

Chinese Educational Mission, an article appearing in the *Hartford Daily Courant*, Monday, January 9, 1882.

As the text on the microfilm is very small, and also contains imperfections on the microfilm, I will write out this text here. If it is thought that certain words or phrases might need clarification, they will be added within brackets [bracket]. Except for these bracketed words, the text will be copied exactly as printed in the newspaper.

CHINESE EDUCATIONAL MISSION

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHINESE STUDENTS BY THE NEW COMMISSIONER.

Mr. Woo Tsze Tun, appointed a few months since, [ago] while secretary of the Chinese legation at Madrid, commissioner of the Chinese educational mission, has lately assumed the duties of his office in this city. One of the first acts of his administration has been the issue of the students of the following interesting circular, [paper] in which their importance in the eyes of their government and the future anticipated for them to their own country is indicated. Mr. Woo Tsze Tun is an elderly gentleman, a scholar of great eminence, and a man of scientific accomplishments, especially in the department of chemistry. He is in entire sympathy with the objects of the educational mission and belongs to the small, but increasing party [number] of public men in China who recognize the new demands created for that country by the events and changes of modern times. The following is the circular:

THE FOLLOWING LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS IS FOR ALL THE STUDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE CHINESE EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

It should be well understood that our government fosters men of talent, and regardless of heavy expenses, sends you to the best institutions of learning; your parents also did not allow their natural affections to stand in the way of your leaving your homes – the hope of both country and parents being that; for a lifetime you may, on the one hand, recompense the state by your services, and on the other that you may bring honor to your ancestors. Imagine how many tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands even, of your countrymen there are, who would gladly secure such advantages for themselves if they could; as, for example, the opportunity to study science and literature, and that too, without the expenditure of money on their part; also, thus early to be invested with rank, and hereafter to return to China, there to compete for greater honors; all of which, and greater advantages, it is impossible here to specify. But you must know that the original design of sending you here, while pursuing your western education, was not that you should by any means forget the manners and customs of your country. It is important that you should attend to your studies with diligence, but not to neglect the rules of etiquette. If you do not closely apply yourselves now, would not your inferiority be manifest when the demands of life come upon you. If you deliberately neglect all the rules of politeness of your native country, on your return home, how can you live in sympathy with your fellow countrymen? Your school duties, outside of the mission, take up nearly the whole year, leaving you but a few weeks at headquarters to study Chinese and to practice Chinese etiquette. Should you fail to make the most of the limited time for this purpose, your confirmed habits cannot be easily changed.

Let this letter of advice cause you to consider well the past and present state of things, and make up your minds to this: Since your stay here is brief, as compared with the time you have to spend in China, foreign habits should not become so rooted as that you cannot change them. Chinese and English studies should be carried on together in

order that you attain to positions of usefulness. If not, of what use is your coming here? There are already foreigners, not a few, who understand Chinese, living in China, and there are many Chinese abroad who understand English and other languages; why then does the government send you abroad at this expense? Think of these facts in all their aspects, and the reason is plain.

There are now already being prepared rules and examples for translating Chinese into English, and examples for translating Chinese into English, and *vice versa*. [The use of italic type here is because these two words are Latin. Today we would use these same two words, but would not write them in italics. The term means “the other way around”.] When collected into a book and printed, specimen copies will be sent you, which you can first study in school hours; and in your leisure moments, instead of wasting them in idle gossip, you should pay attention to the Chinese classics and discuss them among yourselves. One or two days at this may not witness any progress, but a month’s time would show results. In this, the principle is the same in all studies. Each day adds a little and in the end it tells. When difficult characters, such as conjunctions, prepositions and the like occur, and you are at a loss to explain them, compare parallel passages, and note down at the time the various uses of the characters and bring them to the Mission when you come for explanation, or, not waiting for that, write a letter asking for the desired explanation. Let all the students bear in mind that every day’s advancement in study should be a day’s clearer understanding of principles.

That you may become men of ability and usefulness in China is the earnest hope, which leads me to write this letter.

Woo Tsze Tun,
Commissioner

Hartford, April 1st, 1880

Jingcao, if you did not know about this, it must be an important find. On the other hand, you may have known about it all along.

The April 27, 1880 newspaper, in addition to the references made to China and the Chinese, has one added bit of information, which I have highlighted in yellow. This Twichell was the best friend of Edward Carrington, who was killed during our Civil War. It very well might have been something about Yew Fun Tan that reminded the mother and the two sisters of their lost son and brother.

Steven Courtney, the man who wrote a biography of Twichell, found out that there were diaries and other documents in the Carrington papers in Colebrook. He spent several days researching them a couple of years ago. While doing this, he came across [found] much information about the Chinese students, which he simply found to be interesting. Much later, Laura Tyson, (who was the blond lady who served as your interpreter) a personal friend of Courtney’s, happened to say to him that a film crew from China was coming to do a documentary on the Chinese Mission Students. He then told her that there was a great deal of material that this film crew should look at while in Connecticut. It is funny [odd, strange] how these seemingly unrelated facts can come together to allow something to happen that otherwise would never have come to the light of day.