



# Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927

*Weili Ye*

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The students who came to the United States in the early twentieth century to become modern Chinese by studying at American universities played pivotal roles in Chinese intellectual, economic, and diplomatic life upon their return to China. These former students exemplified key aspects of Chinese "modernity," introducing new social customs, new kinds of interpersonal relationships, new ways of associating in groups, and a new way of life in general. Although there have been books about a few especially well-known persons among them, this is the first book in either English or Chinese to study the group as a whole.

The collapse of the traditional examination system and the need to earn a living outside the bureaucracy meant that although this was not the first generation of Chinese to break with traditional ways of thinking, these students were the first generation of Chinese to *live* differently. Based on student publications, memoirs, and other writings found in this country and in China, the author describes their multifaceted experience of life in a foreign, modern environment, involving student associations, professional activities, racial discrimination, new forms of recreation and cultural expression, and, in the case of women students, the unique challenges they faced as females in two changing societies.

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