), president of the University of Shanghai (formerly Baptist College), offered her a job as physical education professor in 1931, she accepted.

Once again the job was short-lived but for reasons other than Chen's personal dissatisfactions. During the 1932 Shanghai War, Japanese troops took over the school. The school's temporary facilities had no space for physical education. Chen eventually found a job as a physical education teacher at the Shanghai Municipal Council Girls' School where she taught from 1932-1943.

Chen's story may not have been typical but it is suggestive. She appeared to have been inspired by the same reform discourse that influenced the YWCA to establish the Normal School, the idea of training the body for China. She does not mention being stirred by the YWCA's goal of training Christian educators. Rather, like many of her contemporaries, she was stirred by nationalism, and by personal ambition. Her training at the Normal School was a marketable skill and remained so throughout her professional life. The key to the longevity of her career, however, was as much her personal network as her training. She used YWCA contacts very effectively, though she never internalized the Association Christian culture or sense of community. Finally, her story illustrates how China's ever-shifting sociopolitical landscape buffeted an individual's life, just as it did the life of the Normal School.

Conclusion

The YWCA used the Normal School for Hygiene and Physical Education to advance the YWCA movement in China during its formative years. The Association's investment in the Normal School was both strategic and tactical. It was the centerpiece of a strategy to define a place for the Association in the

rapidly changing China of the late 1910s. Tactically, the Association's members used the school to find a niche in a missionary community suspicious of a women's organization, provide the Association with a way to participate in the transformation of China's national body, and enable it to maintain its autonomy as separate female-run institutions. In turn, the missionary community ceded the YWCA responsibility for reaching–and Christianizing–girls in China's new public education system. And the Normal School trained young women to take their place as educational leaders in China's reforming state and society and train the next generation of Republican mothers. The school became a foundational institution in China's emerging public world of women.

The Normal School's faculty, curriculum, and facilities brought it to the attention of educators in Jiangxi province and beyond. Although by modern standards it was quite small, the school's faculty and student body numbers were similar to other Christian schools of higher education for women. Throughout China, women made up a small percentage of the youth pursuing higher education. Statistics suggest the Normal School succeeded in its fundamental mission: it graduated physical education teachers who found jobs in both mission and public schools. It is impossible to know whether graduates interjected Christian values into student life or trained future mothers to be citizens of the Republic. But the school helped a small number of women obtain the education they needed to define at least a few years of their lives on their own terms, and in some cases more.

The life stories of women associated with the school, however, suggest it is impossible to compose the archetype "new women" of China. Chen Yingmei was born in 1890 and Chen Yongsheng in 1900. While they were only ten years apart in age, in a rapidly changing China, they belonged to different "cultural" generations. Chen Yongsheng's life illustrates how political and cultural developments in the 1910s influenced adolescent girls to

make different life choices than Chen Yingmei, who had already completed her education and begun her career. According to Chen Yongsheng, nationalism led her to vow never to marry and to spend her life serving her country. Probably no less nationalistic, Chen Yingmei married and became the "kind wife and good mother" mentioned in early Normal School catalogs. But she also continued to work, if only part time, and remained active in the YWCA and other service organization. While women from both generations considered themselves to be "new" women in so far as they led public lives, they perhaps used very different cultural terms to define what it meant to be "new."

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基督教女青年會與中國女子體育, 1915-1925

李　莉　思

摘　　要

本文探討自辛亥革命後十數年中，基督教女青年會如何利用女青年會的體育師範學校來推動中國的女青年會事業。作爲現代教育機構，這些女子師範學校由女性管理，並對女青年作職業培訓。作者認爲基督教女青年會的領袖們基於現實的考慮，利用師範學校的形式以確保教會學校的地位和贏得中國教育改革者的承認，並得以參與有關婦女的公共事務。同時，師範學校的目的也在于激勵那些想要爲國家建設做貢獻的中國婦女和那些想要「走向社會」的新婦女。

關鍵詞：基督教女青年會、體育師範學校、體育、新婦女、梅愛培、陳英梅、郝映青、陳泳聲