

Contribution of Guiyang Wentong Book Company to the Education Development Research in Guizhou during the Anti-Japanese War

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Abstract: This paper discusses the role of Guiyang Wentong Book Company in the development of education in Guizhou during the Anti-Japanese War. Relying on the advantages of the southwest rear area, the publishing house undertakes the resources of internal relocation, innovates the business model, undertakes the task of printing teaching materials in southwest China, and alleviates the shortage of educational materials in wartime. The research shows that Wentong Book Company integrates resources through publishing, maintains the operation of the education system, highlights the social responsibility of private institutions in special historical situations, and lays an important foundation for Guizhou education and cultural inheritance.

Keywords: Guiyang Wentong Book Company; Anti-Japanese War period; Educational development.

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1. Introduction

Since modern times, after the Hua family in Guizhou became rich, they founded Guiyang Wentong Book Company. After the "July 7 Incident", the comprehensive Anti-Japanese War began, and the Chinese publishing industry in Fangxing was hit hard. Publishing institutions and universities moved to the southwest. Guiyang is one of the cities in the strategic rear. Become a gathering place for many cultural institutions and intellectuals. In this context, the development of Guiyang Wentong Book Company is particularly remarkable, and its development is even well-known throughout the country. It has become one of the seven major bookstores in the country, such as the Commercial Press and the Zhonghua Book Company. The academic circles have paid attention to the research of Wentong Book Company, but there is little literature to deeply explore how Wentong Book Company promotes the development of local education in Guizhou. The purpose of this study is to fill this academic gap and reveal its contribution to Guizhou education by examining the publishing activities of Guiyang Wentong Book Company during the Anti-Japanese War.

2. Guizhou education development before and after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War

In order to better understand the contribution of Wentong Publishing House to the development of Guizhou education during the Anti-Japanese War, this paper first reviews the basic situation of Guizhou education before and during the Anti-Japanese War.

2.1. The development of education in Guizhou before the war

Guizhou is connected to Hunan in the east, Guangxi in the south, Yunnan-Kweichow Plateau in the west, and Sichuan Basin in the north. Its karst landform makes most areas relatively closed, and its economic foundation is weak, resulting in a lower level of education than the central and eastern regions. "In 1935, Guizhou had 2059 primary schools (including 606 short-term primary schools) and 29 secondary schools, with a total of 173,746 and 7,043 students, respectively. There are only 4 higher education institutions with 471 students." ^[1]. The unique natural conditions of Guizhou provide the key objective geographical conditions for the independent development and characteristics of Guizhou education, thus forming a Guizhou education model with regional characteristics.

In 1922, the national government implemented the Renxu school system nationwide. The primary school education was changed to a six-year system, with a four-year primary school period and a two-year high school period. Primary and secondary schools will cancel the "reading classics", re-formulate teaching subjects, and stipulate the implementation of compulsory education throughout the country. According to the statistics of 1930, there were 1752 primary schools and 83,000 students in the province. The number of poor people with primary education is only 5, ranking 33rd in the country; the proportion of compulsory education for school-age children in Guizhou is 5.53%, while the national average is 22%. Until 1934, before the Central Army entered Guizhou, there were 1819 primary schools in the province, and the enrollment rate of school-age children was 10% ^[2]. Prewar secondary education in Guizhou, from the overall situation, there is an imbalance; the province only has 13 middle schools in the counties. In 1936, there were 9 provincial middle schools, and the number of middle schools developed to 33. There are some normal schools and vocational schools. However, due to the endless wars and funding difficulties, many schools have the name of middle schools, and Guizhou's secondary education is in a backward state. As of 1936, secondary education was about one thousandth of the population at that time ^[3]. Before the war, the normal education in Guizhou was silent for a long time. In 1930, the Education Department of Guizhou Province ordered all counties not to open short-term normal schools and similar schools, but some counties needed teachers and set up normal schools on their own. Social education is a part of the education system. Social education in Guizhou was established before the war, but it did not exist for a long time. In 1936, the Guizhou provincial government stipulated that 81 counties in the province should set up public schools at the county level. The performance of public schools in counties is one of the criteria for the performance evaluation of county magistrates.

In a word, the foundation of Guizhou education was still very weak before the war, but these weak educational sparks laid a certain foundation for the further development of Guizhou education.

2.2. An overview of the development of Guizhou education during the Anti-Japanese War

In 1935, the Long March of the Red Army entered Guizhou. By pursuing the Red Army, Chiang Kai-shek sent troops to Guizhou and disintegrated the Guizhou Army through both hard and soft methods. This action ended the rule of Xingyi and Tongzi warlords over Guizhou for more than 20 years, and the political situation in Guizhou

was gradually stabilized. As the national government began to rectify the education system in Guizhou, especially after the July 7th Incident, Guizhou, as the rear area of the Anti-Japanese War, ushered in an opportunity for education development because of its geographical importance. At that time, the National Government appointed Wu Dingchang as the chairman of Guizhou Province. During Wu Dingchang's administration (1937–1944), he played an external role in promoting the development of education in Guizhou. He believes that education is the "backbone" of Guizhou government affairs, especially the "mass education", which should be put in the first place. He once proposed that "after coming to Guizhou, he paid special attention to public education to inspire the national concept of the general public and enhance the will of the general public to resist the war" ^[4].

1937–1945 is usually considered to be the period of the full-scale Anti-Japanese War, also known as the "extraordinary period" ^[5]. In August 1937, the National Government promulgated the "Guidelines for the Supervision of Educational Work during the General Mobilization Period", taking "wartime must be viewed as usual" as the policy of education, and denied that the idea of some people in the education sector advocated changing the education system to meet the needs of the Anti-Japanese War ^[6]. The main purpose of this policy is to maintain the normalization of education, that is, the current school system, teaching content, and teaching form are basically unchanged. It was also the educational policy of the national government during the Anti-Japanese War, based on its long-term plan and respect for the laws of education itself. Its purpose is to win the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, and to prepare for post-war reconstruction and development.

Under the guidance of the national government's wartime must be seen at ordinary times education policy, coupled with the efforts of Guizhou local government and Guizhou people, Guizhou education during the Anti-Japanese War formed a complete system of university, middle school, primary school and vocational education, normal education and social education, which was a historic change in the history of Guizhou education^[7]. Education in Guizhou had a short boom. By 1945, there were 10577 primary schools, 1595 central primary schools, 8693 national primary schools, and 623893 students in the province ^[8]. It was a great progress compared with that before the war, but it was impossible to complete the popularization of national education within five years according to the requirements of the time, so that the enrollment rate of children could reach more than 90%. During the Anti-Japanese War, Guizhou's normal education system was also greatly developed. In the original Guiyang Normal School and Guiyang Women's Normal School in Guizhou Province, four provincial normal schools, Zhenyuan, Duyun, Panxian, and Zunyi, were added, and then Tongren, Lushan, Anshun, and other provincial normal schools were added, basically realizing that there was one normal school in each school district ^[9]. In 1939, the Guizhou Provincial Department of Education formulated the "Secondary School School Plan and the Method of Dividing Middle School Districts" and implemented the middle school district system. The province is divided into six middle school districts, with at least one complete middle school in each district and at least one junior middle school in each county. After many adjustments, by 1945, 79 counties in the province were divided into 7 middle school districts. In each school district, the vast majority of counties have secondary schools. During the Anti-Japanese War, a large number of colleges and universities moved westward, which had a profound impact on Guizhou education. These national schools have strong teachers and high teaching quality, which is of great significance to the improvement and development of Guizhou education. After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, the relocation of colleges and universities to the original site led to the stagnation of the development of education in Guizhou. However, during the Anti-Japanese War, the most important reason for the development of Guizhou's higher education and even Guizhou's education was the "cultural westward migration."

This "cultural westward migration" not only preserved and cultivated a group of cultural elites, changed the

backward appearance of Guizhou education, but also promoted the historical changes in the history of Guizhou education. National Guizhou University and National Guiyang Normal University were also established in this wave of westward migration.

3. Guiyang Wentong Book Company during the Anti-Japanese War

3.1. "The text is to carry the road, to the soul": The start-up of Guiyang Wentong Book Company

The Hua family was originally from Linjiang, Jiangxi Province, and practiced medicine for generations. At the end of Kangxi's reign, they moved to Zunyi, Guizhou Province, and settled down, starting with the salt industry. During the period of Hua Zhihong, he deeply felt that the spread of new knowledge lasted for a long time. In this way, Guizhou culture will always fall behind the provinces in the country. He wanted to spread new knowledge by relying on books, so Mo Ruo founded a large-scale bookstore ^[10]. In 1908, Hua Zhihong founded the Wentong Book Company, which means "the text is to carry the way and reach the soul."

The start-up and development of Wentong Book Company the development was difficult. "At the beginning of the opening, one staff member handles about one hundred people." ^[11]. The manpower is quite scarce. After the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution, Guizhou Province declared independence, and all the prints were entrusted to the Wentong Book Company. During this period, the number of employees gradually increased. By 1935, the Central Army of the National Government had penetrated into Guizhou, and the printing business gradually increased. At this time, all newspapers were printed on the basis of the text, the tension of the work, and the complexity of the situation; no more than this period, the number of workers increased to more than 400 ^[12]. Paper is also a major problem that has plagued Wentong Book Company in the early days. Due to the inconvenient transportation in Guizhou, and the local paper is difficult to meet the requirements, there are many difficulties. To this end, Hua Zhihong organized Yongfeng Paper Factory and introduced new Japanese tree species as paper raw materials. The paper produced by Yongfeng Paper Mill is comparable to foreign paper ^[13]. One of the purposes of the initial construction of Wentong Book Company was to "serve Guizhou cultural communication" ^[14]. Hua Zhihong also set up a book department to alleviate the shortage of textbooks in Guiyang and gradually expand the distribution network. In Guiyang, Zunyi, Anshun, Bijie, and other places, they have set up a department or sales point.

In a word, Guiyang Wentong Book Company has developed from the beginning to the Anti-Japanese War. It undertook the main printing and publishing business in Guizhou and played the role of spreading new knowledge and developing Guizhou education before the Anti-Japanese War. The publishing technology, scale, and specifications of the publishing house have also been greatly developed.

3.2. The role change of Guiyang Wentong Book Company during the period of the comprehensive Anti-Japanese War

In 1937, the Anti-Japanese War broke out in an all-around way, and the army of the national government was defeated. Less than half a year after the Anti-Japanese War, North China was in danger, Pingjin had long been occupied, the Shanghai War was unfavorable, and Shanghai and Nanjing lost one after another. In such a turbulent situation, China's modern publishing industry, with Shanghai as the center and Peiping, Nanjing, and Tianjin as the sub-centers, has suffered an unprecedented heavy blow ^[15]. The publishing industry across the country has taken a huge hit, and many publishing institutions have been forced to move inward. For example, in 1932, the

commercial press was retaliated by the Japanese army for publishing anti-Japanese books, and the facilities were destroyed, and the losses were huge. However, the commercial press took measures to evacuate and relocate in advance, reducing losses. In this process, Guiyang, as a relatively safe strategic rear city, attracted a large number of cultural institutions and intellectuals. The publishing house seized this opportunity and quickly adjusted its business strategy, which not only solved its own survival problems but also made important contributions to education during the Anti-Japanese War.

Before the Anti-Japanese War, the marketing of Wentong Book Company was quite good in Guizhou. Around 1921, it was the golden age of Wentong Book Company's economy, and its annual income was 97,159 yuan by 1937^[16]. After the outbreak of the full-scale Anti-Japanese War, most of the publishing institutions in China moved westward and set up branches in Guiyang successively. "Wentong was also deeply affected"^[17]. At this time, Hua Wenqu, the principal of Wentong Book Company, did not hesitate to sell his property to maintain the operation of Wentong Book Company. He also found the drawbacks of the original system and began to reform. Set up the general management office in Guiyang and served as general manager. There are three offices: editing, printing, and distribution. At this time, a large number of schools and literati scholars entered Guizhou. Hua Wenqu seized this development opportunity and hired scholars who returned to Guizhou through various channels. Ma Zongrong and Xie Liuyi served as the chief and deputy directors of the editorial office. The editorial office has a standing editorial committee and employs 112 editorial members ^[18]. In 1941, the editorial office of Wentong Book Company was formally established after reorganization. The editorial office mainly undertook the work of editing textbooks of various schools, compiling yearbooks and manuals of various dictionaries, and editing magazines.

After the reorganization, the work efficiency, the speed of publishing, and printing have been improved. However, because it is a private enterprise, there is a turnover of funds. Ma Zongrong, the director of the editorial office at that time, communicated with the personnel of the Ministry of Education, and the Unified Wentong Publishing Bureau of the Ministry of Education published primary school textbooks and teaching books. To a certain extent, it eased the financial difficulties of Wentong Book Company. In 1943, the "Seven Joint Supply Offices of National Primary and Secondary School Textbooks", namely the "Seven Joint Offices", were established. Wentong Book Company is one of the members. It participates in the distribution of national textbooks for primary and secondary schools. Although it only accounts for 4% of the national supply of textbooks, it has been considerable in terms of the scope and absolute number of distribution. Due to the painstaking management of Wentong Publishing House, the supply of school students' teaching materials was guaranteed, and the teaching of Tail War in schools at all levels in Guizhou was stopped. So far, Wentong Publishing House has officially become a publishing institution that aims to instill new knowledge to promote Guizhou's academics and improve southwest culture ^[19].

3.3. The publishing practice of Guiyang Wentong Book Company during the Anti-Japanese War

Ma Zongrong expected Wentong Publishing House to achieve "integration of literature, science, law, commerce, industry, agriculture, medicine, and education, with equal emphasis on specialization and popularization" ^[20]. As mentioned above, Wentong Publishing House has been committed to "serving the dissemination of Guizhou culture" since its inception. During the Anti-Japanese War, it continued to uphold this concept and actively participated in the publication of textbooks, printing, and social education books. During this period, the publication of books was mainly based on the theme of patriotism during the Anti-Japanese War, and a large

number of university series, primary and secondary school textbooks, educational books, academic, literary, and artistic books were published. The content is extensive, the category is complete, and the benefit is good. The patriotic books of the Anti-Japanese War in this period are such as the first and second series of International Current Affairs Series compiled by the International Propaganda Office of the Kuomintang Central Department, Zhang Zhongfu's Evolution of International Politics in the Far East, Zhong Huanxin's Soviet Local Autonomy, etc. Dong Meikan's "single-act play", which expresses the patriotic theme of the Anti-Japanese War in the form of a play, is more popular with readers. In addition, Bu Shaofu's "war correspondent speech", the book shows the readers the situation of the front line of the Anti-Japanese War with his own experience. In addition, there are many forms of books to show the patriotic theme of the Anti-Japanese War. It can reflect the high sense of national responsibility of Wentong Publishing House to use culture to publicize the Anti-Japanese War.

Another policy since the establishment of the Bureau was to compile and print local literature on Guizhou culture and compile books on frontier folklore ^[21]. During this period, Wentong Publishing House published "Guizhou Literature Quarterly" edited by Ren Kecheng and Yang Enyuan, Chen Can's "Official Yunnan Manuscripts", Zhang Xueli's "Ten Lectures on County Political Issues", Guizhou Continuation of "Qiannan Series" edited by the Bureau of Literature Collection of General Records Bureau, Guiyang Municipal Government's "Guiyang City Guide" and other documents, which brought great convenience to the historical research of Guizhou. During this period, under the leadership of the Social Research Department of Daxia University, the research of ethnology has made great progress. Wentong Publishing House undertook the publishing task, such as the "Ethnological Essays" edited by Wu Zelin, the "Guizhou Miao Yi Society Research" edited by Wu Zelin and Chen Guojun, and the "Life of the Black Miao in Lushan" and other pioneering achievements, which left a lot of real and reliable first-hand information for the follow-up ethnology research.

As one of the members of the "Seven Joint Office", Wentong Publishing House also publishes educational books. Under the leadership of Ma Zongrong and Xie Liuyi, Wentong Publishing House published educational books such as Ma Zongrong's "New Theory of Social Education in the Great Era" and "History of Ancient Chinese Education", Deng Junbi and Xu Shaogui's "General Teaching Method", Dewey's "Experience and Education" translated by Li Xiang and Ruan Chunfang, as well as Zhang Shilu's "Summary of Chinese Philology", "University Chinese" edited by the National Literature Association of Guiyang Normal University, Lan Wenzheng's "General History of China", Shen Junqi and Li Maozhi's "Physiological Practice Guidance" and other university textbooks. It is not only used in Guizhou, but also expanded to the southwest and even the whole country.

Wentong Publishing House also has a start-up publication, "Wentong Publishing House Newsletter", referred to as "Wenxun." "Wenxun" was first founded on October 10, 1941. The purpose of the journal was to brainstorm, publish academic works, literary works, democratic abstracts, cultural dynamics, and other texts related to publishing ^[22]. The journal was discontinued in 1944 due to the "Qiannan Incident", with a total of 5 volumes and 22 issues. The establishment and development of Wenxun exhausted the life efforts of Ma Zongrong and Xie Liuyi. From the articles published in Wenxun, "Anti-Japanese War and national salvation" was the main theme, contributing to the cultural construction during the Anti-Japanese War.

4. Guiyang Wentong Book Company's assistance to the development of education in Guizhou

Printing and publishing are important channels for the preservation and dissemination of human civilization.

With the exchange and collision of Chinese and Western cultures, modern private publishing houses have largely shouldered the mission of spreading new culture and new ideas. Guiyang Wentong Book Company was established during the period of fierce social change in China. After a series of difficult developments in the initial period, such as personnel shortage, shortage of funds, lack of paper, Japanese retaliation, peer competition, and political changes in Guizhou, it finally became one of the members of the "Seven Joint Office", rising from a regional publishing agency to a national publishing agency. In 1952, Wentong Publishing House was incorporated into Guizhou People's Printing Factory, but its contribution to Guizhou's cultural education during the Anti-Japanese War should not be underestimated.

4.1. Continuing Guizhou's education and cultural publishing industry and alleviating the shortage of teaching materials

Since the establishment of the Bureau, it has explained the purpose of its own development. Hua Zhihong hopes to "respect the sangzi with knowledge and change the backward face of Guizhou culture and education", so that Guizhou can "promote civilization and transfer weathering." Therefore, it is necessary to "rely on books" to "enlighten Guizhou people"^[23]. During the Anti-Japanese War, Wentong Publishing House actively carried out book and periodical publishing activities with textbooks as the main business, with the responsibility of "the institute has also been the responsibility of the people, to do the business that the people should do."^[24]. In the eleven years since the establishment of the editorial office of Guiyang Wentong Book Company, a total of 32 kinds of books and 191 volumes have been edited, published, and distributed. First of all, it is the "University Series" with the largest number of 30 volumes. Secondly, there are 2 series and 20 volumes of "Wentong Youth Series." There is also the "literature and art series" with 15 volumes ^[25]. During the Anti-Japanese War, the importance of propaganda and propaganda of the Anti-Japanese War was raised. On this basis, Wentong Publishing House also added books on propaganda and mobilization of war. In addition to the books mentioned above, there are also Zhu Shiming's "Ming Season Decline Record", Qin Yunfen's "Little Hero", and Wang Deliang's "Documents of the Chinese nation against self-defense." In a word, the large number of printing of textbooks meets the supply of textbooks in Guizhou, even in the southwest and even the whole country, and the publication of various kinds of books is also part of the business philosophy of Wentong Publishing House, which provided the supply of books on the market during the Anti-Japanese War and enriched the cultural needs during the Anti-Japanese War; the publication and printing of the propaganda books of the Anti-Japanese War was also the demand of the times, which continued the publishing business of Wentong Book Company itself.

4.2. Preserve a large number of Guizhou local literature, lay the foundation for a follow-up study

As a local publishing house in Guizhou, Wentong Book Company publishes Guizhou local literature and related frontier books. Local classics are its consistent concept. Wentong Publishing House has published many large-scale books, such as "Qianyou Xinying" by Lu Qian, "Constitutional Overview of Guiding County in 31 Years" by the Secretariat of Guiding County Government, "Guizhou in Ten Years" by Ciqing, "Guizhou Scenery" by Huang Yao, and "Hmong Shadows" by the Social Research Department of Daxia University. What Chang Feng said: "The publication of these monographs is one of the glorious achievements of the initial integration of Chinese eastern and western cultures during the Anti-Japanese War" ^[26]. Through the efforts of a large number of scholars and common people, a considerable number of local documents in Guizhou were retained, and a large number

of books were saved. At the same time, it also reflected the cultural responsibility of a private publishing house during the war, and provided detailed historical data and information for today's scholars who study the Anti-Japanese War and the local history of Guizhou.

4.3. Hiring and gathering a large number of talents for a condensed cultural atmosphere

Wentong Publishing House has always insisted on combining the publishing business with education to develop itself. People are the foundation of educational development. Hua Zhihong paid special attention to the cultivation of the editing group. In 1941, the editing institute was established. The editing group scholars of Wentong books were gathered, and there were many famous scholars, such as Ma Zongrong, Xie Liuyi, Wang Boqun, He Zhaoqing, Ren Kecheng, Zhu Kezhen, Mao Yisheng, and other 112 scholars ^[27]. The knowledge of these members involves many aspects, among which there are many first-class masters in various fields in China at that time, and many of them are the main coders, presiding officers, and contributors of the editorial office, which ensures the source and quality of the editorial office. In other words, during the Anti-Japanese War, Wentong Publishing House used the centripetal force of culture and the weapon of public opinion to fight. By absorbing a large number of talents, one of them was the protection and resettlement of talents during the war and turmoil; the second is that these scholars provide human resources for the development of Wentong Book Company, and Wentong Book Company also provides a platform for these scholars to write books and provide a bridge for their future success.

5. Conclusion

Wentong Book Company is the largest and most advanced printing and publishing enterprise in modern Guizhou, founded by the national capitalist Hua Zhihong. During the Anti-Japanese War, China's publishing industry suffered heavy losses, but Guiyang Wentong Data thrived in the war and became a key force in promoting the development of local education. Wentong Publishing House was founded by the Hua family in 1908. The original intention was to improve the cultural and educational status of Guizhou. With the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, Wentong Publishing House, under the leadership of Hua Zhihong, Hua Wenqu, and Ma Zongrong, not only was it not trapped by the current situation, but seized the opportunity to realize the transformation from regional to national through institutional innovation, business expansion, and talent gathering.

In the face of the successive fall of the eastern region, many schools and cultural institutions migrated to the southwest, and Guizhou became a relatively safe haven for knowledge. In this context, Wentong Publishing House undertook a large number of textbook printing tasks, ensured the stable supply of wartime educational resources, actively participated in the propaganda of the Anti-Japanese War, and published a series of works reflecting the spirit of the times. At the same time, it pays special attention to the collation and publication of local documents in Guizhou and preserves many precious local historical materials, which provide an important basis for future research.

It is particularly touching that Wentong Publishing House has never forgotten its social responsibility. It is not only a commercial success, but also a bridge to spread new ideas and new culture. By carefully selecting and editing all kinds of books, Wentong Publishing House effectively promoted the cultural prosperity of Guizhou and even the whole southwest region; in addition, the bookstore gathered a group of outstanding intellectuals. These scholars not only contributed wisdom to the development of the bookstore but also created conditions for their own academic research. In a word, the Guiyang Wentong Book Company during the Anti-Japanese War grew up in a difficult environment with its unique geographical advantages, keen insight into the times, and a firm sense of cultural mission. It has played a vital role in the support and development of Guizhou's education, and also left a valuable legacy for the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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