

《学生中国传统的私立学校读书》

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China's annual national college entrance exams will take place across the country this weekend.

This year's exam will be taken by 9.39 million students, up 270,000 from 2013. For many, the exams are a turning point in life, but in some areas, students are not preparing for any tests. They attend traditional Chinese private schools instead of primary schools or middle schools.

These students are from 4 to 15 years old. In the class, they read classic literature by the likes of Confucius or Mengzi for hours. This is an old style of study, the same as the private schools, "or sishu," in ancient China.

He Yayingxue left primary school after the third year. Since then, for the last four years, she has studied at private schools.

"When I was in the third year of primary school, I had a lot of homework. Sometimes I was doing homework until 1am. My dad felt it was too much pressure, and sent me here," He said.

Li Mengjing, 15, dreams of studying fashion design at college. After finishing secondary school, she decided to take two years to learn classic literature and art before returning to high school.

"Many people don't have chance to learn the Chinese traditional culture and knowledge. I think it will be helpful for my future if I can learn some," Li said.

"The education is not to tell them the meaning of the classic literatures, As these children are growing up with reading classic books, they will gradually understand the profound meaning. Later this knowledge will benefit them for a life time. This is not exams skills, but intelligence." Suzhou Leqian Traditional Chinese School's master Liu Xiang said.

The school is run in a private residential villa, where more than 20 children study and live together. Sending children to such schools is a difficult decision for many parents.

"My daughter is also self learning math course. I was planning to send her back to primary school if she cannot progress, but so far she is doing well," Yi Zhifang, a student's mother, said.

More traditional private schools like Leqian are opening across China, but they are not yet legally recognized.

There may also be problems when students want to enter higher level schools or colleges.

"Traditional private schools have positive impacts in the society, because now our education models are unified, which is exam-oriented, but regulations on self study and private schools are incomplete. The government should be more supportive on this," Wu Hua from Zhejiang University said.

