

Nankai University Committee on Social Economic
Research

I. Purpose and Organization

Social and economic research in present day China is an urgent need. Under the direct and indirect influences of the western countries, China is fast undergoing a process of industrialization, bringing with itself not only those general problems which naturally accompany such a great economic change, but a number of other problems peculiar to the conditions of the country. Problems such as those pertaining to wages, unemployment, working conditions, standard of living and innumerable others become of vital concern; and, upon the wise and successful solution of each of these problems necessarily depends our economic welfare. Obviously, the first step toward their solution is to study and analyse them, to understand their individual significance and trace their specific causes and effects, utilizing whenever possible the methods and past experiences of the West, but referring always to the peculiar historical and contemporary background which underlies them.

It is with the purpose of meeting this urgent need that Nankai University appointed, in 1927, a Committee on Social and Economic Research, which, at present, is composed of sixteen members: a director of research, ten field investigators, and five assistants engaged in statistical and clerical work. It may be noted here that being attached to a university the Committee enjoys two distinct advantages which an independent organization of research does not enjoy, viz: economy and stability. Its attachment to the University enables it to utilize many facilities and equipments which otherwise would have to be purchased at great expense. Furthermore, Nankai University has proved its stability through the many storms of recent political upheavals. Under its protection, the Committee needs have no apprehension for external disturbance.

II. Type of Investigation

The type of investigation carried by the University Committee is essentially quantitative, that is, the finding and measuring of facts bearing upon economic, social and industrial problems. To quote from a declaration of aims and studies published by the Committee and reproduced in the December issue, 1927, of the Journal of American Statistical Association, the Committee "will deal with important economic, social and industrial problems of the day regarding which quantitative analysis is feasible, with the object of placing as much as possible the present day discussion on a basis of facts, as distinguished from more or less partisan opinion" . . . "While it seeks only to determine facts, its investigations are to be carried on in such manner and under such supervision as to make its findings carry convictions to both liberals and conservatives alike."

III. The work of the Committee

The work of the Committee so far undertaken has centered round two fields: (1) the study of the extent and effects of the industrialization in China; and (2) the compilation and analysis of economic statistics.