

After the Japanese War of 1894, Li Kung-chang realised that it was necessary to model an army on Western lines. His work was interrupted by the Boxer Movement, but later Yuan Shih-K'ai carried on the idea, and, with the help principally of German officers, brought the Lu-chun to the greatest state of perfection that has ever been attained by a Chinese army. It was far from being perfect, but from 1905 to 1907 or 1908 it gradually improved. Then unluckily, owing to jealousy, Yuan Shih-K'ai was removed from the command, and it slowly began to deteriorate. With the advent of the Republic it rapidly declined, and with the division of Provinces this national army has now long since ceased to exist.

The best solution, therefore, seems to be to come to an arrangement with the least incapable of the many leaders in China, to induce him to start a model army under foreign guidance, and to assist him in every way until he is able to stand on his own feet. It is not by any means a perfect solution, but it appears to be the best; there are many obstacles in the way, but obstacles only exist to be overcome.

I speak as an outsider, who, after twenty-four years' experience of the country, is thoroughly disgusted with China, and determined never again to revisit it under any circumstances.

These reforms must take a long time to work out, and they require young and energetic officers at the head of affairs who are prepared to devote their future to the work.