The Establishment of Educational Administration in local Society during Late Ch'ing China: The Aspects of Kiangsu, Chekiang and Anhwei

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The introduction of modern education in late Ch'ing China began with the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898. During this reform and the New Policy Reform that followed, the central government expected local elites to promote modern education under its control.

This article analyzes the establishment of local educational administration in the lower Yangtze provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang and Anhwei. According to the gazetteers of these provinces, educational administrative organization such as the education office (学務公所) and the educational society (學務公會) had already been organized by the local elites in many counties prior to the establishment of educational exhortation bureaus (勸學所) and the educational associations (教育會) in 1906. In these counties, despite reorganization implemented by the central government, numerous educational exhortation bureaus and educational associations were different from the usual establishments.

1). In Wuhsien (呉縣), Ch'angchou (長州), Yuanhe (元和) in Suchou, K'ung shan (崑山), and Hsin'yang (新陽), numerous bureaus and associations were concerned with education of the entire region which had been divided into two or three counties by the central government.

2). In Shanghai, Ch'ingp'u (靑浦) and T'ungchou (通州), bureaus had few vice chief officers beside the chief officer who had been appointed by law.

3). In Shanghai, Baoshan (寶山), and Nanhsui (南匯), the associations were closely related with the bureaus, therefore some of them were recognized as an educational legislative organ.

Some educational associations in these provinces were similar to the Kiangsu Educational Society (江蘇教育總會), the legislative organ of the provincial education which had been established at Shanghai in 1905 and recognized as the Kiangsu Educational Association (江蘇教育總會) in 1906. These irregular bureaus and associations were mostly set up in southern Kiangsu, extended to northern Kiangsu, but only a few were found in Anhwei. These irregularities certainly strained their relations with the high level authorities and were finally normalized. In these provinces, the establishment of educational administration made many local elites concentrate on education, on the other hand, the educational exhortation bureaus which were used as administrative organs and the educational associations used as legislative organs enhanced self-government of the local elites.