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DISABILITY, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION:
A STUDY OF THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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SHUN

Good at math, tall, pet lover, runner, sister of Chance,

Love of swimming, chips and cookies,

Who feels love, shy and great,

Who needs love, food and water,

Who gives love, help and happiness,

Who fears snakes, tigers and lions,

Who would like to see lots of money, and my mom stop working!

ABSTRACT

This thesis gives a general picture of important historical events as well as socio-cultural, religious, and economic influences that have shaped both concepts of physical disability and the attitude of the Chinese people toward the physically disabled; that either have directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have a potential for doing so; and educational strategies and interventions, in the past and since 1949, that have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China, and challenges and problems in special education that China is likely to face in the 21st century.

This thesis is multi-disciplinary in nature, drawing upon the disciplines of history, philosophy, sociology, education, and medicine. The major methodology used in this thesis is primarily document and literature research along with illustrative cases studies. Most of cases are from the personal experience of the author or the personal experiences of the family members, relatives and friends of the author drawn from real life.

One can draw several conclusions from this research. The care of the elderly and disabled elderly is emphasized and is guaranteed in China; Chinese society is influenced by tradition – not judging people according to their physical appearance, but their ability; equal education is emphasized since ancient China even though women were not included; the physically disabled with normal intelligent are not identified as persons with special needs; prevention and correction of disabilities have been emphasized in modern China; the rights and interest of the physically disabled are guaranteed constitutionally since the “Open Door Policy” implanted in 1978; finally, physical disability is a social concept. People with physical defects, judged disabled in one

condition, may not be considered disabled in another situation. In general, the model of disability used in guiding policy makers or researchers still reflects mainly the functional limitation model in China.

The results of this thesis demonstrate the complexity of the effects of socio-cultural, political and economic factors at different historical periods on the concept of physically disabled in China. It is clear enough from this study that the concept of physical disability is a social phenomena. Thus the concept of disability as a social construction should not be neglected in the establishment of programs, interventions, policies, as well as research and studies in the issues related to the rights and interests of disabled persons worldwide.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As a concept in Chinese thought, disability is fundamentally linked to many issues, which are often of more immediate importance. It is this inter-relatedness of concerns, and the development of a definition of “disability” around them, which will be analyzed in this thesis. The significance of the development of special education in China and, the study of the issues surrounding that development, has escalated dramatically in the last two decades. Special education has become a most important political topic. Support for this development and action has come from some of the leading elements of Chinese public life including local and national governments, academic institutions, and educators as well political scientists. This thesis will argue that the concept of “disability” is a wide ranging social construct (as opposed to solely an individual phenomenon) by examining socio-culture, economic influences as well as the development of legislation and education strategy.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

China is a country and one of the oldest civilizations in the world. The country's many ethnic groups have jointly created a culture of magnificence with a glorious revolutionary tradition. After 1840, feudal China gradually became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. The revolution of 1911, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, put an end to the feudal empire and gave birth to the Republic of China. But the historical mission of the Chinese people to overthrow imperialism and feudalism remained unaccomplished.

After waging prolonged and difficult struggles, armed and otherwise, along a zigzag course, the Chinese people of all nationalities led by the Communist Party of

China with Mao Zedong as its leader ultimately in 1949, brought down the rule of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. The result was a great victory in the New Democratic Revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China. The People's Republic of China gradually accomplished its transition from a New Democratic to a socialist society. The people's democratic dictatorship, based on an alliance of workers and peasants, became a dictatorship of working people as consolidated and developed. The People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national state created jointly by the people of all its ethnic groups. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance were established among these groups and continue to be strengthened. The state has been doing its utmost to promote the common welfare of all people. Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life.

Communist Revolution and ideology has as its goal admission to full privileges citizenship of those groups of people who had been left out, exploited, and situated in the lowest socio-economic position in the past -- workers, peasants, women as well as minorities. However, one group of people who are in the same category and were not empowered constitutionally until 1980s, after China's "Open Door Policy" in 1978, is persons with disabilities. The government has since issued the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons, Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China and other accompanying policies to protect the rights and interests of this group as well as developing special education and rehabilitation programs for disabled children and adults. However these programs and interventions are based on an understanding of disability as a functional limitation, but not as a social phenomenon.

1.2 Importance of the Problem

Literally, the words “physically disabled” describe persons with various forms of physical defects or difficulties. The conventional usage of “physically disabled” refers to people with visible neuromuscular or orthopedic abnormalities such as a defect or injury or illness physically. This study, in particular deals with physically disabled people in contemporary Chinese society.

Chinese civilization, as described in mythology, begins with *Pangu*, the creator of the universe, and a succession of legendary sage-emperors and culture heroes (i.e. *Huang Di*, *Yao*, *Shun* and *Yu*) who taught the ancient Chinese to communicate and to find food, clothing, and shelter. The Chinese people often refer to themselves as the descendants of *Huang Di*, the Yellow Emperor, a part-real, part-legendary personage who is credited with founding the Chinese nation around 4,000 B.C. A collection of legends written down in the Warring States period (475-221 B. C.) gives an account of this founding (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 1:28).

Shun grew up in a family. Where his father was blind and his stepmother treated him unkindly. When *Shun* grew up, he was rewarded by *Yao* who was the ruler of their tribe for his hard works. His father and cruel stepmother, on several occasions, asked him to help in their field. There they tried to kill him in order to take over his treasures, but *Shun* used his wisdom to escape each time. But, *Shun* was still kind to his blind father and stepmother in helping in the field (Dai and Ji, 2001. v 1:36-37).

In this story and others, people with disabilities such as physical or visual impairments, have appeared in Chinese history for over 4,000 years and the stories imply that they had been productive in ancient Chinese society.

Another famous story is about a disabled military general in ancient China:

Sun Bin is one of three famous pre-Qin dynasty (prior to 221 B.C.) military generals in Chinese history. He conducted four famous battles during his career life as a military general. At the time that *Sun Bin* was chosen to be Qi state military commander in the wars of “rescue Zhao state by surrounding Wai state” and “Ma Ling battle” in 353 and 342 B.C. respectively, he was immobilized by the destruction of the bones in both of his knees by his enemy, and the military arranged to have him in a wagon to command battles (Wang, 1996).

From the above story, it is clear that his physically defective body did not impede his ability to function as a general; although the impairment prevented his walking, he was not “disabled” in performing a military commander’s task. This historical event indicates that a person’s inability to function that characterizes physically impaired people is an outcome of political and social decisions, rather than medical limitations, and that any person who is believed to deviate from culturally acceptable physical norms is “physically disabled.”

Historically, in the world related to people with disabilities, there are three models for understanding and studying the issues related to the people with disabilities: first, disability is a functional limitation; second, the group of people with disabilities is a minority group; third, disability is a social phenomenon. The functional limitations model assumes that the biological fact of disability is central (Hahn, 1991), governing the

disabled persons sense of self, explaining all problems experienced by the people with disabilities, and requiring that the disabled receive help and support (Fine and Asch, 1988). These assumptions inform an understanding of the meaning of disability, guide research, mediate interactions with people with disabilities, and influence what are considered to be appropriate interventions. This model keeps attention focused on the person with disability, while ignoring the environment that exacerbates the condition of disability. This implies that it is the individual person who needs to change rather than the disabling environment (Hahn, 1988). Interventions that rise from the functional limitation model focus on rehabilitation, and deal with the special needs of disabled individual.

The minority group model for understanding persons with disabilities suggests that each member of a minority will deal with uniformity of this group among all members (Hahn, 1991). This model focuses on issues of separation, eccentricity, discrimination, and domination. This perspective is helpful in adding to a more complex analysis of disability because it acknowledges environmental factors as well as differential power structures, group identification as “different”, and discriminatory treatment. With an emphasis on the experiences of eccentricity and discrimination originating and rising from the environment, it is argued that many of the problems encountered by persons with disabilities may best be understood by their membership in a minority group (Fine and Asch, 1988; Scheer, 1994). This model suggests that people with disabilities may not be understood fully without considering the consequences of minority group status, privilege, and the disabling environment. In addition, this model based on the deficit of human body may in fact be responsible for traditional stereotypes of people with disabilities as victims and in need of support. To think of people with

disabilities as minorities often serves as justification for setting those with disabilities apart from others. This view is based upon prejudicial notions of what truly constitutes the disability experience (Hahn, 1988). The minority group model is certainly an improvement upon the restrictiveness of the functional limitations model because it begins by acknowledgment of the social consequences of disability.

Asch (1984) and then Fine & Asch (1988) reframed disability as a socially constructed phenomenon. In order to explore disability as a socially constructed phenomenon, the analysis should be expanded to include both people with and without disabilities. The social construct model is based on the belief that much of what we understand about disabilities results from meanings attached to people with disabilities by people who are not disabled. To think of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon is to distinguish between the biological fact of disability and the disabling social environment in which the persons with disabilities exist. The social construct model of understanding disability contends that one's understanding of the world cannot exist independently of the context within which the individual interacts with the world (Gergen, 1985). In defining the social construction of disability, Fine and Asch (1988:7) write, "... it is the attitudes and institutions of the non-disabled, even more than the biological characteristics of the disabled, that turn characteristics into handicaps." Such a perspective does not discount the existence of either the biological fact of disability or the functional limitation, but the limitation is just that -- a limitation (Lombana, 1989). This biological fact cannot be meaningfully understood outside the contexts, relationships, institutions, or situations that define and shape the meaning of disability (Fine & Asch, 1988; Scheer, 1994).

Examining the influences of cultural and economic changes that shape the attitude toward people with physical disabilities and legislation that deal with physically disabled people is a useful way to understand disability as a social creation. For the formal response of legislation reflects not only a phenomenon of what society defines as problems, but also a phenomenon of how laws have affected and shaped those problems.

1.3 Statement of the Purpose

The Purpose of this thesis is to discuss the concept of physical disabilities in Chinese society. The thesis will describe traditional Chinese attitudes and behaviors toward persons with physical disabilities; it will describe how these traditional attitudes and behaviors have been shaped by certain historical, economic, and socio-cultural and religious influences; it describes how political, economic, and social changes overtime and especially since 1949 have had consequences that have empowered or disempowered the physically disabled; and it will show that what educators and the education system are doing and can do to more fully empower the physically disabled so that they may become good and productive citizens in the spirit of the Revolution of 1949 -- a revolution that has as its goal the empowerment of women, workers, peasants, etc.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the important historical, socio-cultural, religious, and economic influences that have shaped both the concept of physical disability in contemporary Chinese society and the attitudes of the Chinese people toward the physically disabled?
2. What have been the political, social, and economic changes in the past and since 1949 in China that have either directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have the potential for doing so?

3. What kinds of educational strategies and interventions, in the past and since the Revolution of 1949, have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China? What kinds of problems, in the empowerment and education of the physically disabled, is China likely to face in the 21st century?

1.5 Research Method

In doing the research for this thesis it will be necessary to draw upon several disciplines such as history, philosophy, sociology, education, and medicine. The methodological and analytical framework of this study can best be described as dialectical-chronological-historical and inter-disciplinary. The methodology used in this thesis is primarily document and literature searching along with illustrative cases studies.

1. Literature study:

This method was used to search for historical events and data as well as philosophical theories and writings. Without access to original Chinese historical records, much of my resource materials, therefore, have come from secondary sources (English translations of documents or English publications).

2. Governmental documentation:

I was able to update statistics and policies by drawing from the latest information available from Chinese governmental websites and public newspapers.

3. Case studies:

Most of the cases are from my personal experience or the personal experience of my family members, relatives, or friends drawn from the real life of exemplary people in China. Fewer cases are from what have been heard from other people or public newspapers and TV programs as well as from the Internet.

Chapter 2

Influences Shaping the Contemporary Concept of Physical Disability in China

China is well known by its rich diversity of cultures, its large population, and its deep-rooted traditional doctrines. China has gone through the rule of feudalism, foreign invasion, the Revolution of 1949, the Culture Revolution, and the present “Open Door Policy” of reforms in the economy. These cultural and socio-economic changes have impacted the social value and are reflected in the attitude of the population toward the people with physical disabilities in Chinese society. This chapter will focus on how the traditional and contemporary influences and economic changes have shaped the concept of physical disability in China. It will discuss the important historical, socio-cultural, religious, and economic influences that have shaped the attitudes of the Chinese people toward the physically disabled.

2.1 Traditional Influences

With a civilized history of more than 5,000 years, China has long been distinguished for its unique philosophic teachings such as Confucian and Taoist cultures; for its characterization of a hierarchical management of social roles of Confucian’s influence; and for its modesty, and reserved daily behavior of Chinese people. These ancient values, attitudes, and behaviors have influenced the behavior of Chinese people toward people with physical disabilities for over thousands of years.

2.1.1 Confucian Influences

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) visited many of the principalities of his time, advocating his political views and seeking to have his views accepted by the rulers for administering their states (Dai an Ji, 2001: v 2:36-37).

2.1.1.1 Respect the Elderly

One of the most lasting effects of Confucianism on subsequent Chinese life was to raise a concern for the disabled 2,500 years ago. During the early days of Zhou rule, Confucius looked for an ideal social and political order. He believed that the only way such a system could be made to work properly was for each person to act according to certain prescribed relationships -- a pyramid society. People should respect the elderly, be kind to children, help the weak, and support the disabled. Confucian ideology, which focused on adjusting human relations and emphasized benevolence, order, and the doctrine of the mean, occupied a dominant position in Chinese society for over two thousand years (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 2:36-37).

Value associated with filial piety greatly influenced elder care in China. When people get older, their physical abilities start to decline and eventually many become physically disabled. Therefore elder care is becoming an important part of social welfare services as the aging population has increased dramatically. In China, the majority of adult children support their older parents.

Filial piety consists in the practice of filial respect and care of elderly, which has been a normative duty and obligation of adult children. Confucian filial behavior served the nation as well as the individual, past and present. The family, most notably adult children, serves as the primary source of old-age support for the Chinese elderly, especially in rural China, where more than two thirds of the elderly depend on their children for personal and financial support. Indeed, virtually all frail elders in China, both those in rural and urban areas, rely on their children or other relatives for instrumental assistance and care (Wu, 1991).

The following case is a personal experience -- an example of elderly parents living with their adult children, after they lost their ability to live independently. This phenomenon is very common in contemporary China.

Case 1 – Grandma lived with my uncle

My grandma, my father's mother, lived with my father's brother for almost all of her life. She helped to raise all four kids of my uncle and one of her great grandsons. During her last years, she was unable to walk and had difficulty seeing. My uncle and his wife took care of her. When last I saw her 7 years ago, she usually stayed in her bed all day except for going to bathroom with assistance from my uncle or his wife. She did not recognize me, but she did offer to give my daughter, her great granddaughter, some money. My uncle often gave her money in case she wanted to have something when he was not around. She had a big funeral and all members of the family attended.

Three generations living in the same household in China is very common. Sometimes there are even four generations, such as the case with my uncle's family at one time. I grew up under such circumstances and I have personally experienced living with grandparents and parents. The above case was customary in China, when old parents lived with their adult married children.

The obligation of adult children to their older parents is reinforced by norms of filial piety, a fundamental belief of Confucianism emphasizing respect for the elderly. Human relations are governed by "let me respect the tranquility of age;" the right conduct toward parents: "serve them in life, bury them properly after death, thereafter sacrifice to

them;" "it is not enough to feed your parents; if respect is absent, wherein should we differ from the beasts?"(*Lun Yu*: ch.2)

Under such influence, the elders expect to receive support from their adult children -- sons in particular -- when their physical abilities deteriorate with age and they become partially or fully disabled. The Chinese proverb, "Having children makes one's old age secure," well describes the attitude of Chinese parents toward their offspring.

A survey was done in the capital of China, Beijing between 1992 and 1995, where 3,000 elders age 55 or older were sampled randomly. 60% of elderly in the survey lived with at least one of their children, 33% received personal support and help in their daily activities, 26% received emotional support by having a child as a confidant, and 54% received financial support from their adult married children (Chen and Silverstein, 2000). On the other hand, this living pattern is also motivated by the child's desire for companionship and mutual aid, as well as the strong feeling that parents are an inseparable part of the family. This is the very pattern of family living wherein filial piety has been practiced. Although this residential pattern often creates intergenerational conflicts, it nevertheless provides a viable setting for elderly care. Thus, multigenerational co-residence strengthens the informal support of the elderly. The continuity of this living pattern has a positive impact on the welfare of the elderly as well as on the as yet developing social welfare system of the nation. Thus, in an ideal way, the adult children on their own provided their elderly parents with bedside nursing care, care for incontinent parents, meal and feeding services, homemaking, sending a parent to school for seniors, reading to a parent, etc.

I remember that when my grandmother, my mother's mom, lived with us and was sick. My parents and I took turns watching her.

Case 2 – Grandmother was sick

Right before I started Junior high, I moved back to my parent's place until I started medical school. About one or two years later after I came back from my grandparent's home, my grandma moved in with us in the late of 1970s. Since then, grandma lived with my parents and me until the last year of her life, when she moved back to her own hometown and stated that she would like to die in her hometown at her son's place.

She got along with my parents very well, especially with my father, her son-in-law. We all respected her. During her last several years of life, she had difficulty moving around. She needed assistance with almost everything. Often we arranged to help her visit her friends for a couple of hours, or sit outside to have some sun. My parents bought a television set especially for her -- at that time, the TV set was just on the market and was very expensive as I can remember it costing all my parents' saving. It was a black and white but she enjoyed it very much. She always said: "it was said that you could move the theater to your bedside if you love the old shows that much, now it becomes true!"

I remember that there were two times when my grandma was sick. First when I was at high school, she had rapid high fever, chills and shaking, and soon went into a coma with incontinence in three days. My parents took turns watching her. The doctor, one of my parents' friends saw her at our home. She had IV fluid at home with medications.

Another sickness she had was in 1987; we thought that she was going to die. Grandma taught me a lot. She liked a mentor. She taught me how to live, how to manage life, how to deal with difficulty. I always liked to get advice from her. The day when she was sick, she was 90 years old, sitting in her room and we had a chat for a while. I went to work at Beijing after graduating from the medical school, and came back to visit her and my parents (they lived in Shenyang). It was wintertime, close to Chinese New Year.

That day, I found that she was not active as usual. I gave her a piece of banana. I checked her 10 minutes later, she was out, and the piece of banana was still there. I called my parents from the other room, but my grandma would not answer them. All her vital signs were normal at that time. She did not have a high fever, her heart rate was normal, and her breathing was regular with no signs of stress. My parents were going to send her to the hospital emergency room.

I told my parents that I did not think that taking my grandma to the hospital was a good idea. I mentioned that grandma and I had talked and she did not want to go to hospital; especially she did not want to die in the hospital. My mom and I gave her a bath while she was still in the coma because this way, my mom thought it would be good for grandma to have a bath before she died. She woke up during the bath and asked us what we were doing to her. We told her that we were giving her a bath because she was dying. She smiled and said: "I do not think it would be so quick." We rescued her this time again. It took her about a month to recover. My parents and I took turns watching her and changed her because she was incontinent for several days.

2.1.1.2 Praises the Ambitious and Encourages High Achievement

Confucian is not only a philosopher, but also an educator. His major contribution to education is to advocate equality of education. He admitted his students whether they were poor or rich, from working class or noble families, and whether they were sick or healthy. There was one young man of humble origin named Yan Hui who wanted to be accepted as Confucius student but his family was so poor that they even had difficulty providing themselves with daily necessities. He was afraid he would be rejected, as he could not afford the tuition required. One day he came to where Confucius was giving lectures. He saw a few men sitting under a big tree and overheard Confucius say, "I'm ready to accept anyone that can bring 10 pieces of preserved meat for tuition, whatever his origin. " Yan Hui was greatly heartened by this. He hastened back home and told his friends Zi Lu and Zi Gong about it. A few days later, all three became Confucius students. Even a man named Gong Yechang who had just been released from prison came under Confucius tutelage (Confucius - a Great Educator in Chinese History , n.d.). It is recorded that he had over 3000 students, and seventy-two among them became famous scholars in Chinese history (Dai and Yi, 2001, v 2:36-37).

Confucius thought did not become famous until the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220). The Han dynasty adopted his doctrine for government policy as well as a model for an education system. The Han dynasty established the Imperial College and started to administer various levels of the civic service examination, which were used for the selection of imperial officers (Dai and Yi, 2001, v 3:18-21; Zhang and Wang, 1993:11). The exams themselves consisted of essay questions that tested the candidate's understanding of Confucius' teachings. Anyone could prepare for these examinations by

enrolling in the Imperial College or private institutions of higher education. The exam was equal to all, had no restriction on age, physical appearance, socio-economic status, and ethnic background. It was the only way in Chinese history for ordinary people to achieve high political, social economic positions. Since 1840s, China has gone through so many changes politically, economically and culturally but Confucius influence has remained deep rooted until the present. This is the reason why the Chinese value education and respect scholars. In addition, historically almost every Chinese government has practiced “Appointing people on their virtues” to gain the truth from Chinese people and maintain their authority. Chinese people admire knowledge and high achievement, especially achievement among the physically disabled. This has been glorified by Zhang Haidi’s story (Heroes and Villains, n.d.).

Case 3 – Chinese modern youth model of Zhang Haidi:

She was born in 1955, and became a paraplegic at the age of five following four operations for the removal of tumors in her spine. Due to her severe illness, she never went to school, but through diligent self-study, she learned to read books on politics, literature and medical science. She also learned foreign languages, including English, Japanese and German.

The model status of Zhang Haidi is widely publicized in print and in propaganda posters from 1983 on, to illustrate that “a cripple” could still function normally in Chinese society.

2.1.2 Taoist Influences

Taoism, the second most important stream of Chinese thought, also developed during the Zhou period. It too has contributed to the valuation of people with disabilities

in Chinese society. Its formulation is attributed to the legendary sage Lao Zi (Old Master), and said to predate Confucius, and Zhuang Zi (369-286 B.C.). The focus of Taoism is the individual in nature rather than the individual in society. It holds that the goal of life for each individual is to find one's own personal adjustment to the rhythm of the natural (and supernatural) world, to follow the Way (*Dao*) of the universe (Dai and Yi, 2001, v 2:34-35; Zhang and Wang, 1993:146-149). In many ways the opposite of rigid Confucian moralism, Taoism served many of its supporter as a complement to their ordered daily lives. A scholar on duty as an official would usually follow Confucian teachings but at leisure or in retirement might seek harmony with nature as a Taoist recluse. The Taoist approach to life is embodied in the classic *Dao De Jing* (*Dao Te Jing*).

2.1.2.1 Value Modesty

Confucianism praises the ambitious and encourages high achievement, and “standing out.” Taoism has little use for such ambitions. The Taoists rejected all forms of self-aggrandizement and competition. “The ax falls first on the tallest tree.”

He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.

He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

He who tried to shine dims his own light (Dao Te Jing: ch. 24).

Their respectful attitude toward modesty led the Taoists to honor hunchbacks and cripples because of the way they demonstrated humbleness and self-effacement. Taoism influences how Chinese usually do not judge people according to their physical appearance. Often heard is the Chinese saying “there is always a higher mountain than yours; there is always someone better than you,” “anyone can be helpful in someway, you will never know.” Many well-known stories, told in China for generations are about

people with physical disabilities are very wise. There is a story about the general Zhang Liang in the late of Qin dynasty (221 B.C. – 206 A.D.) – household story in China.

“The kid is trainable.”

One day, the general Zhang walked through a bridge and saw an elderly man with his cane standing on the bridge. When this elderly man also saw Zhang Liang walking over, he threw one of his shoes off the bridge, and then he cried out: “gave me my shoe.” Zhang Liang was unhappy about it because this elderly man did not ask for help, but ordered him to pick up the shoe. Zhang Liang did pick up his shoe and gave to him. However, this elderly man did not thank him, but asked him to put the shoe onto his foot for him. Zhang Liang was not happy at all about this, but he did put the shoe on this elderly man with respect. Then the elderly man stood up and walked away shouting to Zhang Liang: “The kid is trainable, come back meet me here five days later.” Zhang Liang showed up in five days later, and the elderly man gave him a famous military book -- *Tai Gong Bing Fa* (Tai Gong Art of Warfare), which later helped him in the battlefield when he helped Liu Bang, the first Han Emperor who established the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 25 A.D.) (Chang, Yang and Ma, 2000:354).

Taoist values knowledge and respects the disabled in a different way. Taoists were fond of pointing out that the value of anyone, whether farmers, craftsmen, homeless, even children. So in China today, one still sees higher educated people wearing inexpensive clothing, and living more informal life style. It also stressed that people with disabilities maybe very intelligent and capable in many areas. For example this household story stated that each person has his own strength that another may not have.

“The Eight Immortals crossing the sea, each one showing his or her special prowess”

In the Heaven, there was Peaches grand meeting (celebration of the harvest of peaches) each year. The God invited the Eight Immortals to attend. The Eight Immortals were riding on the cloud close to the East Sea. Suddenly, the waves rose from the sea, and Lü Dongbin, the head of the Eight Immortals, smiled and pointed to the sea: “Look at such strong stormy waves, people would laugh at us if we are still riding on the cloud. What do you think if we are crossing the sea with our own ability?” Everyone agreed. Then, the cripple Li threw his crutch toward the sea, and crossed the sea by riding on it; Han Xiang Zi threw his basket into the sea and jumped into it to cross the sea; Lü Dongbin, Lan Chaihe, Zhang Hunchback, Han Zhongli, Cao Guojū, and He Xianggu respectively threw their bamboo flute, clappers, paper donkey into the sea to cross the sea. The East Sea raised very strong stormy waves, but the Eight Immortals, talking cheerfully and humorously, crossed the East Sea via their respective individual ability (Chang, Yang and Ma, 2000:8).

Among the Eight Immortals, Li and Zhang were disabled physically, but they could still manage to cross the sea without a problem. This story teaches that each person has advantages or abilities and disadvantages or disabilities. You can find this story in the Chinese school textbooks, Chinese storybooks, Chinese TV shows, and Chinese movies. The following two cases illustrate that people with physical disabilities can be very talented.

Case 4 – Gynecology rotation at teaching hospital

My last year of medical school in China was the internship time. We took rotation in each clinical department. All students were assigned to an attending physician to be their mentor.

During the first day of rotation at the department of Gynecology, we were having a morning case conference. By the end of the morning meeting section, all new interns were introduced to each physician. One of my roommates and I were assigned to a young looking male physician. We were so disappointed at that moment, but we were glad by the end of this rotation. Since everyone was sitting, we did not know about his lame leg until he started to walk with us. I was thinking that nobody noticed that, whether he just stood or sat, he was a good-looking man. Well, he was our mentor; my roommate and I kept quiet and listened to his first lecture. Then we examined our patients and started to write notes reporting on each of patient whom he wanted us to take care of from that time on.

The first day passed by quickly. The next day was surgical day. Most of us wanted to go into the operating room. If we were lucky, one of us might be asked to assist with the operation. But we thought that we might not be able to since our physician was so young and might not be confident enough to let us to assist him, and probably he had a senior assistant anyway. My roommate and I did routine ward rounds in the morning and wrote down the notes for each of our patients before he got there. Of course, he was glad that we did. Surprisingly he let us assist him in the operating room. In turn, his performance and teaching attitude

amazed me, and he did have a huge impact on my later career. We were told thereafter that he got the junior faculty award for his outstanding teaching and clinical work. I did not see him again after we finished the rotation, but I heard that my roommate who was with me in this rotation married him three years later. My roommate started working with him at the teaching hospital after we graduated from medical school.

After I graduated from medical school in 1985, I started to work at a hospital in Beijing. The first authority I met after medical school was the department Chairman who had an artificial leg.

Case 5 – Department chair

He had a tuberculosis infection when he was little and one of his legs had to be amputated below the knee. He leaned toward one side when he walked with his artificial leg. One of reasons why he chose medical school was to cure all children with tuberculosis and to prevent them from possible amputation of limbs. He graduated with honors from his medical school. After his graduation, China went through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and he and his colleagues were sent to countryside there was a lack of health care. He saw many physically disabled children in these rural areas. He decided to stay and work in the local community hospital, until the 1980s, when the government recalled such scholars back to urban areas to fill the gap in academic talent, teaching, and research resulting from the ten years of the Cultural Revolution.

He accumulated much experience in treating and in the prevention of infectious diseases. He married a farmer's daughter and had two children. When I

started working there, his wife and children were still in the country. One of his sons was the village teacher after graduating from normal school the year before; the other one was still in college, taking courses in medicine. He wanted to be a pediatric surgeon to treat sick children.

2.1.2.2 Looking at Things at Two Ways

Another Feature of Taoism is its belief of the relativity of all values and, as a correlative, the identity of opposites. Here Taoism is symbolized by the traditional Chinese *yin/yang* symbol.



Figure – Taiji Tu (Yin-Yang)

This polarity sums up all of life's basic opposites: good/evil, active/passive, positive/negative, light/dark, summer/winter, male/female. But though the halves are in conflict, they are not completely opposed; they complement and balance each other. Each invades the other's half and takes up its portion in the deepest recesses of its partner's area. By the end both find themselves resolved by the circle that surrounds them. In the context of that wholeness, the opposites appear as no more than phases in an endless cycling process, for each turn constantly into its opposite, exchanging places with it. Life does not move onward and upward towards a fixed peak or pole. It turns back upon itself to come, full circle, to the realization that all is one and all is well (Smith, 1995).

In the Taoist perspective even good and evil are not straight on opposites. The West has tended to dichotomize the two, but Taoists are less definite. The following story illustrates their theory:

A farmer's horse ran away and his neighbor showed sympathy saying to the farmer, "Who knows what's good or bad?" It was true, for the next day the horse returned, bringing with it a drove of wild horses it had befriended. The neighbor appeared again, this time with congratulations for the bonus. But he received the same response: "Who knows what is good or bad?" Again this was confirmed as true, for the next day the farmer's son tried to get on one of the wild horses and fell, breaking his leg. There were commiserations from the neighbor, which again elicited the question: "Who knows what is good or bad?" And for the fourth time the farmer's point was validated when on the following day soldiers came by commandeering young men for the army, but the son was excused because of his injury (Smith, 1995).

This dialectical way to look at things is rooted deeply into daily life of the Chinese people. When people have physical disabilities due to natural disaster or accident during their adulthood, initially they had hard time to face the reality. However most of them quickly adopt the reality and go on with their life. People see things from two perspectives. The following two cases will show the typical way of Chinese thinking in regard to this matter.

Case 6 – Chairman of the China Disabled Person's Federation

He was born in 1944, and was admitted in 1962 by Peking University – the highest institution of learning in China -- where he was determined to dedicate himself to be a physicist. He ended up in a wheelchair as a result of a fall (or a push) from a sixth-floor window during the Cultural Revolution of 1968. The

highs and lows of destiny forged his determination to diligently pursue humanitarian courses (China Disabled Persons' Federation, n.d.).

Because Den Pufang, the son of Deng Xiaoping, who advocated "Open Door Policy" reforms in China economy after Mao's death, had been injured during the Culture Revolution, he changed his goal from being a physicist to that of a "peace messenger" in pursuing humanitarian issues. If he never had been injured, he certainly would not have dedicated himself to the disabled. He would not become well known in the world as he is today.

The next case is the wife of a friend of my parents. It will give you a typical picture of how Chinese people both disabled and abled deal with the unexpected incidents.

Case 7 – Injured at work

A friend of our family for many years, his wife had an accident at work. She was sent to the hospital where her life was saved, but she lost her left leg. She was in her 20s at that time. She had a hard time accepting this reality. All her friends and family members visited her at hospital and talked to her. It was amazing that every one of them was a very good consultant at that moment. The manager of the company said to her "Things happened, but your life is saved, that is good. The company will rearrange your work and let you work in the engineering office. That way, you will not do much heavy labor work, but only help with some of the paper work. The salary and benefits are the same and in addition to the compensation from the disability."

Not very long after her injury, she started self-study courses majoring in engineering. Now she has a teenage son, has finished her college degree and is working at the same company, but as chief of the engineering department. Her husband and she visited my parents and talked about the accident. They thought the accident gave her what she has today; otherwise, she would still work in manufacturing as a first-line worker making locks or she might have died during that accident.

2.1.3 The Influences of Chinese Medical Practice (Traditional)

The theories of yin-yang and the five elements were two interpretations of natural phenomena that originated in ancient China. They reflected a primitive concept of dialectical materialism, and played an active role in promoting the development of natural science in China. Ancient physicians applied these two theories to the field of medicine, greatly influencing the formation and development of the theoretical system of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and guiding clinical work up to the present time. Traditional Chinese Medical practice has had an impact on, as well as influencing attitude toward, people with physically disabilities in Chinese society.

The theory of yin-yang is a conceptual framework, which was used for observing and analyzing the material world in ancient China. The early theory of yin-yang was formed in the Yin and Zhou dynasties (16th century –221 B.C.). The term yin-yang first appeared in *Yi Jing* (The Book of Changes), “Yin and yang reflect all the forms and characteristics existing in the universe (cited by Cheng, 1987).”

Up to the Spring and Autumn Period (770 – 476 B.C.) and the Warring States Period (475 – 221 B.C.), the application of the theory of yin-yang had become deeply

rooted in all schools of thought. As pointed out in Chapter 5 of the book *Su Wen* (Plain Questions), “Yin and yang are the laws of heaven and earth, the great framework of everything, the parents of change, the root and beginning of life and death....” This quotation expresses the idea that all natural events and states of being are rooted in yin and yang, and can be analyzed by the theory of yin-yang. The theory of yin-yang, however, does not itself refer to any concrete objective phenomena. It is, rather, a theoretical method for observing and analyzing phenomena (Cheng, 1987).

The five elements refer to five categories in the natural world, namely wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The theory of the five elements holds that all phenomena in the universe correspond in nature either to wood, fire, earth, metal or water, and that these are in a state of constant motion and change. The theory of the five elements was first formed in China at about the time of the Yin and Zhou dynasties (16th century – 211 B.C.). Historically it derives from observations of the natural world made in early times by the Chinese in the course of their lives and productive labor. Wood, fire, earth, metal and water were considered to be five essential elements for the maintenance of life and production, as well as representing five important states that initiated normal changes in the natural world. As said in *A Collection of Ancient Works*: “Food relies on water and fire. Production relies on metal and wood. Earth gives birth to everything. They are used by the people (cited by Cheng, 1987).”

The term “Traditional Chinese Medicine” (TCM) is used to describe the system of medicine that has developed in China. The earliest written records of TCM date back 3,500 years, and archeological discoveries suggest the origins of TCM may stretch back at least 5,000 years (Cheng, 1987).

Although it is called traditional, TCM has changed over time and is very much a part of the modern world. In its more than 2,000 years of recorded history, TCM has evolved under many influences, including politics, economics, science, technology, and social and cultural changes. It is well known as focusing on prevention, searching for the cause of disease, and treating root problems instead of only correcting the symptoms, which Western medicine often does. The practicing of TCM even today has certainly had an impact on the attitude of Chinese society toward people with physical disabilities.

Case 8 – From generations to generations

Probably over a hundred times my mother has mentioned her pregnancy to me. My personality was gentle because she had good mood during her pregnancy. I remember clearly just like yesterday for my first pregnancy. When I called my mother in China, I told her that I was pregnant, the first thing she told me to do was to think happy things, and be in a good mood in order to have a pretty healthy baby. I followed the guidance from my mother. My first baby was a girl, over nine pounds when she was born and very healthy. My second baby was an eight-pound baby boy. Certainly he was very healthy when he was born since I followed the rules during pregnancy -- be in a good mood, stay away from threatening and harmful situation, eat well and natural food, do not take any medicines during the pregnancy even though they are prescribed as safe to the fetus.

My colleague's wife got pregnant this spring, I was so excited to tell him how to take care of his wife, but his wife already had advise from her mother. She

also was told that she should study or read books and not play in order to get a very talented baby.

Obviously this custom has been practiced from generation to generation.

Avoiding having a disabled baby is a critical issue for Chinese families. Pregnant women are well cared for by their husbands, and parents. They take good care of themselves as well. It is a very common custom for pregnant women to eat certain kinds of food, and avoid doing certain activities, which Chinese people believe that may cause harm to their unborn babies.

All this can be traced back to the Eastern Han Dynasty (A.D. 25-220) Wang Chong, one of the most outstanding ideologists in ancient China, said in his famous philosophical book *Lun Heng* (Critical Essays) that three phenomena restricted the forming of human nature: the first was the five elements of the natural world including wood, fire, earth, metal and water; the second was inheritance from parents; and the third was accidents that pregnant woman might have. Wang thought the last one was the main reason for disabling conditions.

Later the distinguished doctors Chao Yuanfang, in the Sui Dynasty (A.D. 581-681) and Sun Simiao in the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) developed the systematic *Wai Xiang Nei Gan* (exterior factors that interfere with interior elements) theory, which supposed that prenatal (or inborn) disabling conditions were caused by a harmful environment to which pregnant women were often exposed. This theory emphasized the importance of the pregnancy period prior to birth and has dominant prenatal education and development in China (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

The search for the cause of physical disabilities is also a focal topic in China and it can be traced back to certain inscriptions on bronze objects in the Zhongdingwen period of the Zhou dynasty (800-1100 B.C.) indicating that blindness could be caused by physical injuries. *Lu Shi Chun Qiu* (Spring and Autumn of Lu), completed in about the third century BC, states that, "If people drink too much water which is lacking in iodine, they will lose their hair and eventually become mute." *Huang Di Nei Jin* (Classic of Internal Medicine of the Yellow Emperor), one of the most ancient Chinese medical books, written in about the fifth century BC, says, "Serious nerve system illnesses such as mental derangement and convulsions, are caused during the fetal stage if the pregnant mother is scared or frightened". The characterized flaccidity or atrophy of the limbs with motor impairment was first described in chapter 44 of *Plain Questions* (part one of Classic Internal Medicine of the Yellow Emperor) as a syndrome (cited by Cheng, 1987).

In addition to searching for the causes, ancient Chinese physicians also mentioned treatment methods for those physically disabled conditions such as pain in the joints causing limitation of movement, and paralysis of limbs mentioned above. The treatment was with acupuncture needles and Moxibustion, as well as conjunction with Chinese herbal medicine. Such methods and prescriptions are still used in China to treat patients.

2.2 Contemporary Influences

After 1840, the Opium War (1840-1842), feudal China was gradually turned into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. Following the loss in the Opium War and the resulting cessation of Hong Kong to Great Britain (Dai and Yi, 2001, v 10:62-63), Western science and technology, via the invading foreigners, gradually began to take root in China. The blending of Chinese and Western cultures has continued to the present

time. The western influences have impacted on the socio-economic changes of China, especially after 1978, the Open Door Policy to facilitate the growth of economy in China. All these changes have had huge impacts on the issues related to how people with physical disabilities are viewed in China today. The following sections will focus on these changes.

2.2.1 Foreign Influences

Along with science and technology from the west introduced into China, Western beliefs and concepts of disability were also introduced into China. There were two critical values in Western society that especially influenced the treatment of disabled people -- personal appearance and individual autonomy (Hahn, 1988). Persons who fail to meet prescribed standards of physical attractiveness and functional independence are not only assumed to be biologically inferior, but they are also exposed to a stigma that represents them as “not quite human”(Hahn, 1988). Like other minorities who have been victims of discrimination, disabled persons have characteristics that permit them to be differentiated from the rest of the population. These characteristics, identified by physical appearance, are likely to provoke strong feelings in nondisabled people around them. You can see obvious evidence of this influence in the issues related to marriage among physically disabled people in contemporary China (Kohrman, 1999).

Case 9 – Marriage exclusion

Ah Bo is in his mid-thirties and lives in a village of Wenchang county, in eastern Hainan province of China. Ah Bo grows papayas and has a large house that he and his older brother inherited when their father died 20 years ago.

When he was born, Ah Bo was a big healthy baby. He was everybody's favorite. One very rainy winter when he was about three years old, Ah Bo got a bad fever. Nobody thought to take him to a doctor right away. A few days after the fever went away, Ah Bo's left leg became very painful and weak and he had a hard time walking. His mother and older brother carried Ah Bo to see many doctors. They gave him many treatments, but nothing worked. After that, Ah Bo, spent most of his childhood crawling around his home and the area just outside the house. An older cousin, who pitied him, taught him to read. Now he can read and write. He is always helping his friends write letters. He is smart. With the money his brother loaned him, he planted a bunch of papaya trees. Now he has more than a hundred trees. Ah Bo does well, just like his brother with his big shrimp farm. However he has difficulties finding an ideal spouse to marry.

In mid-1980s, as Ah Bo was maturing into young adulthood, his brother, mother, and sister-in-law began pressing him to marry. The search for a wife started in the beginning with two of the matchmakers immediately encouraging Ah Bo to consider marrying a neighborhood woman who was deaf. But Ah Bo and his brother proclaimed that a union with someone deaf or otherwise "abnormal" was unacceptable. Like their mother, they felt a marriage to a deaf woman was incompatible with the status of both Ah Bo's and his family status and their consequent expectations of what kind of woman Ah Bo should marry. In addition to rejecting the matchmakers' initial idea, the two brothers asked the matchmakers to avoid discussing with prospective brides anything regarding either Ah Bo's childhood polio episode or his withered leg. Instead, they

instructed the matchmakers to emphasize the realities that they perceived as most central to Ah Bo's existence: his friendly manner, his intellectual acuity, his quickly expanding papaya grove, his family's big house, and his brother's lucrative shrimp farm.

Using such a strategy, the matchmakers were able to arrange four separate introductions over an equal number of years. Each of these meetings was a failure. In every case, the young woman arrived, saw Ah Bo standing with his homemade crutch under arm, and quickly asked the matchmakers to take her home. Two of the women burst into tears on seeing Ah Bo. On one occasion, a father who had accompanied his daughter became very angry, bombarded Ah Bo and the matchmaker with invectives, and demanded that Ah Bo's brother compensate him for his travel expenses and the ridicule he might receive from his co-villagers if the story followed him home. Ah Bo's brother refused to compensate the father, and was scolded the next day by the village secretary for trying to cheat others and nearly causing a fight.

For Ah Bo, the four introductions orchestrated by the matchmakers were extremely painful events that deeply affected him. After each meeting, news spread throughout the community. For many days, people in the village and the nearby town were talking and laughing. They shouted to Ah Bo, "Ah Bo, you are such silly boy thinking you can marry a regular girl." It made him feel terrible and very depressed. He recalls, "I could not sleep. I didn't want to eat. Everything felt uncomfortable and strange. Everything I hoped for seemed out of reach. ...After a

while I got better, but not completely. I've never felt really the same since those meetings." (Kohrman, 1999)

This case shows typically how bodily differences or physical appearances play an important role in choosing a marriage partner. To appreciate further how challenging it is for men like Ah Bo to marry and how this sets them apart from their friends and neighbors, it is useful to look at statistics from a national survey conducted by epidemiologists on behalf of the China Disabled Persons' Federation. According to these epidemiologist's findings, in 1987 only four percent of the general population in China (ages 30-44) had never married. This low rate fits with the normative image of marriage among many people in Chinese cultural contexts: that men and women should and nearly always do marry. The four percent figure also corresponds closely with how marriage in Chinese society, today and in the past, has been cast as a basic bulwark for economic survival and has served as an organizational centerpiece of Chinese ideals about personhood and the unfolding of a proper life.

The rate of the never married, however, diverged markedly from the norm when these same epidemiologists surveyed only people whom they understood as matching the criteria for physical disabilities. Of the 30-44 year-old people with disabilities they interviewed, one quarter were never married (See table 1).

Table 1 – Survey of Marriage Status in China, Age Between 30-44 Years Old (Di, 1989)

	General population	Disabled population
Overall rate of never married	4%	25%
Female rate of never married	0.5%	4%
Male rate of never married	7%	45%

The family played and is playing an important role in caring for disabled people in China, however a sense of independence and competence has been growing with the influences from the west.

Case 10 – Motorcycle-driving *que zi* (the lame)

Chen Yu is in his mid-thirties and lives in Xuan Wu district, a working-class neighborhood of Beijing located southwest of Tiananmen Square. Chen runs a successful tobacco shop he opened in 1989. Two miles down the road from the shop, Chen shares a relatively spacious apartment with his parents who are retired factory managers. To get back and forth to his shop and to conduct business, Chen drives a three-wheeled motorcycle, a unique device designed and marketed by the Chinese government especially for people who, like Chen, meet the state's criteria for lower-body disabilities.

Chen said, "The advantages of having one of these bikes in Beijing, where regular motorcycles are illegal and where nobody can afford a car, was just too great to pass up. So I got one. Besides helping me start my own business, I figured having a motorcycle would make me seem more competent and thus eventually help me find a good wife."

In 1990, through a third-person introduction, Chen Yu began to date Geng La, a woman his parents described as a "lovely and able-bodied girl from a good family." The friend approached Geng La using a pitch Chen had prepared. He said to Geng, "I think you might be interested in meeting my friend Chen Yu. You have a lot in common. You're the same age, from similar families, and both like studying English and collecting classic music. Like you, Chen is unattached

and interested in meeting somebody. Everybody who knows Chen says he's extremely competent and has a strong future. Besides having a quickly growing business, he owns a motorcycle and has a spacious apartment." Of course, the friend told Geng about Chen's legs, how he had polio when he was young.

Through this introduction, Chen and Geng La met, became friends, and dated for several years. Hearing about and seeing Chen's legs were apparently not overriding concerns for Geng. But they were for her parents, who could not accommodate their long-term hopes for their daughter to Chen's body. (Kohrman, 1999)

More so than Ah Bo (case 9, Marriage exclusion), Chen Yu anticipated certain troubles when he began looking for a spouse; he sensed the possible difficulties he faced fulfilling common marriage hopes. So to boost his financial situation and project an image of greater ability, Chen decided, somewhat paradoxically, to integrate aspects of the government's disability transcript and purchase a three-wheeled motorcycle. But the economic success wrought by Chen's increased mobility was not enough to change how he was viewed by others and to win his first female acquaintance's hand. Geng La's parents rejected Chen because of his withered leg -- a defective physical appearance.

As Kohrman (1999) explains, people engage texts with specific expectations. Those involved in the betrothal of a man in China (parents, siblings, matchmakers, neighbors, friends, potential mates, and suitors) approach marriage with certain hopes regarding physical appearance. As the betrothal story unfolds and all these people interact, everybody makes a reading of the situation. As the search for a spouse

progresses, many of the participants will gradually reconfigure their expectations to fit those placed before them by others -- mainly those related physical appearance.

For the key participant, however, such reconfiguring is a more protracted and socially destructive process that involves repeated negations. Yet, under the pressure to continue moving through the betrothal story, men like Ah Bo and Chen Yu often have little choice but to allow negations to influence how they see themselves and their futures as increasingly different from most members of their communities and increasingly like a de-legitimized social other.

2.2.2 Western Science and Medical Influences

Since 1840, the introduction of western science and medicine into China, it has gradually come to dominate medical practice in urban areas. However because of the great need of the Chinese people for medical care, especially in rural areas (80% of China), the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine continues to exist and develops to the present time.

Today the medical practice in China shows both medical systems in parallel as practiced in the general hospital situations. While the western medicine is more popular in urban areas, TCM is more dominant in rural areas since Western Medicine requires more expensive technical equipment than TCM. It is more affordable and easier to practice TCM in those underdeveloped rural areas. Western Medicine is more prominent in treating trauma injury and in emergency situations while TCM is used more often to treat patients with more chronic, and functional problems. For example, TCM is a more effective treatment for arthritis patients than is Western Medicine to relieve or prevent disabling conditions due to the sickness.

In the section 2.1.3, The Influence of Chinese Medical Practice (Traditional), I discussed the influence of TCM as it is related to the prevention of physical disabilities. In this section I will discuss the contemporary influences, including western science and medicine's influences, on the people with physical disabilities. This section focuses on the belief that physical defects or abnormalities can be cured and how this belief has often changed attitudes toward persons with disabilities.

Xiao Xiao is a boy with severe cerebral palsy, a lifelong physical disabling condition, but under advances in western science and medicine, there is an increased belief and hopes that the physical defect can be corrected thereby changing how the disabled person is viewed and treated.

Case 11 – Cerebral palsy

My cousin delivered her first son in 1991. She had pre-term labor, and the baby was born at seven months of gestation age. The boy was not diagnosed with cerebral palsy until he was a year old. The boy has had four operations. His parents took him to several hospitals and found him the best doctor in the country. They wished to cure him and to see him standing up and walking like other kids. They spent all their savings for their son. The boy was paralyzed in both legs and had difficulty handling things with his left hand. His speech is slow, but clear enough to be understood. He has been kept at home all day and cared for by his grandparents.

This summer, my parents went back China and to visit them. My cousin told my parents that she was planning to bring her son for another operation because she believes that someday her son will stand up and walk.

There is another case, which I had during my internship at pediatric rotation in 1984.

Case 12 – Baby with severe jaundice

This baby had severe high jaundice, resulting in kernicterus. And survivors of this kind of sickness may have multiple disabilities. The parents were from a rural area and did not have much money to cover all the expenses for the treatment. However the parents insisted that the hospital intervened in every possible way to save their child's life. They made every effort to cover the hospital expenses including selling all their belongings, their house in the village, borrowing money from friends or relatives in addition to getting financial support from local government. They did all this because they believed that their son's sickness could be cured or corrected by the modern medicine.

2.2.3 Economic Influences

In China today, over 70% of population resides in the rural countryside and for their living hood they rely on agricultural production. The majority of these areas are developing or underdeveloped areas. Thus the differences in the economy between urban and rural areas raise different issues in regard to how the physically disabled are viewed in those rural areas.

In rural areas, what people care about is whether or not a person has the physical ability to work in the field. In other words, the physical disabilities discussed in cases 3-7, 9 and 10, would be considered as a disability in rural area only if the person cannot perform the fieldwork at farm. If they can do the work, they would not be considered

physically disabled. This means that people in some circumstances may be considered as physically disabled, and in other circumstances, not disabled.

Therefore, people with mild intellectual problems and perfect physical ability, may not be identified and recognized as disabled if they are capable of performing daily activities and uncomplicated jobs such as performing simple agriculture work in the countryside. The same people may not be capable of doing work in modern urban industrial areas. The following case shows a typical example, a relative of my mother's family.

Case 13 – Young man at a village of Shangdong province.

My mother recalls that he lived with his parents at a time when my mother visited the village with my grandpa in the 1970s. He was a well build young man with a simple and honest smiling face. He helped his parents by working in the field since his father was getting older. He is the youngest of four sons at home. The rest of them lived separately, but in the same village. He never finished school since he always did poor work at school, and the teachers often called his father and then he got punished many times. Finally he dropped out of school to help at the farm. There he was happier since he had the strength to finish fieldwork without any problem. His father was happy too because his son indeed was a good helper especially since he himself could not do much work anymore. In 1997, my mother brought me back to the village to visit her 100 year-old aunt and I got chance to meet "the young man." He was a well build middle-aged man. It was hard to identify his disability just from his appearance, but every one in our

family knew that he was retarded in some extend, but physically capable of doing all the farm work.

The following data is from a local community service agency (Shenyang local government agency, 1992), which mainly deals with the employment of physically disabled people locally. This survey was conducted in Shenyang area of China among male subjects ages 16-59 and female subjects ages 19-54. The high unemployment rate in country rural areas indicates that the most of physically disabled people are not capable of working in the field, especially males, the major labors of agricultural China.

Table 2 – Physical Disabled in Urban City and Rural Areas

	Male	Female	Total
Urban city	6599	4275	10874
Country rural	6508	2024	8532

Table 3 –Employment Ratio Between Urban and Rural Areas

	Total	Employed	%
Urban city	10874	9506	87%
Country rural	7576	1918	22%

Table 4 – Employment Ratio Between Genders in Urban Areas

	Total	Employed	%
Male	6599	6048	92%
Female	4275	3458	81%

Table 5 - Employment Ratio Between Genders in Rural Areas

	Total	Employed	%
Male	6508	1068	16%
Female	2024	850	42%

2.3 Summary

This chapter attempts to answer Research Question 1. It described traditional Chinese attitudes and behaviors toward persons with physical disabilities and how these

traditional attitudes and behaviors have been shaped by certain historical, economic and socio-cultural influences.

In summary, Confucianism and Taoism are the most lasting effect on subsequent Chinese life, and are the most powerful traditional influences on the attitude of the people of China toward the people with physical disabilities in contemporary China. The value associated with filial piety, a fundamental belief of Confucianism emphasizing respect for the elderly, has great impact on the care of disabled elders in modern China. The majority of elderly parents or virtually all elders in poor health depend on their adult children for personal care and financial support in China. Confucianism praises the ambitious, and encourages achievement and standing out, while Taoism rejects all forms of self-forcefulness and competition. However, both have positive impacts on the attitude toward the people with physical disabilities in contemporary Chinese society -- not judging people according to their physical appearance, but their ability. Chinese people respect scholars and admire high achievement from Confucianism, and value modesty, which leads to the honoring of hunchbacks and cripples with Taoism's Way -- each person has his own strong points.

*In addition, Taoism's dialectic way of looking at things has strong influences and is rooted in Chinese daily living. Circling around each other like *yin* and *yang* themselves, Taoism and Confucianism represent the two native poles of the Chinese character. Confucius represents the classical, Lao Tzu (Zi) the romantic. Confucius stresses social responsibility; Lao Tzu praises naturalness. Confucius' focus is on the human, Lao Tzu's on what go beyond the human. As the Chinese say: Confucius wanders*

within society, Lao Tzu roams beyond. The life reaches out in each of these directions, and Chinese civilization would certainly have been poorer if either had not appeared.

The theories of yin-yang and the five elements which reflected a primitive concept of materialism and dialectics, were applied into Traditional Chinese medicine by ancient Chinese physicians, greatly influencing the formation and development of the theoretical system of Chinese medicine, and guiding its clinical work up to the present time. Traditional Chinese Medicine is well known for focusing on prevention and searching for the cause of disabilities. This leads to a custom that people pay more attention toward pregnant women's behaviors, which they believed the most harmful factor cause disabled babies.

After the failure of the Opium Wars (1840-1842), Western culture and beliefs have been blending into Chinese culture along with the introduction of science and technology. Their major influence on the Chinese attitude toward the people with physical disabilities is personal appearance and individual autonomy. There is very high "never married" rate among the physically disabled because bodily difference or physical appearances play a crucial role in Chinese marital status today. Western science and medicine mainly focused on the correction of physical defects or abnormalities. Many parents of physical disabled children are now willing to spend all their savings in pursue of the goal of correcting their children's physical defects.

People with physical disabilities often are viewed differently in rural areas than in urban areas. In rural areas, what people care about is whether or not person has the physical ability to work in the field. In other words, people in some circumstances may be considered physically disabled, and in other circumstances not disabled. Thus there is

higher unemployment rate in rural areas than in urban areas because most of the physically disabled are not capable of working in the field. Physical disability is a social phenomenon. In general, Chinese people lived by the virtues of *zunlao*, *aiyou*, *furuo*, *zhucan* (respect the elderly, be kind to children, support the weak, help the disabled). Although common tendencies to discriminate against people with disabilities does exist in China, there is no obvious evidence of large-scale abandonment or severe rejection. Most people with disabilities survived with the support of family, government, and society in large. Therefore, a social atmosphere of sympathy toward the physically disabled has been formed and is deeply rooted so that you can still sense its influence in China today.

Chapter 3

Empowerment of Persons with Physical Disabilities

China is one of the four oldest civilizations with a written history of 4,000 years (Dai and Ji, 2001). China's long history includes eras of primitive society, slave society, feudalism and semi-feudalism, semi-colonialism and the present socialist society (Dai and Ji, 2001). China has gone through many historical changes. The recent one is the 1949 Communist Revolution in China. The Communist Revolution and its ideology have as its goal admission to full privileges citizenship for those group of people who were left out, exploited, and situated in the lowest socio-economic position in the past -- workers, peasants, women as well as minorities. However, one group of people who are in the same category and were not empowered constitutionally until 1980s, after China's "Open Door Policy" of 1978, is persons with disabilities. However the programs and interventions after 1978 are based on an understanding of disability as a functional limitation, but not as a social phenomenon. This chapter describes how political, economic, and social changes overtime, and especially since 1949, have had consequences that have empowered or disempowered the physically disabled in China.

3.1 Pre 1840s

In the long course of Chinese history there were many historical events and factors, which radically altered or contributed to the empowerment of people with physical disabilities in China. These include the influences of the Hundred School Thoughts and the establishment of First Emperor (221 B.C.), by which the feudal system of ancient China was utterly destroyed and a centralized monarchy was formed (Dai and Ji, 2001). When the most practical and useful aspects of Confucianism and Legalism

were synthesized in the Han period (206 B.C. – A.D. 220), a system of government came into existence that was the first in China's history to ensure the rights of the people with physical disabilities.

3.1.1 Hundred School Thoughts

During the Spring and Autumn (770-476 B.C.) and Warring States periods (475-221 B.C.), continuous social disturbances gradually broke up the domination of culture and literature by members of the nobility. Confucius started the trend of private education by providing private teaching in the late Spring and Autumn period. Then, in the Warring States Period, many schools of thought appeared and began to contend with one another (Dai and Ji, 2001). These schools of thought have had continuing influence on the development and advancement of Chinese society, and have contributed to the development of the means to empower people with physical disabilities in China. There were times when attempts were made to stop these traditional influences such as Qin dynasty's "burning classic books and killing Confucian followers" and Cultural Revolution's anti-four olds (old ideas, old cultures, old customs and old habits), but these traditional influences always make a comeback.

The teachings of Yin-Yang theory, Confucian and Taoist, which were discussed in the Chapter 2, not only have influenced the Chinese people's attitude toward persons with physical disabilities but also have a present and potential contribution for empowering people with physical disabilities in Chinese society. In addition to the teachings of these schools, there were many other schools of thought with the same or potential influence for empowering people with physical disabilities in Chinese society.

The school of thought founded by Confucius was known as Confucianism. A later school of thought that had equal influence was the school of Mohism founded by Mo Zi. Mo Zi (468-376 B.C.) was born in a working class family. He had personally experienced working class daily living conditions. He advocated universal love, the love for all without discrimination. He believed that people with ability should be elevated. He opposed the princes, dukes and noble classes who dominated the government and advocated choosing people with abilities to run the government (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

He stated that if people treat other families, bodies, countries as their own, there would not be any thieves, robbers, murders, killings, wars, etc; and a peaceful world would come. Orphaned children and helpless elders would be supported and the weak and helpless could be treated, and the disabled could have enough to support themselves (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

His belief reflected the ordinary people's wishes, and exerted a tremendous influence at that time in Chinese society. Mo Zi's teaching along with Confucianism, were called *Xian Xue* (noticeable teaching). Mo Zi is known as the northern sage of China (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

Mencius (372-289 B.C.) carried on Confucian's benevolence and advanced the "benevolent government" theory. He held that "benevolent government" should omit penalties, lower taxes, and let people have enough to make a living. The basis for Mencius' theory of government by benevolence was that man was born with goodness. His theory influenced the development of Confucianism, and how later rulers developed administrative policy (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

Totally opposed to Mencius was the reading of Xun zi (300-237 B.C.), a follower of Confucius. Xun Zi's concept of nature was a step forward compared to the immature materialism or skepticism initiated during the Spring and Autumn Period. He believed that human nature was not good, but that goodness can be achieved through education. He emphasized the importance of education. His teaching had a major impact on later education in China. He also spoke of benevolence, but emphasized the importance of rites. He believed that if a nation did not give priority to "rites," but instead emphasized "songs," "history" and other classics, the cultivating of one's moral character and the running a country would be just like "measuring the depth of a river by using one's fingers; pounding rice by using dagger-axe (ancient weapon-short and sharp point); eating food with awl instead chopsticks; these could not reach the predicted goal" set forth by Xun Zi (cited by Zhang and Wang, 1993).

The concept of "rite" was developed before Xun Zi, but he elucidated the concept of rite systematically. He regarded the rite as "the utmost point of humanity," "the utmost point of morality," believed "a human being without rite can not be born, an affair without rite can not be succeed, and a nation without rite can not be peaceful" from Xun Zi's cultivation (cited by Zhang and Wang, 1993). He stated that a nation without rite cannot be managed, just like a scale needs the sliding weight of a steelyard; drawing a straight line needs a carpenter's line marker; and drawing graphics needs compasses and ruler. His argument that the best government is one based on authoritarian control, not ethical or moral influences, was developed into the doctrine embodied in the school of law or Legalism (Zhang and Wang, 1993). This doctrine was used by Qin state, and later successive dynasties, including modern ones. Certainly it has impacted on the later

development and guarantee of legal rights and interests for people with physical disabilities in China.

Han Fei Zi, who lived in the late Warring States Period, shortly before the state of Qin unified China, was a student of Xun Zi. He summarized the previous Legalists' thoughts and theories, and put forward a completed theory of centralization of autocratic monarchy. The Legalists prior to Han Fei Zi, Shang Yang (390-338 B.C.) emphasized *Fa* (Law), Shen Buhai (d. 337 B.C.) stressed *Shu* (Arts of Ruler), and Shen Dao (350-275 B.C.) highlighted on *Shi* (Legitimacy of Rule) (Zhang and Wang, 1993). Han Fei Zi believed that these three must receive equal attention. Han Fei Zi stood for using draconian law to execute people. His works were brought to Qin, and the king of Qin admired them greatly. Basically all his works had been used in the unification of China (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

The book of *Han Fei Zi* is considered the main text of Legalism. It is a comprehensive guide for ruling. It consists of 55 chapters, each with its own theme. It discusses techniques of ruling -- "Two Handles" and talks about power over reward and punishment as the key to staying in power. Han Fei Zi in his book of *Han Fei Zi* stated, "...rewards should be rich and certain so that the people will be attracted by them; punishments should be severe and definite so that the people will fear them; and laws should be uniform and steadfast so that the people will be familiar with them. Consequently, the sovereign should show no wavering in bestowing rewards and grant no pardon in administering punishments, and he should add honor to rewards and disgrace to punishments -- when this is done, then both the worthy and the unworthy will want to exert themselves...(Bary, 1960)."

The Legalists honored the state and valued its prosperity and martial prowess above the welfare of the common people. Legalism became the philosophic basis for the imperial form of government in the long history of China. It directly contributed both to the empowering and the disempowering of people with physical disabilities in China. This will be discussed in details in the following section.

3.1.2 Legalism and First Emperor

The king of Qin Shi Huang Di (the First Emperor) relied heavily on Legalist Scholar-advisers to unify the six other major states of Eastern Zhou (770-221 B.C.). Under his rule a total transformation of the land now called China took place in 221 B.C. He created a new administrative government system. He abolished the feudal system of landholding and removed the noble warlords. Weights, measures and currencies were standardized throughout the land, and even such details as the width of chariot axles were regulated to help prevent groove in the thousands of miles of new roads that were being constructed. The varieties of “confusing” local writing were eliminated and one standardized writing system was used throughout the land (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

3.1.2.1 Criminal Law

The criminal punishment was major cause of physical disabilities during adulthood and had lasted until 20th century. Prior to Shang Yang’s Reforms (359-350 B.C.), there was no standard criminal law to follow in East Zhou. Physical torture as punishment by state rulers was not uncommon.

Shang Yang (390-338 B.C.), who was a famous statesman and one of Legalists in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period, made the practice of physical punishment as a formal law code. In the early Warring State period, the Qin state was

weaker in political, economic and cultural aspects compared to the other states. The reforms of Shang Yang made Qin become stronger and stronger politically and economically.

Historically he established the first formal law code for physical punishment. Shang Yang's reform was strict and fair in meting out rewards and punishments. The following is the story that shows how strict Shang Yang was in conducting his reform in order to establish the law code.

Case 14 – The Teachers of Prince were punished in Qin

It was recorded that at beginning of Shang Yang's reform in Qin state, there were many nobles against him. Two teachers of the Qin's *Tai Zi* (prince) first came out to tempt the prince to violate the law code, which Shang Yang established. Shang Yang knew that the teachers of Prince were behind the scenes (Zhang and Wang, 1993:107). Then he ordered one of the prince's teachers cutting off nose, one *Ci Zi* on the face (make words or tattoo on the face -- a kind of punishment for the prisoners in ancient time, so the prisoners could not escape because they had markers on their faces) (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 2:48).

Even though the severity of the penalties for criminal behavior was reduced after Qin, they were not abolished until the Communist Revolution of 1949. Prisoners who were tortured would suffer physical damages and that resulted in temporary physical disabilities but, in serious cases, would lead to permanent damages to the body or death.

Legalism achieved what all the other philosophies had attempted -- unification of China. The Qin Dynasty, operating under the Legalist philosophy, finally unified China in 221 B.C. In this light, Legalism was a success. In addition, it successfully put the fear

and respect of the law and government into the people, but it was too much, and the Qin Dynasty ended only 14 years after its founding. The imperial system, initiated during the Qin dynasty and completed during the Han dynasty, set a pattern that developed over the next two millennia.

3.1.2.2 Soldiers' Rights

One of Shang Yang's Reforms included rewards to soldiers who were brave in battles (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 2:49). He removed the noble warlords and abolished the feudal system of landholding (Zhang and Wang, 1993:106). The rank of nobility was based upon the contribution to the war. The greater contribution to the war, the higher rank of nobility the soldier would get. The noble class would lose their position if they did not make any contribution to the war (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 2:49). This law was the first law code in the history in related to soldiers' rights. Therefore those soldiers of low rank, wounded, or injured during battles, would be rewarded by the state according to their contribution to the war. After Qin, the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) continued carry on the law code of rewarding to soldiers according to their contribution to the war (Zhang and Wang, 1993:7).

Later in Qing dynasty, this law particularly mentioned sick soldiers or those who died in battle. For instance in the Great Qing Codes, article 218, Benevolence and Assistance Towards Relatives of the Military says that household members of the families of military officers or men who have died in battle or from illness (must be given) supplies and subsidies from the journey (Jones, 1994:210).

By the Revolution of 1949, the People's Republic of China guarantees soldier's rights. In particular it is stated in the Constitution, article 45, that for those disabled

during their service, “The state and society ensure the livelihood of disabled members of the armed forces, provides pensions to the families of martyrs and gives preferential treatment to the families of military personnel (Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, 1993).” There were a large number of veterans during the early period of new Communist China due both to Civil War and Korean War. This law represents a major means of empowerment in China. The military soldiers, including injured veterans, have very high social status.

During the economic depression of 1959-1962 and during the cultural revolution (1966-1976) and up to early 1980s, the majority of ordinary people in China had not enough grocery supplies such as green vegetables, milk products, meats, eggs, etc., but the military people and their families still had adequate supplies. Their rights and interests, including the disabled soldiers, have been guaranteed in China.

3.1.3 Han Dynasty – Governmental System Set to Last Two Millennia

The thinking of the pre-Qin philosophers was the jewel in the crown, but it lacked practical application. The main achievement of the Han dynasty was to provide a concrete form for everything -- including empowering people with physical disabilities, enabling these things to be carried on through Chinese history.

3.1.3.1 Set the Standards

As discussed in the Chapter 2, Confucian’s human relations doctrine influenced the attitude toward people with physical disabilities in China. This section will discuss how his teaching doctrine has impacted on the empowerment of people with physical disabilities in China.

The flourishing of Confucian thought in the Han dynasty led to the concrete manifestation in law of the humanistic ideas of Confucianism and Mohism. The Han dynasty started to provide pensions for the aged. Law forbade the killing or injuring of a slave, and abolished the cruelest methods of execution. The Law stated that parents had no right to kill or injure their children. That human life and death matters were for Heaven to decide could be dated from this period of time (Zhang and Wang, 1993:15-16).

The Qing code mentioned in article 89, *Supporting Orphans and Old Persons*:

As for widowers, widows, orphans, solitary persons, and persons who are critically or seriously disabled or poor and who have no relatives on whom they may rely and cannot survive by themselves, if the official having jurisdiction and who ought to support them does not support them the punishment will be 60 strokes of the heavy bamboo (Jones, 1994:112-113).

By the time of the Communist society after 1949, elder care is governed by the Constitution. It states in article 49:

Parents have the duty to rear and educate their children who are minors, and children who have come of age have the duty to support and assist their parents...Maltreatment of old people, women and children is prohibited.
(Constitution, 1993)

Beside elder care or old-age support, especially for those elders with physical disabilities, the state has responsibility to support those elders who have no children or relatives to care for them. It stated in the Constitution, article 45:

Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to material assistance from the state and society when they are old, ill, or disabled. The state

develops social insurance, social relief and medical and health services that are required for citizens to enjoy this right. (Constitution, 1993)

The Civil Affairs Ministry was established for this purpose and to provide support and assistance for the soldiers with physical disabilities mentioned in previous section. The Civil Affairs Ministry established various social welfare institutions to accommodate people with severe disabilities who have no family members to support them such as elderly people without children or relatives. The national census indicated that in the 1980s, 3% of elders were supported by the State (Li, 1988).

3.1.3.2 Equal Education

Another contribution of Confucianism to the empowerment of people with physical disabilities is in education. During the twentieth year of rule, Han Wu Di (156-87 B.C.) made Confucianism China's official political philosophy. Confucianism became dominant in the civil service while Legalist opponents continued to hold positions there. Examinations for Chinese civil service positions tested an applicant's knowledge of Confucian ideology, knowledge of ancient writings and rules of social graces rather than technical expertise. Theoretically these examinations were open to all citizens.

Liu Yong (1719-1804) who was the Prime Minister in the Qianlong Era of the last feudal dynasty – Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) is an model for people with physical disabilities for obtaining equal opportunity of education. There were plays shown recently in a China TV series named “Prime Minister Liu Luoguo” and “Legends on How Liu Luoguo Settled the Lawsuits,” which are based on the history and legendary tales about this man to illustrate this point.

Liu Yong was resourceful, humorous and upright. He was not afraid of losing his official position, and did not fear evil forces. He went into the midst of the common people and did many good deeds. People loved him. His fight for the will of the common people has become legend.

A middle-aged scholar, hunchbacked, chicken-chested, with little money and no backing in Beijing, how far could he go? But he wins a pretty woman from an aristocratic family, comes first in the official test and becomes the prime minister. Liu the Hunchback is portrayed as lovely. His famed ugliness, mediated by wit, becomes attractive. When mocked by Emperor Qianlong (1735-1795) and other officials, he retorted with a poem:

My hunchback is to carry the sky,

My high-chest embraces knowledge.

I have a hot heart for the country,

And am full of brains for Your Majesty.

There is a Guozijian street at *An Ding Men Nei* of Beijing. “Guozijian” means Imperial College of Beijing, the highest educational institution of the Yuan (1206-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, is situated on this street. In modern terms, the Imperial College is a national institution of higher learning in the capital.

The students in the Imperial College studied three or four years. After graduation, they could directly go to government institutions at different levels, or alternatively, pass the national civil service examination called *Jing Shi*, and then be appointed to different official posts by the emperor. From the tablets bearing names of *Jing Shi*, namely those who had passed the examination, the Qing dynasty Minister of Personnel Liu Yong (1719-1804) was one of them (CCTV, 2002).

Author William Lockhart (1861:5-6), wrote,

The Chinese are an educated people. They place a high value upon the attainments of the learned. Foreigners differ as to the amount of education of the common people, yet a visitor to the streets of a Chinese city in the evening may usually see many of the working-classes, artisans, small shopkeepers, and even porters, sitting at their doors engaged with a book, or reading placards on the walls...Every one desires that his children may be taught, for which object, and if his means allow, he sends them to school.

The people are encouraged to this by the fact that government offices are open to the poorest if he cares to study, the rule being to confer such employment only upon those who have reached some educational standing.

Thus under this rule, the poor, the rich, the healthy, the ill, the able, the disabled, the young, the old, anyone had the chance to take the civil service examination. Frequently fifty or sixty year-old persons were seen in the examination. An instance is well known in China of an old man of eighty years old going up to be examined and succeeding.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the government has always placed education as its higher agenda and has been made efforts in providing equal education opportunity to all citizen of China. Through uninterrupted efforts in the past five decades, China has made significant progress in its education sector. The 9-year compulsory education is being implemented; higher education, occupational and polytechnic education, diversified adult education and ethical education have been

developed rapidly. In Chapter 4, I will discuss opportunities for special education in details.

3.1.3.3 Eugenic Practice

Taoist teaching is different from Confucianism and Mohism as discussed in Chapter 2. The influence of Taoist doctrine can be found in the academic, political, and literary domains as well as in religious, custom *Fang Ji* (the term for ancient time techniques including medicine, divination, divine by astrology, practicing physiognomy), etc. (Zhang and Wang, 1993:148). Lao (Tzu) Zi's thought increases the scope and depth of Chinese culture. Meanwhile, it also enhances the tenacity of Chinese culture. Additional details about the influences of Lao Zi's thought in Chinese daily life are discussed in Chapter 2. In this section, I will discuss its influence on Chinese medical practice.

Toward the end of the East Han dynasty (25-220), the practice of Taoist religion was on the rise. Its combination with technology contributed to the popular attempt to make pills of immortality, a practice that was in vogue at the time (Zhang and Wang, 1993:183). The resulting experimentation led to explorations in the use of herbal and mineral substances to enrich the Chinese medicine, as well as having an impact on Chinese medical practice for the prevention and control of birth defects.

Many physicians like Wang Chong, Chao Yuanfang, Sun Simiao, etc. raised the issues of the resources for preventing and reasons for birth defects as discussed in Chapter 2. Sun Simiao (581-682) advocated establishing Obstetrics and Gynecology and Pediatrics as individual subjects. He studied women's special diseases and treatment methods, and wrote seven volumes about *Fu Ren Fang* (Women's prescription). His

work described details of etiology and treatment in different diseases of concern to the areas Obstetrics and Gynecology. In particular he emphasized health care during gestation, procedures during labor and delivery, and contraindications pre and postpartum. He believed that pregnant women should pay attention to their food, mood, as well as other desires, and to avoid terrifying situation; that they should be calm and to not be in a rush or fearful during the process of labor and delivery.. People around such women should also be calm and not show worried and unmerciful expressions. Otherwise it was easy to cause anxiety for pregnant women resulting in difficult labor, or retaining the baby, resulting in with abnormalities (Zhang and Wang, 1993:392-393). His works have become part of fetal or neonatal education and medical practice in China up to present time.

3.2 1840s-1949

The mid-late 19th and first half of 20th centuries, China underwent many vicissitudes. Domestic rebellion and foreign invasion often occurred. Among these, the Opium War was a major influence. “The Opium Wars” were in fact not about opium at all. It was a first step designed to open China along with its markets and resources for exploitation. The War itself physically opened China. However, it was the aftermath of the War that exposed China, economically, socially, politically and ideologically to outside world.

3.2.1 Western Influences

The unequal treaties signed after the Opium Wars, were the main device for opening China. China became a semi-feudal and semi-colonial state. Along with an increase in the opium trade, western technology, western religion, western medicine and

western education were introduced into China. These influences were far reaching and long lasting in empowering and disempowering the people with physical disabilities in China.

3.2.1.1 Introduction of Opium

Opium for medicinal purposes was first recorded in Li Shizhen (1518-1593)'s *Ben Chao Gang Mu* (Book of Chinese Medicine Pharmacology) and was used to treat dysentery, cholera and other diseases (Dictionary of Chinese Medicine Pharmacology, 1977; Lai, 1995). Not until the 18th century were there any accounts of opium smoking and heroin abuse in China.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (1999) has document that opium is a strongly addictive narcotic drug and the major component is heroin, a highly addictive drug. Its abuse is associated with serious health conditions. The short-term effects of the abuse have slow gait, droopy eyelids, impairing night vision, and constipation, etc. The long-term effects of the abuse lead to collapsed veins, infections of different organs. As higher doses are used over time, physical dependence and addiction develop. With physical dependence, the body has adapted to the presence of the drug and withdrawal symptoms may occur if use is reduced or stopped. Sudden withdrawal by heavily dependent users who are in poor health can be fatal.

In 1729, the Chinese imperial government, alarmed at opium's debilitating effect, prohibited the sale of opium mixed with tobacco and banned opium-smoking houses. Selling opium for smoking was classed with robbery and instigation to murder, and punished with banishment or death (Tho'Mas, 1997). But this didn't stop Britain, which had gradually taken over the opium trading from its European capitalist rivals, Portugal

and Holland. Much of the opium at this time was grown and manufactured in British India. Opium smuggling developed rapidly along China's South Coast. Opium sales had risen gradually from 2,330 chests in 1788 to 4,968 chests in 1810. But once the British, East India Trading Company got the opium monopoly, they forced it up to 17,257 chests in 1835. The value of the trade was millions of British pounds (Tho'Mas, 1997).

In the 1830's, virtually all men under 40 smoked opium and the entire army was addicted (Tang, n.d.). It affected all classes of people, from rich merchants to Taoists. The total number of addicts in China in the 1830s was as high as 12 million (Tang, n.d.). Due to the smuggling of opium, the trade deficit Western countries had with China quickly turned into a trade surplus. China could not export enough tea and silk to balance the trade. Instead the difference in trade was made up by the export of Chinese silver, which was highly valued for its fine quality. During the fiscal year of 1835-1836 alone, China exported 4.5 million Spanish dollars worth of silver (Tang, n.d.). In 1839, the Chinese opium smokers spent 100 million taels, while the government's entire annual revenue was only 40 million taels (Tang, n.d.). The drain of silver greatly weakened the Chinese government. One government official wrote, "If we continue to allow this trade to flourish, in a few dozen years, we will find ourselves not only with no soldiers to resist the enemy, but also with no money to equip the army (Tang, n.d.)."

So while the Chinese government was taking stronger and stronger measures to end the opium trade, the British were doing all they could to increase it. Britain's East India Company would pay three wars on the people of China in order to secure the right to sell opium there.

The Opium War of 1839-42 started when the Chinese imperial government sent Lin Zhe Xu (1785-1850) to confront foreign merchant ships and demand they surrender their illegal cargo (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 10:60-61). The first Opium War ended on August 29, 1842, with the Treaty of Nanjing. The treaty forced the Chinese government to pay millions dollars to the British merchants. Furthermore, it opened up five ports to English trade. Finally, it ceded Hong Kong to the British (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 10:62-63). This was the bloody origin of Hong Kong's 155 years as a British colony.

The opium tragedy, however, was just the beginning. Soon after, the effects of opium were expressed throughout the whole country. Almost every household had addicted male member. The following is a story of what really happened in my grandma's family.

Case 15 – Two brothers were smoking opium

After my grandma and her sisters got married, her two brothers divided the family's houses, lands and wealth in two. Both brothers began to smoke opium. They sold their lands, fruit trees, mountain, house and anything they could find in order to buy opium to smoke. They not only lost their wealth, they also lost their ability to work. As my grandma said to me, "They were *Fei Ren* (disabled) because the smoking of opium ruined their health and they lost their ability to do physical labor. Their only desire was to obtain more opium. They were doing nothing except smoking opium everyday."

As my grandmother recalled that time, almost every household had someone addicted to opium or heroin. Once people started to smoke opium or inject heroin, majority of them lost their physical ability to work, to support their family, to work on

their farms or shop like her brothers. Almost every day, there were people died on the streets because of the intoxication of heroin.

Only until the Revolution of 1949, under Mao's leadership, the people's government was able to close down all opium smoking houses; mobilize the masses to struggle against and punish drug producers, drug traffickers and gambling rings, and carry out extensive publicity to raise the consciousness of the masses and rehabilitate drug addicts and gamblers. After two to three years of efforts, these social plagues were basically wiped out, and China's social life took a new and healthy turn for the better (White Paper, 2000).

3.2.1.2 Cigarette Production

The technology of cigarette production was introduced into China in 1902 by the British American Tobacco Company (Perry, 1993). Although cigarette production was a new technology to the Chinese industry in 20th century, it quickly became a major component of the national economy. By the mid of 20th century, between 1957-1961, rolled tobacco was China's third largest light industry, employing more than 80,000 workers. In tax revenues, it accounted for approximately 50% of all taxes on industrial production (Perry, 1993:134). By the late of 20th century, the sales volume has grown steadily when economic reforms were initiated. In 1994, about 1.7 trillion cigarettes were produced in China and about 900 million were imported (WHO, 1997).

According to World Health Organization (1997) survey, China has the largest cigarette smoking population in the world. Of China's population of 1.2 billion, more than 300 million men and 20 million women are smokers, making China the world's largest actual and potential national market for cigarettes.

As the world's largest producer and consumer of tobacco products, China bears a large proportion of the global burden of smoking-related diseases that cause physically disabling conditions. Cigarette smoking is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease, peripheral vascular problems and oral lesions (Berkow, 1992). These diseases will lead to physically disabling conditions and premature death.

Of Chinese tobacco deaths, almost half involve lung disease, and the proportions involving tuberculosis, esophageal cancer, stomach cancer and liver cancer are each about as large 5-8% as the proportion involving heart disease or stroke (Peto, Chen and Boreham, 1999). It is not hard to find one or two men around you who has chronic obstructive lung disease or emphysema -- significant symptoms and disability occur around middle age, and the most common symptoms are gradually progressive exertional dyspnea (short of breath under laboring), cough and sputum production. The following case is only one of them.

Case 16 – *Hoba* (Short of Breath) Uncle

There was a man whom we called *Hoba* uncle who lived next door to my grandparents' house. He was short of breath and coughed all the time. My grandma told me that he had smoked since he was young and now he was over 40 years old and coughing and short of breath all the time. He had family of eight, three sons and three daughters. When I was living with my grandparents, I remembered that he stayed on the bed most of time especially wintertime, basically he lost his physical ability to work because of his chronic obstructive lung disease caused by his long history of smoking. He died in his early 50s.

The adverse health effects of smoking are not restricted to the smoker: the passive smoking causes lung cancer, ischemic heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome, and middle ear disease and respiratory illness in children (Smeeth and Fowler, 1998). Even I was a victim of secondhand smoke.

Case 17 – Dad was smoking

I was about 11 to 12 years old when I came back to my parents from my grandparents' home. I go sick most of time, especially wintertime. I often had respiratory infections, pneumonia, and asthma attacks. Each year, I had had half of time in the hospital. Once I got back home, I would have asthma attack. At home, my dad was smoking, and most of evenings and nights he had friends, co-workers come over. Most of them were smoking. During winter, the windows were closed and the smoke had remained inside. Thus under such condition, I had numerous asthma attacks and respiratory infections. Finally my parents realized that it was the smoke that caused my asthma attacks. Dad quit smoking and moved their meetings elsewhere. The following winter, I had no such asthma attacks at all, very few flu and hardly any cough.

I was luckily enough that the cause of my sickness was quickly found. However, many of people at their childhood might have similar problem as mine, and might not be lucky enough to know the cause. Their sickness may continue to their adulthood, thus their long lasting asthmatic condition and repeated respiratory infections would result in physical disability.

There was a study, undertaken by Britain's Oxford University, the Chinese Academies of Preventive Medicine and of Medical Sciences in Beijing. This study

consisted of two parts: one retrospective (Liu, et al. 1998) and one prospective (Niu, et al. 1998). Both the retrospective study and the early results from the prospective study in China indicate that in 1990 tobacco caused about 12% of adult male deaths, and by 2030 it will probably be a cause of about one third of them. About two thirds of young Chinese men become cigarette smokers in early adult life and about half of those who do so will eventually be killed by their habit. As about 10 million a year reach manhood in China, the annual number of tobacco deaths will rise from almost 1 million now to about 3 million in the 2050. Hence, there will be a total of about 100 million deaths caused by tobacco in China during the first half of 21st century. Thus the above data mean that the number of physically disabled will increase due to the increase in cigarette smoking in China.

3.2.1.3 Western Missionaries and Influences

Christian missionary movements in the past two centuries resulted in numerous Western missionaries coming to many countries in Asia. China, before the 1949 Revolution, was a big attraction for missionaries (Cheung, 1988:1). Missionary work did not consist of only evangelical programs. Medical and educational activities were essential parts of missionary work. Medical work served to alleviate physical suffering, break down the prejudices of the native people against missionaries, and assisted evangelical work (Robinson, 1923).

Western medical missionaries were the first ones to introduce Western medicine into China. Mission-sponsored medicine, or missionary medicine, is therefore an important starting point for any discussion of the development of Western medicine in

China. It certainly had an impact on the empowerment of people with physical disabilities in China.

From the historical point of view, the input made by medical missionaries on China's medical revolution were very significant, in contrast to other contributions during that same period, made by the Chinese government and private sources (Cheung, 1988). Medical missionaries also lead the way among scientists who introduced Western science into China. The establishment of a small hospital in Guangzhou in 1835 by Peter Parker, M.D., D.D. (Gulick, 1973), an American medical missionary, corresponded to one of the earliest attempts to establish medical missions in China. Medical missionary work increased when China was forced by the British to open five treaty ports to Westerners after the Opium War (1839-1842), followed by the opening of the core region as a consequence of the Arrow War (1858-1860) (Dai and Ji, 2001, v 10:83).

The medical missionaries not only introduced Western medicine to the patients, but also exposed them to Christianity. In 1890, twenty-one of the forty Protestant societies in China were engaged in some form of medical activity, and six of these group treated over twenty-five thousand patients in 1889 (Hyatt, 1966:105). Their services included treating rich and poor, acute sickness and chronic problems, women and men, elders and children. These patients included, elderly man with painful swollen knees; patient in the late stage of leprosy; abused children; elderly blind woman with bound feet; wounded soldiers; injured prisoners; opium addicts and babies with malnutrition (Drake, 1977). They saved many people's lives and cured sickness that in the part resulted in long term physical dysfunction; relieved patients from their disabilities; prevented illness that

would result in devastating physical disabilities; cured blindness and helped many long term physically disabled to walk again (Drake, 1977).

Despite anti-Christian and anti-foreign movements, which were at their height in the 1860s (Cohen, 1963) and the 1890s (Wehrle, 1966), medical missionaries achieved a fair amount of success by the end of the 19th century. This included the dispersing of Western medicine into countryside, the translation of medical texts into Chinese language (Bowers, 1974), and the training of Chinese auxiliary health workers (Croizier, 1968:38-39). At the turn of the 20th century, there were already 196 missionary doctors (Shields, 1944:287) and 61 missionary hospitals and clinics (Croizier, 1968:38) in China. It should be mentioned that this was at a time when the Chinese Government had not yet officially acknowledged, nor was it supporting, Western medicine. That was to approach after 1911, when the Republican Government overthrew Qing Dynasty.

The official recognition of Western medicine resulted from the epidemic of the North Manchurian (Manzhou) Outbreak of 1910 and 1911 (Nathan, 1974). Anatomical dissection was officially approved in 1913. This spurt of interest in Western medicine and medical education among officials and intellectuals permitted medical missionary work to grow (Cheung, 1988). The medical missionaries increased to 600 in 1925 from 450 in 1913; and the number of missionary hospitals increased to 326 in the early 1920s (Croizier, 1968) from 289 in 1919 (Lennox, 1933). Anti-Christian movement in the 1920s caused this number to change to 235 in 1933 (Lennox, 1933). But still this number accounted for 50% of all hospitals in China in 1933 (Cheung, 1988).

Medical schools under the support of Christian societies were the foundation for China's Western medical education (Lutz, 1971). There were 29 medical schools in 1915.

Among them, 16 were sponsored by missionary societies (Cheung, 1988). By 1933 after the anti-Christian movement of 1920s, half of all the medical schools were financed by missionary societies in China (Lennox, 1933).

From the above statistics, it can be seen that medical missions had a very important role in introducing Western medicine into China, and were directly involved in treating people with physical disabilities in China in the first half of the 20th century. They had a strong influence on the development of Western Medicine in China in the last half of the 20th century up to the present.

In addition to the introduction of Western medicine into China by Western missionaries, other foreigners began to join the anti-foot binding movement near the end of 19th century. Foot binding, was a custom of binding women's feet that resulted in decreasing physical abilities and mobility of those women.

In 1885, Alicia Little (Jackson, 1997:144), an English writer, founded the Tian Zu Hui (Natural Foot Society). She was a sharp observer and later wrote about the domestic and social life of Chinese families in both fiction and nonfiction. She was unusual in that she advised her readers not to come to conclusions about the Chinese based on just a few fragments of information. In addition, she was one of the first Westerners to talk about the influence Chinese women could have over their husbands.

Alicia Little was well known, and best remembered, for her hard work to end the custom of foot binding in China. She learned about the infections and other health problems associated with foot binding from some of medical missionaries. She began with a group of Western women living in Shanghai that included the wives of different

foreign diplomats. She aimed to establish an international association end foot binding. She raised funds for the Natural Foot Society when she returned to England.

Another influence from Christian missionaries was the introduction of the ideology that all people should be equal in the sight of God. Thus the societies of Christian missions established missionary schools for girls (Drake, 1977) and special schools for disabled children in addition to the establishment of medical facilities in China after the Opium War (Deng, Poon-Mabrayner and Farnsworth, 2001). The missionary schools for girls opened opportunities for women to get an education in China. On the other hand, some took part in the anti-foot binding movement. These missionary schools for girls did not admit girls with bound feet (Jackson, 1997:148). The girls who wanted to get an education had to have feet that were never bound or that had been unbound. The special schools for disabled children will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.2.2 Internal Chinese Influences and Reforms

As deeply rooted in tradition as the old China was, time did not hold still, and toward the middle of the 18th century, things were starting to change. While people continued to follow the old customs (as they had for centuries, with their lives based on family rule and obedience to elders), contact with the outside world was beginning to create change. Western traders and missionaries were bringing new ideas with them. Chinese in high places were beginning to concern, to some extent, about how the outside world looked at them. Chinese diplomats, men of education and wealth who traveled outside China, became aware that theirs was considered an uncivilized culture (Jackson, 1997:140). The custom of foot binding was a large contributor to this view.

3.2.2.1 Introduction of Foot Binding

Foot binding began late in the Tang dynasty (618-906) and it gradually spread through the upper class during the Song dynasty (960-1297). During the Ming period (1368-1644) and Qing time (1644-1911) the custom of foot binding spread to the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population until it was finally outlawed in the 1911 Revolution of Sun Zhong San (ShanYat-sen).

Foot binding began as a luxury among the rich; it made women more dependent on others and less physically able around the house. It soon became a prerequisite for marriage. It was even a just reason for a man to call off marriage if he found out that the woman that had been arranged for him to marry did not have bound feet. It came to the point that foot binding was the only right thing to do for a daughter. A mother was *obligated to bind her daughter's feet or she almost certainly would never get married.*

Two of my grandmas and their sisters all had bound feet. My grandma on my mother's side whenever she had a chance to talk about her feet, "every pair of small feet costs a barrel of tears" became her words each time.

Case 18 – "Every pair of small feet costs a barrel of tears"

She told me that when she was 7 years old, her mother bound her feet with a long cloth. It wrapped tightly around her feet, forcing her four small toes under the sole of the foot. This made the foot narrower but at same time it made the feet shorter because it also forced the big toe and the heel closer together by bowing the arch of the foot. The foot was tightened each day and her feet were put into progressively smaller and smaller sized shoes. She said that she cried every night

because of the pain of her feet. This process eventually stopped the growth of the feet and forced the four small toes under the foot.

She told me what she could remember the rotted flesh with bloody pus because of a lack of circulation. It was like it happened yesterday. “This was not too bad” she said, “compared to all of my life. I had to walk on them especially when I have to stand in order to work or bear weight. I cannot run, I walk unsteadily, and cannot perform work like regular people do. I am physically disabled all my life because of my bound feet. My youngest sister, was lucky enough to get her feet released right before her feet got rotten and deformed like mine, but my other sister, just like me had her feet bound before the Sun Zhong San’s revolution.”

Women with bound feet were more likely to fall, less able to squat, and less able to stand up from a chair without assistance than were women with normal feet. This ancient custom has caused severe life-long disability for many women and is still evident in many elderly Chinese women today (Cummings, Xing and Stone, 1997).

3.2.2.2 The Fight to End Foot Binding

The elimination of foot binding by imperial order, attempted by the Manchu as early as 17th century, was hopeless to discourage. It was not until the 20th century, when anti-foot binding came to be regarded as part of a larger movement to liberate the Chinese women from their age-old inheritance of social inequality, that progress was finally made. The keen appeals of revolutionary leaders to free woman from her spiritual and physical bondage made an increasing impact on China’s masses. This liberal dissemination of thought, combined with positive action by local officials, gradually

brought to an end this unique contribution by Chinese culture to the history of feminine suffering and disability.

The anti-foot binding movement in China was part of a larger movement to liberate women and raise their status in society. Progress was achieved in stages. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, associations of anti-foot binding organized followers spreading propaganda in towns and villages throughout the country (Levy, 1992:74-82). This led the way to greater popular enthusiasm and participation in the movement of anti-foot binding in years shortly preceding the Revolution in 1911.

The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the Qing dynasty, and aimed to eliminate foot binding from the Chinese society. New Republic Government issued a series of orders, which reached into every provincial town, hamlet, and village. By the end of 1920s foot binding was obviously diminishing.

There was a survey done in a rural area 125 miles south from Beijing in 1929 by the Chinese National Association of the Mass Education Movement. There were involving 1736 females from 515 families in this survey. The data, when correlated with the ages of the women, illustrated clearly how the foot-binding pattern changes in this area within thirty years and how foot binding gradually disappeared. It was slowly at beginning and then rapidly increased until foot bounding completely disappeared in 1919. From the table 6 (Gamble, 1943), it was after the turn of the century that significant changes occurred. The proportion of girls with normal feet rose to 18.5% (81.5% bound) from 5.9% (94.1% bound). Then came the Revolution of 1911, the elevation of woman's social status, for which the elimination of foot binding was essential. The data show the sweeping change for 80.5% (19.5% bound) of girls born from 1910-1914 had unbound

feet. The percentage increased to 94.4% (5.6 bound) for girls in the 1915-1919, and there were no new cases from 1920 on.

Table 6 – Tingsien Females with Bound and Unbound Feet 515 Families, 1929

year of born	age group	unbound feet	bound feet	total	percent bound
before 1890	40yr or over	4	488	492	99.2
1890-1894	35-39 yr	6	103	109	94.5
1895-1899	30-34 yr	6	97	103	94.1
1900-1904	25-29 yr	24	106	130	81.5
1905-1909	20-24 yr	52	77	129	59.7
1910-1914	15-19 yr	120	29	149	19.5
1915-1919	10-14 yr	152	9	161	5.6
1920-1924	5-9 yr	169	0	169	0
1925-1929	under 5 yr	294	0	294	0

In August 1928, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs announced sixteen regulations against foot binding and ordered all prefectures to carry out enforcement (Levy, 1992:205). In addition to forbidding foot binding, the regulation encouraged the founding of any association or club, which supported activities in anti-foot binding. The regulation also required that school texts had a chapter added on the prohibition of foot binding so that an emancipation mood would be fostered among young students who, in turn, could then influence their families and relatives.

To the Chinese revolutionaries, abolition of foot binding and the liberation of women were equal causes. It was an important mission to bring the foot binding custom to an end, but it was difficult because most women still remained hidden and were of lower social status in society. Foot reform enjoyed its initial success in the larger cities and towns where women were more liberated and of higher social status. However progress was slow in eliminating foot binding in the villages, especially remote conservative areas. The conservative male view of woman as an inferior accessory and plaything remained fundamentally unchanged in those areas. In such an atmosphere, the

preservation of the old ways must have been regarded as natural and proper. Women stayed at home rearing children, doing household tasks, and serving their husbands. They were ignorant and cut off from the outside world. Conservative thinkers shied away from discussing a topic as personal as women's feet, and the peasant masses were even less likely to talk about it. Therefore, though there were numerous laws and regulations that forbade foot binding, without a revolutionary change in people's viewpoint, it was difficult to eliminate it. Yunnan Province was one area where foot binding continued until 1957 after it has ceased virtually everywhere else in China (Jackson, 1997:155).

It was not until the Chinese Communists took over the country in 1949 that the custom of foot binding really came to an end in China. The Revolution of 1949 brought the liberation of women both in urban cities and rural areas.

Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work to men and women alike and trains and selects cadres from among women. (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 1993)

Once women step out of their homes, they should enjoy the equal opportunities of education, employment, social services, and appointment to leadership position, certainly there is no place for foot binding in China today.

3.3 1949-1966

In the old semi-colonial, semi-feudal China, the broad masses, ordinary people were oppressed by imperialism; feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and had no equal rights in vast aspects of Chinese society. After the People's Republic of China was

founded in 1949, the Chinese government and people waged a series of large-scale campaigns, rapidly sweeping away the remains left over from the old society, and established a basic political system which could promote and protect the right of vast majority of Chinese people, so that the nation and society took on an entirely new look and a new age was started for the progress of all citizen rights in China. There were several tasks, which new China governments had accomplished during the transformation to socialism and the building of strong foundations for the later full empowerment of people with disabilities in China.

3.3.1 Establishment of Communist China – Elimination of Social Evils

From the beginning, the Chinese government advocated complete national independency and progress in citizen rights. Invaded and enslaved by various foreign powers, old China had lost its state independence, and its people had lost their rights to minimum guarantee. New China, after it's founding, promptly abolished all unequal agreements, which had been forced on China by various imperialist countries and worked to implement constitutionally equal rights for all citizens in New China.

By eliminating prostitution and drug abuse, ultimately China reduced the social sources that caused many physical disabilities related to prostitution and drug abuse. The physical disabilities resulted from drug abuse such as opium smoking or heroin injections were discussed in the previous section. In this section, the focus will be on the physical disabilities caused by sexual transmitted diseases, which are related to prostitution. These diseases will cause functional difficulties or physical disabilities in infected persons or their offspring.

For instance, gonorrhea, an acute infectious disease of the epithelium of the urethra, cervix, rectum, pharynx, or eyes, may lead to bacteremia and result in metastatic complications. Both men and women could be infected. In some cases, the infant and children can be infected too. Beside people with such infection had general infection illness symptoms, some of them got arthritis, which limited their motion and ability to work. If treatment was implanted early enough, over 95% of patients with gonococcal arthritis recover completely their joint function, but left 5% of them with permanent joint damages which means they are having permanent physical disabilities (Berkow and Fletcher, 1992:254-257).

Another disease was syphilis, a contagious systemic disease caused by the spirochete *Treponema pallidum*, characterized by sequential clinical stages and by years of symptom less latency. It can affect many tissue or vascular organ of the body and can be passed from mother to fetus. The clinical manifestation during late or tertiary syphilis, patients generally affects in the 40s or 50s. Their physical deterioration gradually affected their walking, writing; and eventually, in some cases, they would develop loss of bladder sensation. Generally, in the late stages of syphilis, patients loss all their physical abilities to live independently (Berkow and Fletcher, 1992:258-265).

A chlamydial infection is about 50% of sexual transmitted disease. Actually, Chlamydial ophthalmia neonatorum, which would lead to blindness in newborn babies, is increasingly recognized in infants born to women with Chlamydial cervicitis (Berkow and Fletcher, 1992:257-258).

The mass movements against the preventable communicable disease such as the venereal diseases includes mass education, a national health insurance system, training

dispersion of rural health care personnel, elimination of prostitution, liberation of women, and full employment. By 1964, the government announced that they had virtually eliminated venereal disease (Abrams, 2001). In 1977, there were only three people registered as being infected with venereal diseases (Ferdinand, 1996).

Through these social reforms, involving getting rid of the old and creating the new, the New China not only reached a historic turning point in the development of its citizen rights, but also initiated a brand-new starting point for further exploration and development of the equality of citizen rights. They laid a foundation for equal rights for people with disabilities in China.

3.3.2 Social Welfare System – Providing Employment Opportunities

As stated earlier, due to the special situations during the establishment of the New China, the government established the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health to provide aid to injured soldiers from wars initially, then the responsibilities of these ministries spread to those people who were helpless, and to those who have no supports from their families including elders, orphans, ill or disabled. Both ministries are responsible for making policies and operating programs of rehabilitation, employment, and social services for people with disabilities. The Civil Affair Ministry was most centrally involved in providing employment, rehabilitation engineering, and social services for people with disabilities. It established numerous “welfare enterprises” in which people with disabilities constituted at least 35% of the productive lines. These enterprises enjoyed tax exemptions or deductions and were administrated by the ministry and the local civil affairs bureaus under the country’s economic planning system. Most of people with physical disabilities but the mental ability to accomplish various tasks work

at different enterprises arranged by these welfare agencies (White Paper, 1996). My friend's brother is an example.

Case 19 – My friend's older brother

In early 1960s, my parents moved to the apartment next to Deng's family apartment. Deng's family has four kids, the first three are boys and the youngest one is a girl. Deng's second son had been infected by polio when he was young. I always played with his little sister who is my age and with whom I attended school. The son had a crutch, which helped him to move around since only one leg was infected. I remember that the time I saw his tiny thin leg -- paralyzed and atrophic -- I was shocked. He always helped with our homework and seemed to enjoy doing that.

Later my mother told me that he had a job working at the local welfare factory, which is one supported by the government to provide jobs for those people with physical disabilities. The time when he graduated from high school was during the Cultural Revolution in China when most of the high school graduates went to countryside to be trained at farms and fewer went into army or factories. Because of his physical disability, he was among the few lucky ones who did not have to go to countryside.

Sometimes, the employment for those with physical disabilities is provided by their parents' working places, which have an obligation to arrange jobs for such children of their employees under the leadership of Civil Affair Ministry of China.

Case 20 – My classmate's family

Actually it was not the entire family. The parents were of normal height, only the four kids were all short in stature. The medical term for this is achondrogenesis -- a hereditary disorder characterized by hypoplasia of bone, resulting in markedly shortened limbs with normal head and trunk. Right before junior high, the last year of elementary school, there was a classmate like this in my class. The first day of class, the teacher arranged for me to sit next to him, in the first row. He was very active, and he ran off during the self-study time without his being noticed by anyone because he was very short and even shorter than me when I was sitting.

His grades were not very good, and most of time the teacher kept him after school. He always tricked the girls in class and made them mad. Several of girls and I had to go to his home to tell his parents whenever he was held back at school because of his bad behavior or performances. So I got chance to meet the rest of his family. His father and mother were all normal height, two elder brothers were shorter than average, but taller than he at that time, and one little brother was the same height as he and two years behind him. His parents and an older brother were working in a factory.

The following year, we all went to Junior high. He and I went to different classes, but often we saw each other in the hallway. He was still very active and not doing well academically. In 1977, the college entrance examination resumed after a 10-year delay. We went to different high schools. He went to a vocational school and got a job at his father's factory after graduating in 1980.

The above two cases indicate that the people with disabilities, including the physically disabled, got arranged jobs from the government. The data from table 3, Chapter 2, the employment ratio in urban areas, illustrates that the majority of people with disabilities have jobs. They are employed either by welfare enterprises as in Case 19, or they are employed in the parents' working place such as in Case 20.

Additionally, it is very common to find the physically disabled in hospital settings in China. Professional training in medicine for people with physical disabilities, or impaired vision or hearing is common in China. *Tuna* (massage or bodywork) in Traditional Chinese Medicine basically is dominated by the physicians with physical impairments such as partial or total vision impairment. Other fields in health care practice have been popular for those people with physical disabilities such as the cases mentioned in Chapter 2, the gynecology physician (Case 4) and the chairmen (Case 5). Our family dentist was crippled.

In a local district of Shenyang, China, there are eleven community hospitals and clinics. Among them, one particular clinic is dedicated to blind massage physicians because the majority physicians are blind -- "There were about twenty of them," recalled a retired local health official, and "there were seven physicians with other physical disabilities i.e. one lost of one arm, one lost one hand, and five had paralyzed legs in other hospitals and clinics throughout the whole district health care system."

The Chinese government supports many welfare enterprises in which the disabled are employed. It supports them in every way, in their production, management, technology, funding, taxation and marketing. With the help of the government's preferential policy, welfare enterprises increased rapidly from 1,022 in later 1970s to

42,000 in 1990 (White paper, 1991). In the 1980s the number of disabled people working in these enterprise increased by 67,000 each year, bringing the total to 750,000.

Government organs and other institutions and enterprises also employ some disabled people.

As reported from State Council (White paper, 1991), by 1990, among the 5.18 million urban disabled aged 16-59, about 2.60 million were employed. And the employment rate was at 50.9% by 1990. In rural areas, there were about 17 million disabled aged 16-59, and 10.30 million of them were engaged in raising crops or livestock. This means that about 60% of rural disabled persons participated productive activities. In summary, there are about 60% of people with disabilities, including the physically disabled employed under social welfare enterprises and other organizations as well participating in rural productivities at the present time. There are still about 40% of people with disabilities, including the physically disabled, who still need employment opportunities in China. The policy of providing employment opportunity to the disabled in China is now threatened when the whole nation has a very high unemployment rate for those people without physical difficulties.

3.4 1966-1976 – Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution, the young people and cadres were urged or even forced to move closer to the grass roots of society by going into the countryside and improving wilderness areas, especially in the Western provinces. There were large numbers of Party officials taking part in this movement to countryside. Many families were involved in this event. Both my parents went to rural areas at least once. My father went twice. Our school sent us to a school farm for two weeks during Junior high.

During this relocation movement to rural areas, the “6.26” Medical Team movement made a positive impacts on the rehabilitation of people with physical disabilities and influenced the later development of rehabilitation medicine in China.

Case 21 – Interviewing health care official

Mr. Zhang worked in the local health department of northern China all his life and had been gone through all the political movements during his tenure in office until the early 1990s. I asked him about the medical personnel being sent into the countryside to practice medicine during the Cultural Revolution period. He recalled that, “It was probably June 26, 1969, and that is why it was usually called ‘6.26’ Instruction. On June 26, Chairman Mao sent out a call to all medical personnel in China to form medical teams to go to rural areas and treat vast number of peasants who were lacking access to health care. It was the third year of the Cultural Revolution. Most of provinces had already established a ‘Revolutionary Committee,’ which functioned as the local government. After this instruction from Chairman Mao, provinces, cities, and medical institutions all established ‘6.26’ Medical Teams throughout all of China. The member went to rural areas, using acupuncture needles and Chinese herbal medicine, treating peasant patients with free of charge. This action actually benefited the vast majority of peasants in countryside, remote poverty areas, and especially sick people or the disabled. For instance, many local diseases i.e. *Da Gu Jie Bing* (big bone diseases), and *Xiao Re Ma Pi Bing* (Polio infection), *Long Ya Ren* (hearing impairment and mute) were targeted and the *Mang Ren* (blind) and *Lao Ren*

(elderly) regained the ability to be productive in their daily living and productive in the fieldwork. This movement lasted about ten years.”

“Big bone disease” mentioned here actually is Kashin-Beck Disease, a disabling osteoarticular disorder which is prevalent in northern China, Mongolia, Siberia and Tibet. At least 2-3 million people were estimated to be affected by this disease in a recent report at an international symposium in Beijing (Tomlinson, 1999).

Both my parents are physicians who experienced that period. My mother recalls how she went to countryside to treat *Bin Xiao Zhong Nong* (peasants without land or little land prior to the People’s Republic of China) using acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. During this time, the physicians who were trained in Western Medicine, like my mother, now attended intensive training courses in Traditional Chinese Medicine. These physicians who mastered both kinds of medical knowledge have contributed the most to modern and Traditional Chinese Medicine for treating chronic, debilitating conditions such as stroke, arthritis, or other acute, chronic disease which causes physical disabilities. The following was a paraplegia patient, whom my mother and her colleagues treated during that period.

Case 22 – Paraplegia of over ten years stood up again

This patient was a peasant living in a village where the “6.26” Medical Team, my mother and her colleagues, were responsible for the health care. The village is located far north of Shenyang. It was very poor at that time. My mother said that many families had only one blanket for wintertime. This patient got injured at the construction site of local water conservancy project in 1958. He was paralyzed from the waist down and could not stand at all. My mother and her

colleagues visited his home and treated him. They gave him acupuncture treatment everyday. Finally, he stood with assistance after two months treatment. With the continuity of treatment, gradually he stood alone and went to bathroom by himself.

This is not miracle. Recent studies done in acupuncture treating spinal injuries or strokes complications shows over 94% of cases of improvement including reduction in muscle spasms, some increased sensation, improved bladder and bowel function (Naeser, n.d.). This ancient therapy not only relived the suffering of the physical disabled in China, but also has become well known and used in around the world today.

3.5 1976-2000

Since Mao's death, China has gone through dramatic changes politically, socially, and economically. These changes have had huge impacts on the rights and interests of people with disabilities in China.

3.5.1 "Open Door Policy" – Guarantee of Human Rights for the Disabled

Since the "Open Door Policy" was established in 1978, China has been engaged in an effort to reform its economy. Deng Xiao Ping and his supporters have placed top priority on the opening of China's economic markets to the west. The rapid growth of the economy and the influences of the west have raised concerns of legal rights of the people with disabilities in China.

The first reversion of China's Constitution in 1982, particularly named the disabled as a group to enjoy the same civic rights as the able-bodied in the legislation in China. The rights of disabled have been guaranteed under various policies and

regulations since the establishment of the People's Republic of China as discussed in previous sections in this thesis.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons in December 1990. This law, guided by the principles of "equality," "participation," and "co-enjoyment," specified that the disabled are to enjoy equal rights with other citizens and are to be protected from violation. It also states that measures of support and help shall be taken to develop undertakings for the disabled, to promote their equal participation in social life and to guarantee their share of the material and cultural achievements of society (Law of the PRC on the Protection of Disabled Person, 1990). Many important laws such as the Criminal Law, the Criminal Procedure Law, the General Principles of the Civil Law, the Civil Procedure Law, the Marriage Law, the Inheritance Law, the Electoral Law, the Military Service Law and the Compulsory Education Law, have special provisions guaranteeing the rights and interests of the disabled. In accordance with these laws, the Chinese government has worked out specific policies, rules and regulations to protect the rights and interests of the disabled, for example, the China Five-Year Work Program for People with Disabilities, the Several Viewpoints on Developing the Education for People with Disabilities, the Program for the Implementation of Three Rehabilitation Projects for People with Disabilities, the Circular on Tax Exemption for Private Business Run by Disabled People and the Circular on Tax Exemption for Social Welfare Production Units (Whit Paper, 1995). Authorities in some provinces, municipalities directly under the central government and autonomous regions have worked out local laws and regulations to safeguard the rights and interests of the disabled. Many local governments have

adopted concrete measures to provide the disabled with preferential assistance, treatment and care. One of my childhood friends is one of the beneficiaries of these regulations.

Case 23 – Sun Ling, a woman executive

Our apartments were all on second floor, but in different building, next to each other. We could see each other and talk to each other through our windows. We played together a lot with other kids. She did not have much difficulty playing with us. She walked with a crippled leg fast enough to catch up with us in playing “seek and hide,” or “old owl catch chicks.” She was a tough girl. Sometimes, when boys picked on me, she was the one protecting me since I have no other brothers or sisters to help me. She was a smart and handy girl. She taught me how to crochet, but I never got a chance to learn sewing from her. She was two years older and like an older sister to me. She quitted her job once the “Open Door Policy” allowed people to have their own shops in the 1980s. She opened a tailor shop in our neighborhood with assistance from the local government. She told me that the government helped her find the location and made arrangements for her to get the permit and license. They even loaned her some funds to purchase a sewing machine and have a grand opening ceremony. I visited her in 1997; she owned a small company, which was manufacturing clothes. Her company office was located at a new building complex, which is at our old apartments location.

The old apartments were tore down in 1992. She bought a portion of the building with a government loan. The building is facing the street. She opened several clothes stores at the downtown area, and owns several clothing factories located in suburban areas. At that time, she told me that she was negotiating with

several businessmen from Taiwan and Hong Kong to export her products out of China. She wanted me to help her to get market place in the United States.

Unfortunately, I am not very business oriented.

To guarantee the right of the disabled to elect and to be elected, China's Electoral Law stipulates that those who are unable to write their vote may ask others whom they trust to write for them. Chinese law guarantees the property rights and other civil rights and interests of the disabled. For the disabled who are unable to file a civil suit, the law stipulates requirements for qualified guardians. The Inheritance Law of the People's Republic of China details measures to protect the right to inheritance of property for disabled people who are unable to work and are without resources. Chinese law also prohibits ill treatment and abandonment of disabled by family members. The disabled who cannot work or live independently have the right to require other family members to support them. The legal provider of a disabled person must fulfill his or her duty of supporting that person (Law of the PRC on the Protection of Disabled Persons, 1990).

The laws prohibit discrimination, insult and injury against the disabled or their ill treatment and abandonment. Those who take advantage of a person's disability to infringe upon their personal rights or other legitimate rights and interests thus commit a criminal act and are to be punished severely according to law. On the other hand, a disabled person who violates the criminal law will be exempted from criminal responsibility, or have their punishment mitigated or waived in full consideration of their intellectual, mental or physiological capacity to be responsible for their actions (Criminal Law, 1997).

The Chinese government and social organizations have made great efforts in ensuring rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, welfare and a good environment for the disabled. In March 1988, with approval of the Chinese government, the China Disabled Persons' Federation was established. The federation represents the common interests of all the disabled, protects their lawful rights and interests and mobilizes social forces to serve them. It has established its local branches on the basis of national administrative divisions. Federations of the disabled have been set up in all provinces, municipalities and counties, except in Taiwan. Grass-roots associates of the disabled have been set up in about one third of the townships, sub-districts and factories with a concentration of disabled workers (White Paper, 1991).

In order to help the disabled recover or enhance their participation in social life and ability to enjoy their rights, the State Council in 1988 approved the National Program of Three Projects for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled. The government and society have poured human and material resources into the three rehabilitations projects: curing of cataracts, rectifying complications of polio, and hearing and speech training for deaf children. The information provided by the State Council of the People's Republic of China (White Paper, 1991) stated that "in the past three years, 160,000 polio sequelae have been rectified with an effectiveness rate of 98.7%, enabling many young disabled to improve their limb functions, enter schools or take up jobs."

A national network of community rehabilitation centers in both urban and rural regions is being built. According to the State Council (White Paper, 1991), there were about 2,300 grassroots community rehabilitation centers, 750 disabled children care centers and training classes in cities and towns. For instance, in Shenyang, the 16

neighborhood offices of a district, have established disabled children's preschool education and care centers along with a variety of disabled service programs for training, rehabilitation, welfare, match-making and administering social security funds (White Paper, 1991).

The Chinese government promotes and encourages scientists and researchers around the world to study various causes of physical disabilities. There was a study done in China regarding the cause of Kashin-Beck disease. This debilitating disorder starts in childhood, attacking the growth of joint cartilage, with the worst forms resulting in dwarfism, very short upper limbs, and deformed and painful joints with limited mobility. The most frequently affected joints are ankles, knees, wrists and elbows, making manual farming work difficult and painful (Sorbie, n.d.).

In China, about 30 million people live in areas where the disease is endemic, and it is estimated that at least 2-3 million people are affected. Many of them live in the poor rural areas. There is no cure, and no clear preventive measures exist, so prevalence can be as high as 80-90% of people in some small communities (Tomlinson, 1999).

With international assistance from the Center for Disease Control, Medecins Sans Frontiers, and support from the Chinese government, scientists and researchers have been making efforts to improve health conditions for the people with physical disabilities. They realize that there is still a long way to go.

3.5.2 Family Planning Policy – Abandoned Disabled Baby Increasing

The "One-Child Policy" started in 1980. This "One-Child Policy" does curb population growth, but there is increasing concern about child abandonment in China related to this policy.

Subsequent to the introduction of “One-Child Policy” in 1980, the number of cases of child abandonment, especially those involving baby girls and babies with physical disabilities is rising. The reason for this can be tracked back to the traditional culture of China. Under traditional influences, people like boys over girls. Due to the “One-Child Policy”, there is an increasing tendency to abandon after birth baby girls, especially those with physical disabilities. This following case I experienced during 1980s at my hometown Shenyang, China. This case may illustrate the importance of the issues of abandoned disabled children in China.

Case 24 – Newborn girl with cleft palate in 1980s

The girl was delivered in Shenyang Maternal and Infant Hospital in the 1980s (the exact time I did not remember, but I am sure that many of people during that time in Shenyang would remember this girl). She was abandoned at the hospital after she was born. Her mother left without her. She had a cleft palate. It was on the news in Shenyang for a period of time and the call went out parents to come and take her home, but no one even came. Many articles criticized the parents’ behavior. This girl was ended up at the Shenyang Welfare Home as I can remember.

Since parents who abandoned babies know the government welfare homes would take care of their babies, and they are likely to place their babies in a public places such as train stations, markets, even outside the doors of welfare institutions or hospitals as in the case above. There is no official data for abandoned children with physical disabilities each year in China. However there were some other articles regarding the increase of abandoned children in China including disabled babies. One of the articles, I remember,

mentioned the Beijing Welfare Children Home and how difficult it is for them to accept more children into their facility because of the increased number of abandoned babies. One important reason for parents to abandon their babies is financial problems. As discussed in the previous chapter, Chinese parents would spend all of their savings to find the best doctors in the country to treat their children's disabilities if their belief is that their child's problem can be cured. One baby boy with cerebral palsy was sent to the Beijing Welfare Children's Home. There was a letter left with him when his parents abandoned him. Below is the letter translated from the original Chinese writing. It brings tears to the eyes to read it.

“Dear Grandpas, Grandmas, Uncles and Aunts:

I am a disabled child abandoned by my parents. I cannot move my arms and legs due to the birth trauma. There is food and water in my bag. Please take them out and feed me. My face will show nervous signs when I wet my diaper. It will cause people not to like me if I get my clothing soiled. I believed that my parents are dead, and they are bad parents. Would you please take me to the government welfare home? Otherwise, I will starve to death. Abandoned baby, Wu Ming.”

His parents continued,

“Finally we heartlessly abandoned our child. Everybody has some heart, but there was nothing we could do for our child. We owe too much, and could not pay back the loan for his medical expenses. We worked so hard to make money in order to treat him. We spent all our savings and now owe a lot of money since he

was born. Now he is three years old. Nothing is left for us except bad health.

Finally we have to give up. We could not do more. Wu Ming's parents."

Under the "One-Child Policy," a family with a disabled child will be allowed to have second child. However the financial burden of a child with a disability has huge impact on the family's financial situation even with government support such as in the case above.

In addition, the more propaganda directed toward the issue of abandoned disabled babies the more abandoned disabled babies will end up at state welfare homes. This is because most parents who have weak finances believe that either their sick babies will die at home or they will have a chance to survive under government care. The State Council (White Paper, 1996) stated that most babies abandoned by their parents are seriously or almost always irremediably disabled, mentally or physically, or because they have contracted a serious illness. A White Paper from the State Council of the People's Republic of China (1996), "Situation of Children in China," stated that there were about 20,000 children under the guardianship of and being reared by welfare institutions. These accounted for five Children per one hundred thousand juveniles in China.

By facing the demand for more Welfare Children Homes, in addition to the already existing 40,000 welfare institutions, including orphanages in rural and urban areas, involving in caring of those orphans, the Chinese government has been encouraging local government to participate in establishing welfare home facilities. By the end of 1995, there were total of 73 welfare homes for children set up by local governments. They are responsible for 8,900 orphans and abandoned, ill, or disabled children (White Paper, 1996). In addition, more than 1,200 social welfare institutions in

urban areas and some homes for the aged in rural areas also have responsible for rearing orphans and abandoned, ill, or disabled children. Some of these children are under the care of or are legally adopted by common people. More over, there are a total of nearly ten thousand organizations serving orphans and disabled persons in communities throughout China, such as schools for orphans, rehabilitation centers, training classes, as well as about a hundred social welfare institutions established by individuals or organizations (White Paper, 1996).

Dandong, the city where my mother grew up and where I spent all my childhood, recently reported that there were 60 orphaned and abandoned children in the government's care who do not have a place to stay (Dandong Children's Home, 2002). The Children range in age from 1 to 17 years old, are mostly boys (43 of them are boys while 17 are girls) and many are disabled. This ratio of boys to girls is high compared to the average gender mix of other orphaned and abandoned children in China in state care. Typically 10-20% of children in state care are boys (Dandong Children's Home, 2002). Here 20 children (15 of them are boys and 5 are girls) have been identified as having mental and physical disabilities. These disabilities include cerebral palsy, clubbed feet and mental retardation.

This data even though from a small city illustrates the growing problem of orphans and abandoned children, probably one third of whom are disabled, and where boys account for more than 50%. The Council states,

When they come to welfare homes, most children are suffering from serious illness or inherent disabilities. Welfare homes have paid much attention to treating these children to the greatest degree possible. Ill or disabled children in

serious condition are sent to local hospitals for better treatment. In 1995, the number of the children nursed back to health exceeded 200 (White Paper, 1996).

In 1993, the Civil Affairs and Public Health Ministries have jointly launched “Aid the Disabled” project, which aims at the rehabilitation and education of disabled orphans. Under this project, 8,000 orphans now attend schools, and hundreds have recovered their health (White Paper, 1996).

In addition to the government welfare facilities for children, the government encourages activities to help orphans with disabilities, and has called upon the whole society to show concern for orphans. During 1990s, mass movements to help orphans blossomed. In Shanghai and Beijing, campaigns such as “Let kindhearted people give orphans a big hug,” “Offer your affections to orphans and disabled children and bring health to them,” “Help orphans in every way” and “Link your hearts to orphans’ hearts” are enthusiastically responded to by people from all walks of life. In these campaigns, many urban families take children from children’s welfare institutions and let them stay in their homes during holidays or at ordinary times so that these children can enjoy the warmth and affection of a family (White Paper, 1996).

In 1994, 26 large hospitals in Beijing co-sponsored a campaign of “giving love and help to the disabled orphans.” They offered free operations for 32 orphans, and doctors and nurses donated more than 40,000 Yuan. In 1995, assisted by the 300,000 Yuan donation from the People’s Bank of China, 28 more disabled orphans received operations. Over 4 billion Yuan (500 million dollars) have gone to the nationwide social welfare including orphanages in mid-1990s. The state allocation and collective funds

grew at an annual rate of more than 50%. In 1993 alone, 1.8 billion Yuan was raised.
(Orphanages in China, n.d.)

The China Charity Federation was established to promote charities and extensively collects donations. By the end of 1995, the China Charity Federation had recruited 44 local organizations throughout China as group members, and had collected donations of over 100 million Yuan. A considerable amount of the money was used to support orphans in vocational training and to perform corrective surgery on disabled children. By 1998, this project for rehabilitation of orphans with physical disabilities helped 3,000 children have corrective surgeries for cleft palates (China Charity Federation, n.d.).

People from all walks of life show much concern for children's welfare institutions. They donate money and materials to help these institutions improve and upgrade their conditions. This allows the institutions to improve the quality of their care and education. Welfare funds for orphans have been established in Qindao, Shandong Province, Cele County in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and other places. In 1994-1995 the Shanghai Municipal Welfare Home for Children received 4.4 million yuan in donations (White Paper, 1996).

Individuals are becoming enthusiastic about running children's welfare homes, and non-governmental welfare homes are on the increases. In Guangzhou the number of beds in social welfare institutions run by individuals now accounts for 10% of all social welfare institution beds (White Paper, 1995).

3.6 Summary

This chapter answered Research Question 2 of this thesis. It discussed the political, social, economic and religious changes in the past and since 1949 in China that have either directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have the potential for doing so.

Ancient China produced rich philosophical teachings that are well known. The *Hundred School Thoughts* during the golden time of Chinese culture included school teachings of Confucius, Taoist, Mohism, and Legist. These schools of thoughts have been influencing the development and advancement of Chinese society.

The first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang Di, heavily relied on the Legalist scholars in unifying China. He created a new administrative government system, which set the foundation for later dynasties in China. Shang Yang's reforms established a criminal law code and guaranteed soldiers' rights. The Han dynasty put the thinking of the pre-Qin philosophers into a concrete form of governmental system, enabling these things to be carried out through Chinese history. It set the standard for elder care and civil service examinations that opened to all citizens. Additionally, Taoist practice has influences on the medical practice in China.

During mid-late 19th and first half of 20th centuries, China, this age-old country, underwent many changes. Domestic rebellion and foreign invasion occurred frequently. The unequal treaties after Opium War opened China. Western religious, medicine and education were introduced into China. These had been both positive and negative influences on the empowerment of people with physical disabilities in China.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new government accomplished several tasks during the socialist transformation. In addition to liberating women, uplifting the poor, and eliminating social evils, the Chinese government established the Civil Affairs of Ministry to provide employment opportunities to disabled persons. The relocation movement toward the rural areas during the Cultural Revolution, and the Medical Team movement had positive impacts on the rehabilitation of people with physical disabilities and influenced the later development of rehabilitation medicine in China.

Since Mao's death, China has gone through dramatic changes. These changes have impacts on the rights and interests of the people with disabilities in China. During the decades of 1980s and 1990s, disabled persons' legal rights and interests were guaranteed under the constitution, protection law, and other various laws. There is increased social concern for abandoned babies since 1980s after the implementation of "One-Child Policy" in China. It was estimated that about one million babies are abandoned in China. Most of these children are suffering from serious illness or inherent disabilities. In addition to the efforts from government in empowering these abandoned disabled babies, people from all walks of life show much concern for them.

However, throughout the age-long history, the disabled as a group seems like a rather passive group waiting for things to be done for them in China. This is probably due to the influence of having for thousands of years ruling under the feudalism.

Chapter 4

Educational Strategies and Interventions: Completing the Revolution of 1949

Historically, China has placed a high value on education even as it went through dramatic changes during the past 200 years of foreign invasions, revolutions and reforms, western missionaries, Communist ideology, application of a Soviet education model, and the 1970s global movement in the education of children with disabilities. All of these have had impacts on the education system and on the employment of educational strategies and interventions, including education of the disabled. This chapter focuses on the educational strategies and interventions, since 1949, which have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China; as well as major problems in the development of special education during the past two decades in China.

4.1 History (Pre 1949)

During the classical era (600-221 B.C.), influential Chinese thinkers from Confucius (551-479 B.C.) to Mencius (372-298 B.C.), from Mao Zi (468-376 B.C.) to Xun Zi (313-238 B.C.), advanced the extraordinary idea that merit and ability measured by education should take priority over race or birth in state appointments (Zhang and Wang, 1993).

Beginning in the middle empire (581-907), the Chinese state increased its expenditures on education and the national examination system for selecting civil officials. Such development climaxed during the Song dynasty (960-1279), when a national school system was set up to mainstream bright young men from local counties throughout the empire into public service (Dai and Ji, 2001).

The history of education in traditional China is a complex one, not only because of its long history, but also because of its combination of many strains of philosophical thought. However, what kind of education was there for persons with physical disabilities before the Revolution of 1949?

4.1.1 Origin of Special Education

The earliest record in regarding education for people with disabilities is found in the Analects of Confucius, book 15 (*Lun Yu*, Saying of Confucius). There is a description of the helpful and respectful behavior toward blind music master Mien. When he makes a visit, Confucius tells Mien when he has reached the steps and when he has reached the sitting mat and, after Mien is seated, Confucius tells him who is present in the room. After music master, Mien, has left, Tsze-chang, one of Confucius students asks, "Is it the rule to tell those things to the music master?" and says Confucius, "Yes. This is certainly the rule for those who lead the blind." This indicates that disabled persons such as those with impaired vision were educated in ancient China and often worked as musicians, a respectful position in China.

In the history of China, the state played an unambiguous role in the education of its people. Confucius and most Confucian scholars approached education from the perspective of a person's moral cultivation, and that the promotion of education could help maintain good government. The Confucian ideal of universal education and the use of merit as the standard to determine students' admission to schools are the foundation on which generations of Chinese governments formed a complete system of education.

Since educational merit was stressed, some of people with physical disabilities were integrated into regular schools and allowed to take the examination. Some of them,

for instance the case of Liu Yong (Chapter 3), a person who passed the exam, were appointed to an important position.

The examination system had no age or background limitations and most of students who passed the civil examinations were already past middle age and even elderly. Some of them had declining physical abilities. For instance, there are four of such scholars in the book of *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (1614-1912):

Chao I (1727-1814), an educated official, in old age called himself "the old man with three halves," -- meaning half vision, half hearing, and half audible voice. The calligrapher Chien Tien (1735-1790), paralyzed on his right side after a stroke, learned to write with his left hand. Shen Ch'in-han (1775-1832) was a productive reviewer and editor of classical literature even though disabled by a difficulty in speech and having a very ungainly appearance. The classical scholar Yu Hsaio-k'o (1729-1777) upon becoming blind, retired as a teacher to Soochow (Shu Zhou) and was known as the Blind Master as he lectured from memory (Hummel, 1943-1944).

These examples tell us of persons well educated when they passed the civil service examination and who served in official positions even when having physical disabilities. It also indicates that there were no special segregated schools for these people in which to study. Lü K'un (1536-1618), was an official and scholar in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Beyond his formal administrative duties, he worked for the establishment of institutions for the relief of the poor, aged, and disabled. He worked to train disabled people to be self-supporting (Handlin, 1983:162). Also he hired blind teachers to instruct and drill the blind beggars in telling stories and fortunes; he edited two manuals for

teachers, *Tzu-p'ing yao-yü* (The Essentials of Astrology) and *Ch'üan-shih ko-tien* (A Songbook for Exhorting the World). He also provided musical instruments so that the blind beggars would eventually be able to support themselves and have their own families (Handlin, 1983:162).

He held that the views of the upper and lower social strata were equally valuable and should be exchanged through disseminating educational works and collecting information. In his educational works, he made numerous concessions to semiliterate and illiterate audiences. He advocated the use of very simple and common words and the exclusion of classical phrases so that women and children would all understand (Handlin, 1983:143).

For instance, in his training program, he advised that old blind female beggars were trained to perform the songs from his *Percepts for Women* so that they could spread them to the female residents of elite households, from which men were banned (Handlin, 1983:149). Lü K'un was seen as both unusual and praiseworthy in the late Ming era. But his program might not be the first one for disabled people in China history since the career of musician historically has been a dominant one for blind people. The Analects of Confucius (*Lun Yu*, Saying of Confucius, book 15), which showed that a musical education for the blind began before Confucius' time, and that the position of music master was a highly respected in ancient China.

In summary, early on people with physical disabilities were educated in integrated ordinary school settings (Miles, 1998). However no systematic study of early education of the disabled is yet available. When Chinese historians seriously study the history of

education, they will no doubt find much more material on the early education of the disabled.

4.1.2 The Education of Women

Whether Confucius intended that formal education should be made available to women and the disabled is unclear. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the women in ancient China, approximately from Tang dynasty to 20th century, often had their feet bound and had limited physical ability. They make up one of the largest groups of people with physical disabilities in China's history. How was this group educated in China prior to the Revolution of 1949?

One of the best-loved and most-performed operas tells the romance of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai. This is one of the best known stories in China. In this story, Zhu Yingtai convinces her father to let her dress up like a boy and enroll in an academy in Hangzhou where she studies the classics and histories. She befriends and falls in love with a handsome classmate Liang Shanbo. The story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai is a fitting introduction to this section on the history of the education of women in China. It indicates that originally there was no institution or schools for women. However, certain upper class families would send their girls to school or hire a teacher to teach their daughters at home.

Marriageable daughters in the Qing period received different types of education depending on the class and the means of their families. At the highest level of the elite, sons (and at least some daughters) undertook classical learning with the aim of becoming cultured. Whereas boys moved as quickly as possible out of home tutorials into lineage or community-sponsored schools, private local academies, or government schools, women

were required to study at home (Elman and Woodside, 1994:20). The gendered segregation of higher learning began to break down during the 19th century. Whether learned or merely instructed, literate women were still only a tiny proportion of the female population in China prior to 1949.

4.1.3 Introduction of Special Schools into China

More material seems to be available on blindness than on all other disabilities. Starting in the mid-19th century, along with the arrival of Western missionaries in China, there were some schools for girls and special needs children established by some of these missionary societies. *Gu Shou Tong Wen Guan* (Elementary School for the Blind and the Old People) in Beijing, in 1874, established by William Murray, a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, historically is marked as the first special school for the blind and the elderly in Chinese history (Miles, 1998). However the real founder and pioneer missionary to blind Chinese people was Mary Gutzlaff. Mrs. Mary Gutzlaff opened a small school in Macao in 1835 under the support of the Society for Promoting Female Education in China, India and the East, with help also from the Morrison Education Society (Miles, 1998). The first blind girl who was name 'Mary Gutzlaff', found in Macao (Miles, 1998). Mrs. Gutzlaff put the little Mary Gutzlaff into regular class with other children in her school. Later Mrs. Gutzlaff sent five blind girls to London and American to be educated, where she hoped they could be trained as teachers who would return to China to serve their own country and be able to support themselves (Miles, 1998). Mary Gutzlaff, though lacking any specialist training, could certainly be regarded as the pioneer teacher of blind girls in China. Additional credit can be given to her for an educational program that was both inclusive and multicultural. In 1887, American missionary Charles Mills and his wife

Annetta established *Qi Yi Xue Guan* (School for Enlightening the Deaf) in Dengzhou, Shandong province. It was the first special school for the deaf in China. Mrs. Mills, who had received a teaching certificate from Rochester School for the Deaf in 1870, introduced Lyon's sign language to students and wrote the first textbook for deaf students in China's history (Yang and Wang, 1994).

Zhang Jian, one of the most famous industrialists in modern Chinese history, established a teacher training school for the blind and deaf in 1912 and a special school for the blind and deaf in 1916 in Nantong, Jiangsu province (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001). The establishment of the teacher training school prior to the special school echoed Zhang's insight that teacher education was so important that it should be given the first consideration in planning special education. Zhang advocated training students to help themselves by giving priority to vocational education and the teaching of general knowledge. The academic curriculum included the Chinese language, morals, geology, and history; the vocational curriculum included handcrafting, farming, sewing, woodworking, embroidery, typing, haircutting, silkworm breeding, proofreading and gardening. Local material resources were used in teaching these subjects and skills (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001).

In 1927, the Chinese government joined this movement by establishing the Nanjing Municipal School for the Blind and Deaf. The school's curriculum included junior high, vocational, and senior "normal school" levels. Some qualified graduates were able to pursue advanced training at the Normal College of the National University (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001). By 1949, there were 42 special schools including 9 public schools with more than 2,000 students (Yang and Wang, 1994).

In summary, these special schools established during the later 19th and early 20th centuries mainly focused on children with special needs such as the blind and deaf. The guiding theory was that the disabled can be trained to work and support themselves (Weinstein and Pelz, 1986). The children with other physical disabilities were not the focus of these programs, except for some girls with bound feet who were admitted to the girls' school. But the majority of girls' schools operated by missionaries refused to admit girls with bound feet, as detail was discussed in Chapter 3.

4.2 Communist Education System (1930s-1976)

During this period in China's modern history, the education system has gone through dramatic changes. The revolutions and reforms of this time have had huge impacts on the education systems, and certainly influenced the programs of special education as well as educational strategies and interventions in China.

4.2.1 Adult Literacy

The most urgent problems in the field of education in the liberated areas of the 1930s and 1940s were adult illiteracy under the conditions of the lack of a basic system of formal education, limited structure, and the severe shortage of resources. A great deal of attention was paid to non-formal types of schools such as night schools for peasants and workers, half-day schools, winter schools, and literacy groups (Lofstedt, 1980). An important concept was the *minban* (management by the people with the assistance of government), which also became part of a strategy to transfer authority from higher-level professionals to people in the villages (Lofstedt, 1980). This type of education went on for a while after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The people who joined the study group for literacy included young, middle-aged, elders, men and women,

persons like my grandmother with bound feet, blind, crippled, as well as poor workers and peasants.

Case 25 – Our family dentist

He was about at middle-aged during the Revolution of 1949, and he could not read and write at that time. He had tuberculosis on his leg when he was young which left him crippled. His parents sent him to a dental physician to study, however he did not know how to read and only depended upon his memory to learn. In the end, he became an assistant at the dental office. After the liberation of China in 1949, he attended night school. After he graduated from night school, he went to medical school to get his medical degree and became a dentist at age of 50.

There were many such stories in China around that time. For example, someone like my grandmother with bound feet, who never went to school and only knew how to write her own name, went to night school and completed an elementary education. By 1966, more than 100 million persons learned to read and write. 8,500,000 graduated from part-time evening elementary schools, 1,650,000 graduated from part-time secondary schools and 200,000 graduated from part-time universities and colleges (Powell, 1982). The dentist in Case 25 was one of them.

4.2.2 “Red and Expert”

In addition to literacy education, the new government took over all the special schools sponsored by foreign organizations or personnel, and transformed all of these schools into public special schools which became the foundation for the national special education system (Yang and Wang, 1994). Although facilities at that time were still

minimal, progress was made through the expansion of Socialist humanitarian ideology, which advocated that all the poor and laboring people become the masters of the society (Constitution, 1993). The government made an all-out all effort to expand the education system. In October 1951, the government published *Resolutions on the Reform of the School System*, which stated that the governments at all levels should establish special schools for children with special needs such as the blind, the deaf and the mute; and should provide education for children, youth and adults with disabilities (Yang and Wang, 1994). Since then, many special schools have been established all over the country. The number of schools increased from 42 in 1949 up to 57 in 1955, while enrollment increased to 5,312 students with disabilities (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001). By the end of 1960, the number of schools increased ten-fold , and student enrollment increased five-fold compared to the number in 1955 (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001).

This rapid growth in special education was part of the equally rapid growth of the economy during early and mid-1950s. This situation did not last long enough for those enrolled students to graduate from the schools. Some of these schools had to be closed because of the economic depression during late 1950s and early 1960s in China, resulting in a shortage of school equipment, teaching staff, and financial support. By 1965, special schools were reduced to 266, students to 22,850 (Yang and Wang, 1994). However, the teaching guidelines and plans, developed during this period as well as various textbooks to be used by all kinds of special schools, were published, and a new Chinese Braille system and Chinese Pin Yin finger alphabet system were also developed during this time (Yang and Wang, 1994).

The philosophies of Mao Zedong, the founding leader of the Communist Party in China, strongly influenced educational strategies and interventions for people with various disabilities. Mao attempted to reconcile his specific vision of Socialism with the ancient Chinese tradition of hope for creating a just society that would not have an exploitive class. Extreme egalitarianism had dominated Chinese society and had resulted in the neglect of individual differences. Under this ideology, it was assumed that all children would perform at high levels and in similar ways. Disabilities were not acknowledged, except in children with obvious sensory impairments such as the blind. Even today, one still can sense this influence in the special education system in China.

Under the Maoist philosophy, people with disabilities were to be treated as equal members of society who could make contributions to the Socialist state. This education system and the policy for educating students both with or without disabilities were aimed at preparing people with or without disabilities to be “laborers both Red and Expert” by combining proletarian politics with productive labor, and Socialist consciousness with moral, intellectual, and physical development. Everyone was to be a producer, and every pair of hands would contribute to the economic race to decrease the time necessary for transforming China into an industrial nation (Orleans, 1961). The goal of educating children with disabilities became a means for training laborers with a consciousness of Socialism that would compensate for their physiological and psychological defects.

The glorification of labor was advocated in the schools of China almost from the initial revision of the educational system under the Communists in the 1930s until the 1970s. The whole educational system was mobilized to include a focus on production

and physical labor as part of every student's curriculum including the education of disabled children.

Case 26 – Neighbor's son

The third son of my grandparents' neighbor had bowlegs and was very short. He is about the same age as me. We went to the same elementary school. In Dandong city, it is famous for the production of soybeans. The senior students at the elementary school were required to provide factory labor. He went to the Tofu making plant to fulfill his labor-practicing requirement. I remember that he brought back some of soybean products and shared them with all the neighbors. He stated that he had made them. He seemed to enjoy his work at the plant. After the "Open Door Policy", he opened his own plant in a rural area, and earned a decent income from selling Tofu.

I went to a factory that produced nails. I learned how to plant rice at our school owned farm and worked in our own factory to make little springs. I am pretty sure we all had fun learning hands-on things during the 1970s and before this policy was abolished in the late 1970s. Certainly it gave some of us, including disabled students, skills and experience that could be applied later on. This strategy for education, though it was over emphasized and overdone during this period of time, had its advantages in providing vocational or technical training for students with or without disabilities.

4.2.3 Soviet Model of Special Education

The Chinese disability model was influenced by the Soviet Union's special education model because of the close relationship between the two countries in the 1950s. Like the Soviet Union, China established segregated residential schools to develop

special education and used Vygotsky's primary and secondary defect theories to explain the nature of disabilities (Gindis, 1999).

Vygotsky lived in Russia between 1896 and 1934. He did most of his writing and research between 1924 and his death from tuberculosis in 1934 (Hausfather, 1996). However, one of his contributions to the discipline, a contribution relevant to this thesis, was his concern for the upbringing, and education of disabled children which has been less well known in the west until recently (Vygodskaya, 1999). His contribution is significant, and it is difficult to overestimate all that he did for special education. Today, people can still discover his influence in the special education system of China.

Vygotsky discovered the connection between sociocultural processes taking place in society and mental processes taking place in the individual. He pointed out that the primary problem of a disability is not the sensory or neurological impairment itself, but its social implications. Any physical disability not only alters the child's relationship with the world, but above all affects his interaction with people. Any organic defect is revealed also as a social abnormality in behavior (Gindis, 1999). With the context of his paradigm of the social nature of the disability, Vygotsky introduced the core concepts of the primary disability, the secondary disability, and their interactions. He pointed out that, from psycho-educational perspective, the primary problem of a disability is not the organic impairment itself, but its social implications: an organic defect is recognized by society as a social abnormality in behavior. Changing negative societal attitudes toward individuals with disabilities should be one of the goals for special educators (Vygotsky, 1995). The search for positive capacities and qualitative characteristics in the upbringing of children with disabilities is the trademark of Vygotsky's approach.

Under Vygotsky's model, students in China with physical disabilities were encouraged to participate in labor and social life. The Government also provided work opportunities for those who graduated from high school and did not go on to college, for instance in the persons in Cases 19 and 20 in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.2 Social Welfare System – Providing Employment Opportunities).

Moreover, spreading the idea of the disabled person who can contribute to the society and who still can be a hero, the concept of the disabled Soviet hero* was introduced into Chinese society during this time. This “hero” was wounded during war, blinded in both eyes and had paralyzed legs. He wrote a novel which has been popular in China since 1950s. The novel was based on his own life in the Soviet revolutionary period and his later life as a disabled person. He persisted in writing his book while his vision became dim, and his physical health deteriorated. He was lying in bed with his girl friend, who later became his wife, helping him record down his words. His story has been in children's reading books and school textbooks, as well as a novel sold in bookstores. If you mentioned his name, everyone in China knows him as the “blind and paralyzed Soviet hero” who wrote the book while he was disabled. Every youth has read his story many times. Someone, like my parents' generation (1930s-), my generation (1960s-), and my daughter's generation (1990s-) all know his story, and have been encouraged from his spirit – a disabled person still can contribute to society and still can be a hero. He has been a role model for people with and without physical disabilities and certainly has had an impact on those special educators who plan educational strategies and interventions in China.

Communist education during 1950s and 60s emphasized methods emphasizing remediation of defects such as clinical remedies, sensory training, and defect orthopedics. (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001). These Soviet theories and practices remained part of within China's special education system, and they continue to shape its developmental direction in China up to today, the 21st century.

*I only have his Chinese translation, not his name in the Russian language. The Chinese translation of his name sounds like *Bo-Er Ke-Ca-Jin*. I believe that *Bo-Er* is his first name, and *Ke-Ca-Jin* is his last name. His book title is translated from Russian, the Chinese sounds like *Gang Tie Shi Zhen Yang Lian Cheng De?* [How is the steel refined?], again I am not able to get the Russian name for his book.

4.2.4 The Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), all education in China suffered greatly because of political chaos. The development of special education was slowed, and the annual growth of students in special schools decreased to 600 during the Cultural Revolution; compared to 1,176 before 1966. By 1975, there were only 246 special schools across the country with 26,782 students (Deng, Poon-Mcbrayer and Farnsworth, 2001).

The influence of the Cultural Revolution on education can be viewed two ways: one way it can be seen as very lethal because it resulted in the total stoppage of classes for three years; on the other hand, it can be seen as important, and from a Maoist viewpoint desirable, as an education that favored the poor or working classes than was the case before the Cultural Revolution. The differences between intellectuals and laborers are growing smaller. The learning tends to be more practical than before. For

instance, students devote much more of their energies applying their knowledge to real situations than they used to, so that a youth undertaking an engineering course will spend a good deal of time in a factory learning how to put what he knows to direct use. This same strategy in education had influenced the development of special education during the same period of time, but still shapes its development since 1976. You can easily point out its influences on special education today. For instance, the vocational or technical training for students with disabilities as well as the curriculum more often emphasize the technical and handcraft skills, and are less weighted in the humanities -- subjects such as literature, languages, arts, music, education, etc.

Another contribution, possibly the main effect of the Cultural Revolution, has been an intensified effort to bring about universal literacy. Many of the high school graduates, who were sent to the countryside after 1968, helped with teaching in remote areas. Some of them were the first ones to start village schools in these areas. This movement continued until 1976 when the Cultural Revolution officially ended. Certainly this has helped in reduce the number of uneducated disabled children in the remote poverty areas of China. It was predicted by Mackerras (1976), in his book *China: The impact of Revolution, a survey of twentieth century China*, what China would achieve its goal of having all children in schools within a decade or so. His prediction might become true if China's political situation remains unchanged.

4.3 Major Achievements in Special Education (1976-2000)

The global movement in the education of children with disabilities has resulted from international concern. Taking the lead in promoting legislation concerning special education, the United States passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act

(Public Law 94-142) in 1975. It not only had an important meaning at home, but also influenced other countries. Against such an international background, the Chinese government, after casting off the shadow of the Cultural Revolution, carried out Reform and the “Open Door Policy” from the late 1970s, where they began to make greater efforts than ever before to develop a special education system for children with disabilities. Now by the beginning of the 21st century, China has established an education system for disabled people, which consists of preschool education, compulsory education, secondary and higher education and education for adults.

4.3.1 Legislations

Two important laws, Compulsory Education of the People’s Republic of China (1986) and Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons (1990), were passed. Both laws guarantee the educational rights of children with disabilities.

The China Compulsory Education Law, passed on April 12, 1986, is the first compulsory education law in the People’s Republic of China. It promises renewed efforts to provide a free education for children with disabilities. The regulations, *Suggestions on Implementations of the Compulsory Education Law*, drafted by the China State Education Commission (1986), the State Planning Commission, the Ministry of Labor and Personnel, and the Ministry of Finance, stated in Article 10, Section 31 that:

When implementing the Compulsory Education Law, local governments at all levels shall attach great importance to compulsory education for the blind, the deaf and the mute, the mentally retarded, and other handicapped children, systematically arranging for them to go to school (p8).

The Compulsory Education Law is a civil rights law, ensuring all the children, including those with physical disabilities, the right to receive a free education. In accordance with this law, the government has worked out specific programs such as the *Five-Year (1988-1992) Work Program for Disabled Persons* and policies such as *Suggestion on the Development of Special Education in China* (China State Education Commission, 1989) to guide and promote the development of programs for educating all children with disabilities in China.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons passed in December 1990 is another civil rights law that has had a great impact on the development of special education in China. It became a milestone in modern Chinese special education history. Guided by the principles of "equality," "participation," and "co-enjoyment," it stipulates that all persons with disabilities should have equal rights, including the right to receive their education with other citizens:

The state shall guarantee the right of disabled persons to receive education. People's government at various levels should make education of disabled persons a component of the state education program, include it in their overall planning and strengthen leadership in this respect. The state, society, schools and families shall provide compulsory education for disabled children and juveniles (Law of the PRC on the Protection of Disabled Persons, 1990:10).

The Law of the Protection of Disabled Persons clearly and completely states the duties, characteristics, guiding principles of development, channels for running schools and methods of instruction. The developing pace of special education in China has increased since the late of 1970s, and the relevant legislation is being perfected.

4.3.2 Increased Enrollment

In the preliminary results of the year 2000 China Population Census (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2001), there are 289.79 million children in the age group of 0-14 years, accounting for 22.89% of the total population. As compared with the results of the 1990 population census, the share of people in the age group of 0-14 was down by 4.80% points. If the children with disabilities are 2.66% of the total child population, the disabled children from 0-14 years of age will be about 6.4 million (Office of the National Sampling Survey of the Handicapped & State Statistics Bureau, 1987; National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2001).

Since the compulsory education law passed in 1986, education for disabled children has been included in the overall national program for making compulsory education universal. By the end of 1998, it had become a major force for disabled children to receive compulsory education where they study together with regular education in regular schools (*Xinhua News Agency*, 1999). After years of effort, China has formed a compulsory education set-up for disabled children which takes special education schools as the backbone, and special education classes, and the attendance of individual disabled students in ordinary schools as a main focus. Table 7 below illustrates the increasing numbers of special education schools and the enrollment of children with disabilities in China from 1949 to year of 2000.

The rapid growth of special education, especially during the last decades, shows the number of schools doubling from 1990 to 2000. The enrollment numbers of students with disabilities in the special schools increased almost four time from 1990 to 2000. These schools are mainly for the blind, the deaf and the mute and those with mental

retardation. The children with physical disabilities who can manage or adopt to the school environment go to regular schools. By the end of 1995, there were 296,000 disabled students attending regular schools or special classes attached to regular schools (White Paper, 1996).

Table 7 – Number of Special Schools in China from 1949-2000 (Yang and Wang, 1994)

Year	Number of Special Schools	Student enrollment
1949	42	2,000
1957	66	7,538
1960	479	26,701
1965	266	22,850
1975	246	26,782
1981	302	33,477
1987	505	52,876
1990	746	105,000
1992	1027	129,455
2000*	1,539	380,000

*National Bureau of Statistics, 2001

The disabled children who now study in regular schools account for over 50% of the total subject to the regulations education tasks such as stated in the article 22 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons:

Ordinary educational institutions shall provide education for disabled persons who are able to receive ordinary education. Ordinary primary schools and junior middle schools must admit disabled children or juveniles who are able to adapt themselves to life and study there; ordinary senior middle schools, secondary polytechnic schools, technical schools and institutions of higher learning must admit disabled students who meet the state admission requirements and shall not deny their admission because of their disabilities; in case of such denial, the disabled students, their family members or guardians may appeal to the

relevant authorities for disposition. The relevant authorities shall instruct the schools concerned to enroll the students (Law of the PRC on the Protection of Disabled Person, 1990:8).

During the Ninth Five-Year Plan period (1996-2000), about 77% of all disabled children started their compulsory education, with an increase of 15% points over that of the Eight Five-Year Plan period, 1991-1995 (Huang, 2001). In addition, about 2.57 million disabled people have received professional training at different levels, and there were 6,812 disabled students admitted by colleges and universities in China by 2000 (Huang, 2001). By the year 2000 there are up to 998 vocational education institutions for disabled students (*Xinmin Evening News*, 2000).

Case 27 – China's 1st college for the disabled marks its 15th anniversary

China's first college for the disabled, the Institute of Special Education at Changchun University, celebrated its 15th anniversary on August 21st, 2002. Since 1987, 870 disabled students have graduated from this college. Currently, over 400 students are studying at the college, which has five major subject areas -- art design, painting, acupuncture and massage, music and art performance, and accounting. There are 45 teachers including 17 senior faculty. (*People's Daily*, August 22nd, 2002)

Deng Pufang, the Chairman of the China Disabled Person's Federation, said at the celebration ceremony that the school was the largest and best of its kind in the country (*People's Daily*, August 22nd, 2002). Some of students are members of the China Disabled Person's Art Troupe and have performed in 18 countries and regions during past decades. This indicates that special education in China is reaching the level higher

education, besides the continuation and promotion of compulsory education to school age children with disabilities. In addition to regular higher education, many disabled persons won college diplomas through special examinations and by self-study courses (White Paper, 1991).

4.3.3 Early Childhood Education

Based on data from the Office of the National Sampling Survey of the Handicapped (1987), it was estimated that approximately 2,460,000 children with disabilities were aged 0-6 years. They were about 4.76% of the all disabled population. In 2000, the estimate of 0-6 year-old children with disabilities is about 3 million, and of a total population of 1,265.83 million of which 5% are disabled (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2001; Office of the National Sampling Survey of the Handicapped and State Statistics Bureau, 1987). See table 8 for details:

Table 8 – Survey of the Disabled in China

Unit (million)	1987 survey	2000 survey
Total population	1,032.80	1,265.83
Total disabled	51.64	63.23
0-6 yr old disabled	2.45	3.01
7-14 yr old disabled	5.71	6.99
15-18 yr old disabled	2.57	3.15
0-14 yr. Physical disabled	0.62	0.76

That there are a large number of children of preschool age with various kinds of disabilities in China, can be seen from the table above. The Government realizes the high demand for early intervention and education for these children. More attention has been

given to the education of infants and preschoolers with disabilities during the past ten years. One of the three primary goals of special education stated in *Suggestions on the Development of Special Education* is to “actively develop early childhood education” (China State Education Commission, 1989). In addition, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons (Act 22, 1990:8) requires that “ordinary institutions of preschool education shall admit disabled children who are able to adapt themselves to the life there.” The Government has mobilized the whole society to develop preschool education in various forms and channels and encourages, not only government institutions and enterprises, but also mass organizations and individuals to open kindergartens to all children in light of these relevant regulations. This is one of the principles adopted by China in developing preschool education.

Due to the vigorous support and active participation of the government at all levels and society at large, China's pre-school education has been developing steadily. A new era has dawned in which the state, the collectives and individuals run kindergartens together. In 1990, only 32% of children from 3-6 years old, including the disabled, entered kindergartens, while by the end of 1998, China had 180,000 kindergartens with an enrollment of 24 million. About 70% of children attend kindergartens for one year before going to school (White Paper, 2000). A sample survey shows that 94.8% of new students in grade one of primary schools across the country have received preschool education (White Paper, 2000).

In urban areas, full-time kindergarten is the dominant form of preschool education, with the boarding system and preschool classes as a supplement. In rural areas where the local economy is better-developed, central kindergartens can be found in every

township and pre-school classes in every village. In the backward countryside, mountain and rustic areas, which are remote and sparsely populated, there are growing efforts to *create conditions for running pre-school classes, people are opening children's activities stations, games groups, mobile groups giving children guidance, and other non regular forms of pre-school education.*

By 1990, there were 927 preschool classes for children with disabilities; nearly 70% of these classes are conducted by local communities (Yang and Wang, 1994). However there were no details on how these classes are run, whether or not programs for disabled children are integrated into ordinary classes, and what the rate is for disabled children enrolled in the preschool classes. A pre-school education for disabled children is part of the national program of pre-school education in general, thus there is not detailed update data for 1990-2000 about preschool education for children with disabilities.

4.3.4 Learning in Regular Classrooms (LRC)

The driving force for the inclusion movement in China has been referred to as “Learning in Regular Classrooms” (LRC). LRC is aimed at offering government-supported arrangements for children with disabilities to be educated in neighborhood schools in classrooms with their peers without disabilities (Deng and Manset, 2000). The roots of the LRC movement can be traced back to the Gold-Key Education Project of 1986, in which 1,000 children with visual impairments were integrated into general classes within a year. The success of the project extended the development of LRC programs to three categories of disabilities -- mental retardation, visual impairment, and *hearing impairment -- throughout the majority of rural and urban area of China (Xu, 1992).*

Children with other particular physical disabilities such as polio victims have been going to regular classes and therefore not usually included in LRC programs. Physically disabled children with normal intellectual capacity and capable of adapting themselves to the school and class environments have been going to regular classes since ancient times in China, as discussed in section 4.1.1 Origin of Special Education, however the inclusion of children with mental retardation into regular school and classes maybe for the first time in China's history.

The impact of LRC on the development of special education in China has been profound. It has changed the emphasis from special schools as the only way to provide special education to those special needs children to a new model in which separate schools constitute the backbone of the system and special classes and LRC serve as the body (Gu, 1993). LRC's role in making public schooling accessible for children with disabilities is best illustrated by the school entrance rate. Between 1987 and 1996, the school entrance rate of students with disabilities rose from 6% to 60% (Gu, 1993; Xiao, 1996), and a large majority of these students were in general education classrooms.

Mainstreaming and inclusion were based on the philosophy of equality of opportunity and diversity from a liberal political system and a pluralistic culture. It seems that this rule does not account for the children with paralysis, or defective limbs who go to regular classes in China under the Mao's philosophy (section 4.2.2 "Red and Expert").

4.4 Major Problems

Special education in China has developed rapidly in the past decade. There are however, many problems still to be addressed. Although China must face and try to

overcome many problems and difficulties, it seems that special education in China has a bright future.

4.4.1 School Attendance

First of all, the China Compulsory Education Law mandates that all children receive nine years of free education. However, school age children with disabilities, especially those in rural and remote areas, seldom have the opportunity to go to school

Case 28 – My cousin's son did not go to school

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that one of my cousins has a son with cerebral palsy (Case 11 in 2.2.2). They live in a remote small town in northern China. Now the boy is 12 years old, and never has gone to school. He has mental problems along with his physical disabilities. He can not add numbers, he can not write, and can not read. What he does everyday is eat, sleep, sit outside or inside the house, and play with the neighbors' children since he has the most expensive and wonderful toys which other kids do not have. He talks reasonable and understandable sentences. He recognizes people and remembers people's name. Sometimes, You can have an interesting conversation with him.

There is a registration system for all members of each household, especially local residents. All children are registered and enrolled in school once they reached school age. Parents will get a notice from the school district to enroll their school age children. However, severely physically disabled children, like my cousin's son, are not required to attend school. There are no special classes or teachers in their neighborhood school, who can take him as a student because his intellectual level makes it impossible for him to adapt to the regular class environment even though his parents are willing to vouch for

his physical ability in adapting to the school and class situation. Obviously they do not have financial problems, but they seem to have spoiled him by providing him with all kinds of special things. Currently, the provinces that have reached the national average in the enrollment ratio of disabled children are mostly the developed areas of China. While in the twelve provinces and autonomous regions of West China, the number of unschooled disabled children of school age, due to poverty accounts for 46% of the total in China, and those in the middle of China, where economy is not well developed, makes up 35% (Huang, 2001).

Poverty always has been a factor in preventing the children of remote rural areas from an education. As discussed in the previous chapter, a majority of the disabled in rural areas are under the poverty level in China. In order to ensure their right to get an education, the Chinese government has put effort into solving the poverty problem, such as the aid-to-poor program conducted from 1978 up to 2000. It solved the basic problem of living for more than 200 million people, however there are still over 30 million people under the poverty line, left without the security of having enough food and clothing (White Paper, 2001). Certainly children with or without disabilities under the poverty line have little chance to get an education. The Population survey of 2000 indicates that there are 289.79 million children in the age group of 0-14, accounting for 23% of the total population (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2001). This means there are about 700,000 children with or without disabilities in the poverty areas without enough food and clothing for them while they are growing up. Thus the urgent need for them at the present time is to get enough food to eat, warm clothing to wear, and safe shelter.

4.4.2 Shortage of Staff

With the expansion of compulsory education for the disabled, the shortages of personnel, teaching materials, and instructional modifications have become severe and caused public concern.

As mentioned, Zhang Jian established the first special teacher training school in 1912. Unfortunately, the teacher-training program ended before long, and later there was a void in the field. Until 1980, there were no special education teacher training institutes in China. Most teachers in special schools were selected from regular schools. New teachers in special schools “learned by doing” or by following experienced teachers.

The first special education teacher training school -- Nanjing Special Education Teacher Training School was established in 1981 (Yang and Wang, 1994). By 1998, there were 33 secondary special education schools (China Education and Research Network, 2001). They offer three education specialties for the deaf, for the blind and for the mentally retarded. Normally, they enroll graduates from junior secondary schools, and the schooling lasts either 4 years or 3 years. Gradually there are some of normal colleges and universities, such as Beijing Normal University (in Beijing), East China Normal University (in Shanghai), Central China Normal University (in Wuhan), and Southwest China Normal University (in Chongqing), starting to provide undergraduate as well as graduate programs.

However, regardless such efforts by the government, China needed about 400,000 special education teachers by the 21st century (Liu, 1991). To meet this need, China had to train nearly 40,000 teachers each year from 1990. The special education schools increased at rate of 1.5 schools each year during last 8 years which did not make much

difference in providing teachers for special education. About 3,000 students graduated from 21 special education teacher institutes in 1990 (Yang and Wang, 1994). There is no data of the number of students graduating actually graduated from the 33 special education teacher institutes in 2000. If we calculate the average of 143 students from each school every year, every two years would increase the need for three more schools. Thus by 1998, the graduates would have numbered 4,715. See table 9 for the graduates each year. China has a long way to go to meet the need for special education teachers in China even including the planned training of 13,006 new special education teachers in the year of 2000 according to Agreements signed by the Ministry of Education with 21 provinces to promote the Compulsory Education to disabled children in China. This agreement is called the Special Education Project Task Agreement (*China Education Daily*, 1999).

Table 9 – Special Education Teacher Institutes and Number of Graduates 1990-2000

Year	School #	Graduate #
1990	21	3,000
1992	24	3,429
1994	27	3,858
1996	30	4,286
1998	33	4,715
2000*		13,006

*Plan reported in 1999 (*China Education Daily*, November 22, 1999)

Most schools made the commitment to educate students with disabilities long before they were prepared or had the necessary resources. Some teachers had never talked to a student with a disability before, let alone taught one. This lack of experience and expertise has affected the quality of instruction and led to problems in general classrooms. For instance, the orphanages are the place where children with physical or

other disabilities are placed. Most of them have their own education programs, however the majority of teachers are not trained for working with this type of population. Thus China has a long way to go in solving the teacher and staff shortage problem, since the development of special education in special schools for children with disabilities is not parallel with the development of special education teacher training schools.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has focused on the educational strategies and interventions, since 1949, which have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China; as well as major problems in the development of special education during the past two decades in China.

China has a long history of placing a high value on education. In recent history, China has gone through dramatic changes -- foreign invasions, revolutions and reforms, all of these have had impacts on the education system and strategies and interventions employed including education for disabled in China.

China's education system has developed rapidly since the late 1970s. By the beginning of the 21st century, China has established an education system for disabled people, consisting of preschool, compulsory, secondary and higher education as well as education for adults. Two important laws issued during this time were the Compulsory Education Law and the Law for Protection of Disabled persons in China. The rights and interests of the disabled in China are guaranteed under these laws.

By the year 2000, the enrollment rate for disabled school age children in China was 77%. China's pre-school education has developed steadily. By the end of 1998, there

were 180,000 kindergartens, with 24 million children, and a 70% enrollment rate for one-year pre-school education.

Influenced by the international inclusion education movement, China developed the Learning in Regular Classrooms (LRC) movement. The LRC is aimed at offering government-supported arrangements for children with disabilities to be educated in the classrooms of neighborhood schools with their peers without disabilities. The educational strategies and interventions used in the LRC program has changed the emphasis from special schools as the only way to provide special education to those with special needs to a new model in which separate schools constitute the backbone of the system and special classes and the LRC serve as the body. The LRC plays an important role in making accessible public schooling for children with disabilities who previously required special schools.

Special education in China has developed rapidly in the past decade. However, there still are many problems to be addressed. For instance, in reality, few school age children with moderate to severe or multiple disabilities, and those children in rural and remote poverty areas, have the opportunity to go to school. Poverty is the factor that prevented the children from getting an education. By the year 2000, China still had about 30 million people under the poverty line. With the expansion of compulsory education, the result has been a shortage of teachers.

Although China must face and try to overcome many problems and difficulties, I believe special education in China has a bright future. Interestingly, history seems to joke with us. The educational strategies and interventions used by ancient educators, as well as Vygotsky's model and Mao's theories of education were ignored and rarely mentioned

during the past two decades, however it seems that we are incorporating many of those ideas after all.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Summary

China has the largest population in the world, and thus has more individuals with physical disabilities than any other country in the world. The empowerment of the physically disabled is an important priority in China. This thesis gives a general picture of important historical events as well as socio-cultural, religious, and economic influences that have shaped both concepts of physical disability and the attitudes of the Chinese people toward the physically disabled; the political, social, economic and religious changes, in the past and since 1949 in China that either have directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have a potential for doing so; educational strategies and interventions, in the past and since 1949, that have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China, and challenges and problems in special education that China is likely to face in the 21st century.

The thesis is multi-disciplinary in nature, drawing upon the disciplines of history, philosophy, sociology, education, and medicine. The major methodology used in this thesis is primarily document and literature research along with illustrative cases studies. Without access to original Chinese historical records, much of the resource material, therefore, comes from secondary sources (English translations of documents or English publications). Most of cases in this thesis are from the personal experiences of the researcher or the personal experiences of her family members, relatives, or friends drawn from real life. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 were written to answer the following Research Questions: What are the important historical, socio-cultural and religious, and economic

influences that have shaped both the concept of physical disability in contemporary Chinese society and the attitudes of the Chinese people toward the physically disabled? What have been the political, social, and economic changes in the past and since 1949 in China that have either directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have the potential for doing so? What kinds of educational strategies and interventions, in the past and since the Revolution of 1949 that have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China? And, what kinds of problems in the empowerment and education of the physically disabled is China likely to face in the 21st century?

Chapter 2 answered first research question. It described traditional Chinese attitudes and behaviors toward persons with physical disabilities and how these traditional attitudes and behaviors have been shaped by certain historical, economic and socio-cultural influences. In China's long history, Confucianism and Taoism have had a long lasting effect on subsequent Chinese life, and are the most powerful traditional influences on the attitude of the Chinese people toward persons with physical disabilities in contemporary China. After the failure of the Opium Wars (1840-1842), Western culture and beliefs have blended into Chinese culture along with the introduction of science and technology. A major influence on the Chinese attitude toward people with physical disabilities has been *personal appearance and individual autonomy*. Additionally, changing economic conditions have also contributed to different views of people with physical disabilities. Most people with disabilities survive with the support of family, government, and society at large. A social atmosphere of sympathy toward the physically disabled has developed and is deeply rooted in Chinese society.

Chapter 3 answered the second research question. It discussed the political, social, economic and religious changes in the past and since 1949 in China that have either directly contributed to the empowerment of the physically disabled or have a potential for doing so. In ancient China, the Hundred School Thoughts during the golden time of Chinese culture included school teachings of Confucius, Taoist, Mohist, and Legist. These schools of thoughts have continued to influence the development and advancement of Chinese society and the empowerment or disempowerment of people with physical disabilities. From the mid-late 19th to the first half of the 20th centuries, and especially after the Opium Wars, western religions, medicine and education were introduced into China. These had both positive and negative influences on the empowerment of people with physical disabilities in China. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new government accomplished several tasks during the socialist transformation. In addition to liberating women, uplifting the poor, and eliminating social evils, the Chinese government established the Civil Affairs of Ministry to provide employment opportunities to disabled persons. The relocation movement of people to rural areas during the Cultural Revolution, and the Medical Team movement had positive impacts on the rehabilitation of people with physical disabilities, and influenced the later development of rehabilitation medicine in China. Since Mao's death, China has gone through dramatic changes. These changes have had impacts on the rights and interests of people with disabilities in China. During the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s, the legal rights and interests of disabled persons were guaranteed by the constitution, protection law, and other various laws. However, there has been increased social concern

for abandoned babies since 1980s during the implementation of “One-Child Policy” in China.

Chapter 4 answered the third research question. The focus is on educational strategies and interventions since 1949, which have been employed to empower the physically disabled in China. Also examined major problems are the encountered during the rapid development of special education during the past two decades in China. In its long history, China has placed a high value on education. An examination of China’s history records people with various disabilities such as impaired vision and hearing, as well other physical disabilities, getting education in an ordinary setting school or class settings. The ancient examination system was opened to all citizens and all persons could take the examines regardless of their physical appearance. So throughout China’s history there have been scholars with various physical disabilities. Special education schools actually started in the late 19th century in China and were introduced into China by Western missionary societies. However, such schools were usually segregated from regular schools and were established with the idea that disabled persons could be trained to work and support themselves.

Since the early 20th century, China has gone through dramatic changes. The *revolutions and reforms, Communists ideology, and the imported Soviet model* all have had impacts on the education system, strategies and interventions including education for disabled in China. The Cultural Revolution led to some important and desirable reforms in education when the poor and working classes were now favored more than before the revolution. The gap between the laboring and the intellectual classes was reduced. *Practical knowledge was emphasized over theoretical knowledge. This strategy*

influenced the development of special education programs during that period and has continued to shape its development today. The Chinese education system has rapidly developed since the late 1970s. By the beginning of the 21st century, China had established an education system for disabled people consisting of preschool, compulsory, secondary and higher educations, as well as education for adults. However, there are still many problems that need to be addressed such as a continuing lack of access to education facilities in general and especially for those disabled children in remote poverty areas. A shortage of trained special education teachers is also a widespread problem.

5.2 Conclusions

*First, one can draw several conclusions from this present thesis research. The care of the elderly and disabled elderly is emphasized and is guaranteed. An illustration is the story of *Shun* (1.2) who respected and cared for his blind father in ancient times and modern Cases as 1 and 2 (2.1.1.1). The majority of elderly parents or virtually all elders in poor health depend on their adult children for personal care and financial support. Since 1949, elderly care has been guaranteed by the Constitution. The increasing aging population and the decreasing number of children in each family in modern China are not addressed in this thesis. However, China will be facing the problem of elderly care, especially disabled elders, in the 21st century if the Chinese government does not come up soon with an adequate social welfare or social security system for the aging population.*

Second, one can draw certain conclusions from China's history of not judging people according to their physical appearance, but their ability. An illustration is "The Eight Immortals" story (2.1.2.1) which teaches the lesson that people with physical disabilities may have compensating ability as seen in the modern Cases of 3 (2.1.1.2), 4,

5 (2.1.2.1), 6 (2.1.2.2), 23 (3.5.1), 25 (4.2.1) and 26 (4.2.2) in which physically disabled persons all have particular abilities in certain fields. In modern China, the emphasis on physical appearance has dominated the selection of marriage partners as illustrated in Cases of 9 and 10 (2.2.1). Here two physically disabled young men with unimpaired intellectual ability and fairly high economic achievement were still facing difficulty in searching for marriage partners. This problem may also be due to the high different ratio of males to females because of the selective abortion of baby girls in China. This issue is not addressed in this thesis.

Third, equal education is emphasized. It is illustrated by the case of the hunchback *Liu Yong* (3.1.3.2) passing national civil examination in Qing Dynasty to the modern Cases of 4, 5, 7 (2.1.2.2), 19, 20 (3.3.2), 23, 25, 26 and 27 (4.3.2) in which these physically disabled persons had the same education as other none disabled children or adults. Women, however, with bound feet were the largest group of physically disabled in the history of China and rarely had an opportunity for equal access to an education until the 20th century. The issue related to women, especially those women with physical disabilities was not addressed in this thesis.

Fourth, physically disabled with normal intelligence are not identified as person with special needs. This was illustrated in the case of *Sun Bin* (1.2), the military general without walking ability, who still directed battles in ancient China, to the modern Cases of 3, 4, 5, 23, 25 and 26 in which physically disabled persons capably function as well as other members in their particular society i.e. in a hospital, a factory, or a school setting and can perform the same or equivalent tasks as others. This thesis only addressed issues that related to the physically disabled in China, but did not discuss any issues related to

people with learning disabilities, or mild mental retardation with normal physical abilities who are not recognized as disabled.

Fifth, prevention and correction of disabilities have been emphasized in China. This is illustrated by Case 8 (2.1.3) the prevention during pregnancy and Cases of 11 and 12 (2.2.2) in which the parents of physically disabled children put all their efforts into obtaining a cure for their children. The Chinese government also put effort into both areas. However, equal attention needs to be given to those with physical disabilities to live a normal life in China. This issue should be stressed and further study should be conducted for developing strategies or policies to improve life for this group people.

Sixth, the rights and interest of the physically disabled are guaranteed. During the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, the legal rights and interests of disabled persons were guaranteed under the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1993), the Compulsory Education of the People's Republic of China (1986), the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons (1990), and other various laws. But in order to put these laws into practice, the Chinese people and their government have long way to go. This thesis did not stress in this aspect. Developing strategies and policies to effectively implement these laws is necessary and further study should be addressed in this aspect.

Finally, physical disability is a social concept. This is illustrated by the early case of *Sun Bin*, and the modern Cases of 4 and 5, in which two physically disabled physicians were not considered as disabled in performing their tasks in the hospital setting. However if they had to perform tasks such as fieldwork in an agricultural setting, they would be considered as physically disabled. On the other hand, in the Case 13 (2.2.3), the

young man with a mental disability was considered physically competent in the agriculture setting. Physical disability is a concept from a social perspective. However, the model of disability still reflects mainly the functional limitation model for establishing programs, policies and interventions in China.

Throughout the age-long history, the disabled as a group seem like a rather passive group waiting for things to be done for them in China. In Chinese history, there were numerous rebellions due to poor living conditions and oppressive taxes, but there were no mass movements or rebellions related to the rights for the physical disabled except for the anti-foot binding and women's liberation movements. This is probably because a majority of disabled in China are cared for by their families and have had no chance or reason to form a group to fight for their rights and interests.

After 1949, persons with disabled without families are supported by the government, families who have elderly parents with sickness or disabilities or disabled children got support from the government or working place. Since the 1980s, due to the "Open Door Policy" and the international influences, the only organization for the disabled, China Disabled Persons' Federation, supported by the Chinese government, was established in 1987. This organization functions as a bridge between the government and disabled people and other social organizations.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The growth in the recognition of the rights and interests of disabled persons worldwide, as well as the results of this thesis which demonstrate the complexity of the effects of socio-cultural, political and economic conditions at different historical periods on empowerment of physically disabled in China. It is clear that the concept of disability

as a social construction should not be neglected in study of disabilities and the disabled. An important next step in trying to understand disability as a social concept is to conduct an investigation using a multi-cultural approach. The limited number of existing multi-cultural studies notwithstanding, it would also be desirable to explore different factors effecting empowerment for various categories of disabled persons in the same society.

Additional study of public policies should also be pursued, for as this study has demonstrated, the connection between the influences of socio-cultural, political and economic factors and the empowerment of the physically disabled has not been wholly captured by demonstrating the roots of the construct of disability that have grown from legislation and public documents. Further investigations should contribute to the formation of policies that permit the disabled as much opportunity as the non-disabled to choose whether and how to enrich themselves and their communities.

Qualitative research should also be conducted in the future; income, employment status and occupational status of disabled tell only part of the story of empowerment of the disabled. Such an investigation can be conducted using a nationally representative data set of able and disabled by examining income, employment and occupational achievement chronically and cross-culturally. To understand more fully the differences related to age, gender, home, school and work of the disabled in the same or different socio-cultural settings, and the use of probing in-depth interviews might throw more light on the concept of disability as a social construct and help in developing educational strategies for working with disabled children that come from different cultural backgrounds.

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