

CHINA NEWSPAPERS TRY NEW OPENNESS

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** MAY 6, 1989

About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems. Please send reports of such problems to archive_feedback@nytimes.com.

After studiously ignoring pro-democracy protests for the last two weeks, China's official newspapers seemed today to display a new openness in their reports of a mass demonstration held here on Thursday.

Photographs of streets filled with students waving banners as far as the eye could see ran on the front pages of most newspapers. The newspapers also reported details of demonstrations not only in the capital but in many other cities. Some of those demonstrations had not previously been reported.

The largest demonstration was in Beijing, where 100,000 people gathered in the central square to call for greater democracy and an end to corruption.

China Youth News reported demonstrations in at least 11 cities outside Beijing, and reported that in Shanghai, Xian and Wuhan, more than 10,000 students took part. The other cities were Changsha, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Taiyuan, Chengdu, Chongqing, Lanzhou, and Xining. The Demand for Better Coverage

More accurate reporting has been one of the demonstrators' principal demands, and today's articles and photos seemed to be a move to satisfy the demand. While the articles were not as comprehensive as the students would have liked, the surprise was that they appeared at all.

The articles noted that the demonstrations were called on the occasion of the 70th

anniversary of the nationalist demonstrations that led to the May 4 Movement. The movement called for China's political and cultural modernization and led to the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. To some extent, the articles tried to portray the demonstrators as patriotic citizens commemorating a historic occasion.

But the articles also referred explicitly to the demands of the student demonstrators who blanketed Tiananmen Square for an afternoon of speeches, chanting and singing.

"Several hundred thousand spectators watched the students marching along the streets, and many of them donated cold drinks and food," read part of an article from the official People's Daily. "As long as there is corruption, this country will never be stable," the article quoted a banner as saying.

Such articles were unusual only given the Government's previous determination to avoid references to the demonstrations. It is not clear if today's articles and photos in the official press mark a permanent step toward openness that will let Chinese people learn about events as they happen.

Today's newspapers also quoted the Communist Party General Secretary, Zhao Ziyang, as saying that corruption occurs partly because there is a "lack of openness in the system of work." That seemed to be another call for more openness in Chinese society, one of the major student demands.

University students said today that they had no immediate plans for further demonstrations.

A version of this article appears in print on May 6, 1989, on Page 1001004 of the National edition with the headline: CHINA NEWSPAPERS TRY NEW OPENNESS.