ABSTRACT

Zhang Zhi-dong, an official of the late Ching Dynasty, was well known for his contributions to the educational reform in that period.

Zhang himself started as a scholar who looked upon the upholding of Confucianism as his responsibility. This was because of the traditional Confucius education he received in his earlier years, and of the influence of his father who was a Confucius scholar and government official. Before the Sino-French War (1884), Zhang had been idealistic and ambitious, yet lacking the knowledge of the West. He advocated Confucian ideology in the promotion of the traditional education system. That constituted the first stage of his educational thought.

It was only when he was appointed Governor General of Guangdong and Guanxi, that he accumulated the experience of making defence plans for Guangdong and deploying armed forces during the Sino-French War. At the same time, he acquired knowledge about the West. From then onward, he became a pragmatist who persisted on introducing Western scientific technology and other practical subjects to China's educational system. He put in great effort in establishing Western-style schools so as to train local talents in helping China's modernization process.

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, Zhang himself speeded up his educational reform policies. His contributions during this period were the propagation of the common
thoughts of 'Chinese learning as basis and Western learning as pragmatics' (中学为体，西学为用), through his writing 'Exhortation to Studies' (劝学篇), and the demolition of the Civil Examination System (科举制度) in China.

My aim in this academic exercise is to examine the features and changes in Zhang's educational thought. This will help us in understanding the educational policies and ideology of the late Qing Dynasty.

Chapter one deals with the educational situation during the late Qing Dynasty. Chapter 2 concerns Zhang's early life and his work as a government official. The next chapter focuses on the developmental changes of Zhang's educational thoughts. His ideas on the usefulness of education in all fields are discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 analyses Zhang's efforts in developing various types of educational systems. Chapter 6 considers some features of his educational thoughts and chapter 7 provides a critical evaluation. The concluding chapter shows the impact of his educational thoughts on China in her early attempt at modernization.