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## Upheaval in China; Unnerving Day of Reckoning Looms for Students: Exams

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** MAY 25, 1989

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Wu Qiaohong, hunched over a stack of notes and books that cluttered a library desk, was taking a rest from protesting so she could finish her senior thesis.

A 21-year-old international politics senior at Beijing University, Miss Wu was not sure how she was going to graduate next month if she did not hand in her essay soon. She had spent most of the last few days on the front lines in the struggle for democracy, blocking soldiers from moving into the city and trying to persuade them to retreat.

"All the students in my year face the same problem," Miss Wu said. She was one of the few who had come today to the library reading room, which normally is packed with hard-working students.

"Our main task as students is to study, and we know that when we leave the university, we must earn a living based on what we have learned here," she said. "But what preoccupies us is the environment we will end up in. Will it be free and democratic, or will it be repressive?" **Normality Seems Far Away**

Campus life in China has been turned upside down in the last five weeks of protests. Final exams are about three weeks away and senior theses are due soon. But now on the fifth day of martial law in Beijing, as students press on with their

class boycott and teachers continue their sympathy strike, there is no sign that university life will return to normal.

On the contrary, the campuses, like the one at Beijing University, appear more like headquarters of sorts for China's professional demonstrators.

A loudspeaker almost continuously broadcasts the latest rumors and protest plans. The campus triangle, which is covered with posters, has become a center for exchanging news. The floors of the long dormitory hallways are often used for writing banners. Dormitory rooms have been converted into conference centers.

As the perceived threat of violent military confrontation diminishes, some students have started to think about their studies, their exams and their futures. At the same time, the uncertainty over the progress of the student movement and the frustration of not having achieved their goals seem to draw them back into the intensity of the protest fever that has overwhelmed their lives recently.

The students' demands have included better treatment of intellectuals, punishment of corruption among officials, direct talks with the Government and a positive evaluation of the student movement. Most recently, some students have called for the resignation of Prime Minister Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader.

As China's political crisis grows more acute, there is also apprehension that the present relative calm is simply a respite and that the outcome of the power struggle in the Communist Party headquarters will once again summon students to the streets.

"For a few days we seem to have had some peace and quiet, but if the situation changes, the apparent peace will be shattered," said J. Wang, a 24-year-old graduate student of English literature who was trying to finish her master's thesis.

"Because the atmosphere outside is so stirring and exciting, I can't just sit around to work on my thesis. It sometimes seems so selfish."

For nearly two weeks, students have occupied central Tiananmen Square, where up to 3,000 students went on a hunger strike last week. Thousands of supporters moved in with them, pitching tents, bringing in food supplies and converting the monument in the square's center into a headquarters with a loudspeaker system. They even hung their red school flags on the official flagpoles and later allowed scores of buses to be moved in as shelters against the rain. 'There Is No Set Routine'

Now, since martial law took effect Saturday, many students have abandoned

their campsite at Tiananmen Square, where days of rubbish have piled up and the novelty of invading the nation's seat of power has worn off. They have scattered throughout the city streets to rally their cause, or gone to the outlying areas of the capital to help contain the troops, or returned to the campuses to rest.

But the tense, busy and unorthodox routine has left students exhausted, making it difficult for them to catch an hour here or there to open their textbooks.

"We sleep during the day and we take part in activities during the night; there is no set routine," said Li Cunhai, a 21-year-old law student at Beijing University.

His roommate Liu Yebing added: "Some nights we went out several times. We'd settle in bed, just as someone would call us back out with the latest news, and then we'd go out again."

Their room was practically spotless except for today's newspaper on the desk and a textbook on law that Mr. Liu reads every now and then. Each of the six roommates belongs to a different group in the protest activities: the picket lines inside or outside the school, the propaganda teams on the streets and the groups who watch for troops on the outskirts of the city. To maintain a 24-hour student vigil by the troops, the students have set up a series of rotating shifts. Many

### Teachers on Strike

Many of the teachers at Beijing University are on strike. Not only are many not holding classes, but they also have not prepared the exams the students are to take in the middle of next month. A small group of teachers seem to be organizing the faculty support while the rest spend their time conducting research at home or exchanging rumors among themselves and with students at the campus triangle.

"Li Peng just stepped down," the students and teachers whispered recently. "No, that's not true, Zhao Ziyang stepped down," came the reply.

"The movement has occupied us and some teachers have gone to help block the trucks with their bodies while others have gone to Tiananmen Square to look after the students," said a 48-year-old teacher in computer science.

Zhu Shanli, a 36-year-old economics teacher, said: "Before the movement, we just taught students. Now, we spend all our time in meetings trying to figure out ways to help the students. We want some results, too."

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