seen working on street pavements that have been long left in a
dilapidated condition. Though considerable time will be required
to restore Shanghai to an appearance reminiscent of its golden
days, ultimate success in this direction can be confidently expec-
ted. Thirdly, the line of communication between Nantao and
the rest of Shanghai bids fair to be resumed in the very near
future. A number of buses taken over from the Japanese will
be made available to the public as soon as necessary adjustments
are completed to bring them to a working condition. Fourthly,
Shanghai’s water front is also undergoing a steady process of
reconstruction, and ocean liners will soon be able to enjoy dock-
ing facilities that once made Shanghai one of the leading ports
of the world. Fifthly, both foreign and Chinese enterprises are
being rapidly returned to the lawful owners, and they may
shortly resume operation to relieve unemployment which has
caused not a little concern to the Government. Finally the order
for 1,500,000 piculs of rice placed by the Food Ministry for
Shanghai has produced an immediate effect with the steady decline
of the price of this staple food. If a reasonable supply could be
maintained for the next few months, commodity prices will
generally follow a downward trend, with consequent return to
economic normalcy. These and other features of renewed activity
will surely put Shanghai on the map again.

The Need for Educational Reform

VARIOUS aspects of China’s educational problem are
discussed in special articles appearing in this issue. For
the moment, the attention of educational leaders and students
alike is being diverted to questions of more urgent and immediate
interest than that of reforms. The Shanghai student body is very
much concerned with the plight of its poor members and is
pushing ahead with the Student Aid Fund with the approval and
support of the general public. The university students also are
up in arms and are demanding the re-opening of their schools
which have been suspended. However, these are but temporary
manifestations resulting from the special circumstances now
prevailing. The more serious and vital aspects of youth education
must very soon come up for consideration and action, if national
recovery is to be as rapid as it should be and the nation is to
derive the maximum benefit from the inexhaustible wealth of
young talent with which the country abounds. A complete over-
hauling and streamlining of our educational system along modern
lines is imperative. In many respects, our present educational-
system runs counter to the accepted standards in western coun-
tries which have been tested and tried by years of experience.
In the first place, in a Chinese school everything is learnt by rote.
From arithmetic to history, from Chinese to chemistry, the
student is asked to “learn by heart”. Nobody bothers to find
out whether he understands what he learns—it is not even con-
sidered important. His head is just crammed full of facts and
figures which he is expected to recite parrot fashion. Contrast
this with the practise in the west, where learning by rote, with
the exception of arithmetic tables, vocabulary, verses of poetry and
the like, is strictly forbidden. The usual assignment is “Explain
in your own words the meaning of the following passage”. Immedi-
ately the child is stimulated to thinking. He either under-
stands or he does not, as his explanation readily shows. An answer
burnt by heart will be marked with a zero. Also, it is an
accepted psychological fact that short periods of work with
adequate rest periods between bring the best results, whether it
be learning or factory work. In the west, there are usually 5
school-days in a week, of which one half day is devoted to sports
and physical exercise. About 5 hours per day are spent in
schools, including recess periods in the mornings and afternoons.
In China, school hours start very early in the morning and end
late in the afternoon and for six days a week. Little or no
time is devoted to physical exercise. Even in primary schools,
there is a long list of homework to be done each night. Is it surprising then that the children’s brains are dull
and confused and their health as poor as it is? There is no joy
in learning—it is just a heavy, dreary grind. There is no time
to play, just cramming, cramming, cramming, day after day.
Schools like to boast of their so-called “high standard”. For
instance, a certain primary school was priding itself not long ago
on teaching, besides other subjects, four languages—Chinese,
English, French and Japanese, in the first grade! Parents, who
view with alarm the strain which is being put on their children,
are beginning to protest. Some have even taken their children
out of school and have hired a tutor for them at home with
specific instructions not to overtax the young brains. They are
waiting for the competent authorities to institute enlightened
reforms.

A Chinese Heroine

A fitting tribute was paid to the young Chinese heroine,
Miss Ho Jo-nei, last week, when Lieut.-Geh. Stratmeyer,
Commanding General of the Army Air Forces in China,
conferred on her the Emblem for Meritorious Civilian Service—the
second highest civilian decoration conferred by the War Depart-
ment—in recognition of her courage in refusing to reveal the
whereabouts of an American flier, despite the tortures inflicted
upon her by the Japanese. In the eyes of the world, Miss Ho
may be taken as a symbol of all those Chinese patriots, men
and women, young and old, who suffered tortures and even
gave their lives for victory, oftentimes when things looked black
and victory seemed remote. Only a firm conviction, a sublime
faith and a patriotic fervor could have withstood the humiliation
and extreme suffering to which she was submitted. The flesh
was weak—she tried to commit suicide more than once—but the
will was very, very strong. Nothing the Japanese could do to
her could make her talk. Lying on her sick bed, where she is
still recovering from the effects of the inhuman treatment she
received at the hands of the Japanese, she is a link in the chain
of friendship binding two continents—America and China. In
the words of the citation accompanying her decoration, her acts
of courage “stand as an outstanding example of the perfect
cooperation between the Chinese and American forces in
the prosecution of the war against the Japanese.” Millions of
women throughout the world worked and suffered for victory, but few
could have gone through the mill in the infamous Japanese Bridge
House and come through with flying colors!