THE HASKELL LECTURES IN
COMPARATIVE RELIGION

THE CHINESE RENAISSANCE

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THE HASKELL LECTURES · 1933

By HU SHIH

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With introduction by
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Twenty five years ago, when I was a student at Boston University, I first read *The Chinese Renaissance* by Dr. Hu Shih. I can still recall vividly the intellectual excitement roused by the book. From its little more than one hundred pages I acquired a far richer understanding of the epochal changes then overtaking China than had been possible from the study of dozens of books and literally hundreds of periodical articles. Rereading his lectures today, thirty years subsequent to their delivery at the University of Chicago, I find that my initial enthusiasm for Dr. Hu's scholarship and historical insight has not waned.

It was characteristic of the late Dr. Hu that, at a time when his country was cruelly wracked and torn by civil wars, Communist subversion, and foreign invasion, he sought to place these tragic events in a broad historical setting. In an era when it was so easy for China's leaders to succumb to political despair and intellectual cynicism and to wring their hands over their nation's plight and prospects who but Dr. Hu could have used so optimistic a phrase as the "renaissance in China"? It was not that he was oblivious to the tides of nationalism that were rolling over his age-old country or that he dismissed lightly the titanic struggles for political and military power that all too often mesmerised the observer seeking rhyme and reason in the transient affairs of the day. On the contrary, he took these phenomena as seriously as he believed history itself would take them.

Dr. Hu had a wary regard for the nature and meaning of revolution and, insofar as China was concerned, he invoked the word sparingly and advisedly. He himself strove to grasp and transmit understanding of history, as it had been and as it was becoming. Revolutions, however defined, were, he knew, not without precedent in China nor was cultural renaissance alien to the history of his country. If Dr. Hu preferred to categorize the mighty transformation in China during modern times as a

"renaissance" rather than as a revolution, it was doubtless because he himself placed a value upon the changes to which he himself was a primary witness. Revolution implied metamorphosis, for better or for worse, while "renaissance" signified rebirth and, hopefully, new life.

Chronologically Dr. Hu was still a young man when *The Chinese Renaissance* was published in 1934. Still, it is clear that the basic ideas and personal experiences which he presented reflected a life that was already mature. Long before he was invited to present the Haskell Lectures in Comparative Religion at the University of Chicago, he had made his mark internationally as a scholar, philosopher, critic, and educator. His many addresses and publications had won him unstinting renown in China and the West. To single out but a few of the factors conditioning his views of the nature and implications of the widespread changes occurring in modern China would surely leave one open to the charge of oversimplification. Nevertheless, it would perhaps not be inappropriate to take note of the following circumstances.

Dr. Hu was in many ways a prototype of the new Chinese intellectual who inspired and was inspired by the Chinese renaissance. Born in 1891 in a small village in Anhwei province in eastern China, it was still not too late for him to have a traditional upbringing and education. Unlike many Chinese intellectuals of later generations it could never be said of him that he was ignorant of or alienated from his own cultural heritage. He was, thus, never at a disadvantage in academic jousts with even the most conservative Confucian scholars; he was ever prepared to match quotations from the Classics and the commentaries with the most erudite of pundits.

But Dr. Hu also boasted, in the narrower sense of the term, a sound and solid Western training and education. He was at ease in the realm of Western history, literature, and thought. These two cultural traditions, the Chinese and the Western, did not constitute separate and distinct sectors of his mind but were rather integrated into a philosophical whole. He was, accordingly, able to view the Chinese Revolution in its many manifestations from the perspectives of both the centuries-old civilization of China and of world history. It becomes immedi-

ately apparent to the reader of his works that he never suffers from cultural parochialism or strident nationalism.

If Dr. Hu possessed a finely rounded view of history, he also had a favored point of departure in his intellectual inquiry, especially as it related to matters of the Chinese Revolution. During his years as a graduate student in the United States he became intimately involved in the *pai hua* movement, the campaign to replace usage of the classical with the colloquial language. Once he became wedded to the premise that the promotion of literacy among the masses of his countrymen, traditionally illiterate and unlettered, would ultimately work a revolution, a renaissance of inconceivable dimensions, his orientation towards the vast upheaval in China was affected accordingly. He took it as axiomatic that the wars and politics, the science and technology, of the modern world would inevitably alter the nature of Chinese civilization but he also believed with equally firm conviction that acquisition of the instruments of basic literacy by China's millions of people would lastingly shape the character of the revolution in the older way of life. While his fellow revolutionaries battled against warlords, subverters, and aggressors, Dr. Hu sought to arm his countrymen for an all-out war against ignorance.

One last determinant of the thought of Dr. Hu might well be stressed, namely, the circumstances of his own life. Even during his adolescent years he was not oblivious to the erosive effects of Western civilization upon the traditional Chinese way of life. Not simply cultural change but, as importantly, its unprecedentedly quick tempo captured his attention. In his essay, "Social Disintegration and Readjustment" (*The Chinese Renaissance,* page 96), he himself has neatly summed up his marvel at the intrusions of modernity into his own familiar world. "And the rapidity of it all!," he exclaimed.

> Within my own life, I read all the beloved novels by lamps of vegetable oil; I saw the Standard Oil invading my own village, I saw gas lamps in the Chinese shops in Shanghai; and I saw their elimination by electric lights. In the field of locomotion, I traveled in sedan chairs, wheelbarrows, and small river boats rowed by

> men . . . I saw the first tramway operated in Shanghai in 1909, and wrote a poem protesting against its dangers to the ricksha. My first trip on a steamship was when I was only two years old, but I never rode in a motor car before coming to the United States in 1910, and did not travel in the air until 1928. And my people have traveled with me from the vegetable oil lamp to electricity, from the wheelbarrow to the Ford car, if not to the aeroplane, and this in less than forty years' time.

Dr. Hu was an indefatigable scholar but he also sought to learn the lessons of life.

Dr. Hu Shih has justly been acclaimed as one of modern China's foremost scholars, philosophers, and educators. He was revered not only in his native land but also in the United States where for years he carried on his work. The republication of *The Chinese Renaissance,* the book by which he is best known in this country, thirty years after its first appearance is a fitting tribute to this inimitable scholar and man.

Brooklyn College
June 18, 1963

Hyman Kublin
Professor of History

A long deferred hope was fulfilled when Dr. Hu Shih of the National Peking University accepted appointment as Haskell lecturer for the summer of 1933. His lectures on cultural trends in modern China are here presented under a title selected by him expressly to characterize the nature of the cultural transformation described—*The Chinese Renaissance.*

The Haskell Foundation was established by Mrs. Caroline E. Haskell as an aid to mutual understanding among the peoples of the world, separated so long by their varied heritages of culture and religion. She intended the Barrows Foundation to provide a scholarly presentation of Christianity to the Orient and completed the circle by the Haskell Foundation which brings a sympathetic interpretation of the religions of the East to the Christian West.

During the last decade all religions, in all parts of the world, have been awakened from the slow rhythm of past ages by new forces compelling startling and revolutionary change. Since all cultures are penetrated by the same influences and all religions are of necessity wrestling with the same problems, it seemed wise and in line with the intention of the founder to devote the Haskell Lectures during this period of transition to an interpretation of the process of re-embodiment through which old religions and cultures are assuming new and vital forms.

Both as an interpreter of China's cultural renaissance and as an ambassador of interracial and intercultural understanding Professor Hu was an ideal Haskell lecturer. Culturally he belongs to both East and West. The vast changes in the cultural life of China are so recent as to fall within the span of his youthful age and in many of these

movements he has been a pioneer and a trusted leader. His western education and his work in the field of international conciliation have given him the background and the detached vision necessary to an evaluation of the processes of intercultural penetration at work in his native land. The personal note in some of the chapters was retained at the urgent request of members of the committee who won in the contest with Dr. Hu's self-effacing modesty.

A. Eustace Haydon

University of Chicago

PREFACE

THESE lectures were delivered in July, 1933, as the Haskell Lectures of the Department of Comparative Religion in the University of Chicago. The original title of the series was "Cultural Trends in Present-day China." With the exception of slight changes in the language, the lectures are now published as they were delivered. My original plan to expand them with greater details and fuller documentation has not been carried out, partly because of a lack of time during my very brief visit to this continent, and partly because of a desire expressed by several friends who heard the lectures that I should not change their familiar and direct form of communication.

These lectures are primarily historical. They are intended to describe, in the first place, how certain phases of Chinese culture have been changed; and, second, to explain how those changes have taken the particular course and form they have taken. Both the description and the explanation are historical. If I have any thesis to present, I want my readers to understand that cultural changes of tremendous significance have taken place and are taking place in China, in spite of the absence of effective leadership and centralized control by a ruling class, and in spite of the deplorable necessity of much undermining and erosion before anything could be changed. What pessimistic observers have lamented as the collapse of Chinese civilization, is exactly the necessary undermining and erosion without which there could not have been the rejuvenation of an old civilization. Slowly, quietly, but unmistakably, the Chinese Renaissance is becoming a reality. The product of this rebirth looks suspiciously occidental. But, scratch its surface and you will find that the stuff of which

it is made is essentially the Chinese bedrock which much weathering and corrosion have only made stand out more clearly—the humanistic and rationalistic China resurrected by the touch of the scientific and democratic civilization of the new world.

I wish to express here my gratitude to Professor A. Eustace Haydon, Head of the Department of Comparative Religion of the University of Chicago, and to the authorities of the University, who, in inviting me to give the Haskell Lectures, have given me the stimulus to think over the recent cultural tendencies in my country, not merely as isolated changes, but as individual parts related, consciously or unconsciously, to a general historical movement. I am deeply indebted to Professor and Mrs. Haydon for their constant encouragement throughout these lectures. I am grateful to Mr. Bruno Lasker of the Institute of Pacific Relations, who has been kind enough to read through the whole manuscript, revise its English, and give me ten pages of very frank criticism. I am also grateful to Mrs. Florence Lowden Miller and Miss E. Clifford Williams, both of whom have had the kindness to read and correct these notes in manuscript. I wish also to thank the University of Chicago Press for publishing the lectures.

HU SHIH

October 5, 1933

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I

TYPES OF CULTURAL RESPONSE

THE problem of China, however multifarious and complicated it may seem at first sight, is in reality one of cultural conflict and readjustment. It is the problem of how to bring about a satisfactory adjustment in a situation where an ancient civilization has been forced against its own will into daily and intimate contact with the new civilization of the West; where the old civilization has clearly proved itself hopelessly inadequate in solving the pressing problems of national existence, economic pressure, social and political disorder, and intellectual confusion; and where, for reasons hitherto never fully understood, the new invading civilization has not yet succeeded in either grafting itself upon the traditional culture or being extensively adopted in working out a new cultural equilibrium on a national scale.

The conflict has reached its most acute stage during the last two or three decades when, in the apt words of a keen observer from the West,

> . . . . economic, political and intellectual movements, which elsewhere made their way by gradual stages and small increments of growth are, in the China of to-day, in simultaneous ferment. The Renaissance; nationalism; the attempt to create a sovereign, unitary state, and its struggle against local particularism and centrifugal ambitions; the beginnings, on the eastern seaboard and rivers, of an industrial revolution, with the criticisms and aspirations which are its natural accompaniment; the reform of local government, of education, of the financial system, and of the complicated structure of Chinese jurisprudence; the partial dissolution of the venerable institution of the Chinese family, with the whole system of personal responsibilities and social relations of which it was the centre—all these, and much else, have been crowded into the space of little more than a generation.[1]

[1] R. H. Tawney, *Land and Labour in China*, pp. 1–2.

This modern conflict of these diverse civilizations, viewed in the light of history, is only one of the last scenes of the great drama of world-conquest by the new civilization which began in Western Europe and spread both east and west with ever increasing force and vigor until both its eastward and westward movements finally met in the great arena of East Asia. As the great drama slowly but irresistibly unfolds itself, this new civilization is seen to make fresh conquests at every turn of its onward march: in its western expansion it subjected two new continents; in its eastern sweep it crushed every old culture in Africa and Asia, also placing all of Oceania under its domination. A subcurrent of this gigantic hurricane, which blew in a northeasterly direction from Western Europe, has captured the whole of the land of the Slavs, and swept across the vast Steppes, till its head reaches the eastern shores of the Pacific.

East Asia is the meeting point of all the three routes of this aggressive civilization. Thus far it has met with no serious resistance. It is in East Asia that the grand finale of this drama of world-conquest is to be staged. For it is here that the civilization of the West is brought into direct contact and conflict with the two principal centers of the civilization of the East: the continental empire of China and the island empire of Japan. Upon the final Westernization of these two empires depends the completion of the world-conquest of this new civilization.

It has been generally observed by all students of contemporary history that China's reaction to Western civilization is radically different from that of Japan. The difference is so great that it has shaped and conditioned the entire history of these two countries during the last seven decades. After 250 years of successfully enforced seclusion, Japan suddenly found herself impelled to adopt almost *in toto* the new ways of the Western invader in order to save

herself from the imminent danger of national humiliation and, possibly, subjugation. This task of nation-wide Westernization has been undertaken with such rapidity and vehemence that in the brief course of little more than half a century Japan not only has become undoubtedly a past-master of all the arts and weapons with which the West once threatened to overpower her, but is now actually threatening to out-Herod the Herods of the Western world in industrial and commercial expansion as well as in military and naval rivalry. On the other hand, China has wasted fully a century in futile resistance, prolonged hesitation, spasmodic but incoherent attempts at reform, and disastrous wars of revolution and internal strife, and today she is still displaying to the world the most pathetic spectacle of a once great nation helplessly struggling to stand on its own feet again, and groping desperately to find ways and means for the solution of her numerous and pressing problems created and complicated by the impact of the irresistible civilization of the West.

This sharp contrast between the responses of China and Japan to a more or less similar situation of cultural conflict, together with the vastly different outcome in the destinies of these nations, is so striking that one is tempted to pause and speculate whether a comparative study of such differences in the cultural responses may not reveal some useful clue to a better understanding of the problems of cultural control. May we not expect that, from such a comparative study, some generalization may be reached as to the essential factors or conditions which may account for successes or failures, rapidity or slowness, in any given situation of cultural control? And may we not expect that, from such studies, some further light may be thrown on these problems by discovering different and distinct types of cultural response of which the significance may not be fully measured by apparent speed or tardiness, or even ap-

parent success or failure? Some such attempt, I believe, is at least worth while for its suggestive value, if not actually for any permanent scientific value.

What, then, are the factors or conditions which have been responsible for the speedy success in Japan's cultural adjustment, and the absence of which helps to explain China's failures? At the outset, let us first eliminate those factors which, like double-edged swords, may be used to prove or to disprove a thesis. For instance, we may very well ignore the relative size and geographical position of China and Japan as decisive factors. For, while a country of small size and insular position may be more readily modernized in matters of communication and transportation, it may be argued with equally convincing logic that a continental empire with vast territory and resources certainly has greater advantages than her island neighbor.

Next, we may also rule out the frequently proffered explanation that, while China, which had never known or met any civilization equal to her own, was too proud to adapt herself readily to the enforced requirements of the new civilization of the foreign invader, Japan was well prepared for Westernization by her long experiences in accepting and assimilating alien ideas and practices introduced from time to time from her continental neighbors. Such a theory is inadequate because, in the first place, it ignores the historical fact that China was at one time under the cultural domination of Buddhist India, which country was revered by the Chinese people as the "Heaven of the West," and from which has come the religion of Buddhism that has for two thousand years remained one of the three national systems of religious belief and moral teaching. Second, it does not explain the very strong resistance of the Japanese against the early advances of Western culture as exemplified in the persecution of the Christians in the seventeenth century, in the rigid and successful policy of

250 years of seclusion from the outside world—a seclusion by far more successful than any similar attempt by China —and in the heroic anti-foreign movements in the middle years of the last century when foreign ships were once more forcing their way into Japanese ports. And lastly, this theory entirely fails to take into account the very important historical fact that all the early Japanese movements of reform which heralded the new era in Japan were started and fostered under the double war-cry: "Away with the Barbarians" and "Down with the *Bakufu* (i.e., the Shogun)!" Indeed, this hostile attitude toward the foreigner and his civilization has not died away with the decades of apparent rapid Westernization, and is now articulately reasserting itself in the acts and utterances of its military spokesmen.

What really needs explanation, therefore, is not the existence of resistance to a foreign civilization—which is universal and natural and without which there would be no problem of cultural conflict to necessitate our study and speculation—but the more fundamental question: Why and how has Japan succeeded, and China failed, to overcome this natural resistance to foreign culture and achieve an early and speedy readjustment?

As far as I can see, there were three factors which contributed most substantially to the success of Japan's Westernization. First, the existence of a powerful ruling class from which have come all the great leaders of the movements for reform and modernization. Second, the fact that this ruling class was a specially privileged and highly trained military caste, made it possible for Japan to adapt herself easily to one particular phase of Western civilization which the other oriental nations have found most difficult to learn, and which is most essential in securing national existence against the invading powers of the new civilization—namely, the phase of military and naval

strength that is behind the scientific, technological, and industrial civilization of the West. And third, the peculiar political development of Japan for over a thousand years has bequeathed to her a suitable and stable basis for a new political framework which has served as a solid center of gravity for all movements of change and has made steady and continuous progress possible in a situation pregnant with every possibility of discontinuity and revolution. It is these three peculiarly favorable conditions which, I believe, have enabled Japan to achieve what may be described as the most successful attempt of cultural control in any region with which the Western civilization has come into intimate contact. A comparative study of these conditions in Japan and of their absence in China will bring us nearer to a real understanding of the nature of the success and failure of the respective nations.

In any situation of conflict and control, the first question naturally is: Who is to do the controlling? Whence shall come the leadership in the work of control? The existence in Japan of a very powerful ruling class in the person of the *daimyo* and the samurai, who for centuries past had been the real powers in control of the central and local governments, offered a ready answer to this primary question. The leadership in the work of national reform must of necessity come from this class. It was but natural that all the members of that brilliant galaxy of statesmanship of the early Meiji era were members of this class: Iwakura and Sanjo were nobles; Ito, Yamagata, Kido, and Inouye were samurai of the feudal fief of Choshu; Saigo and Okubo, samurai of the fief of Satsuma; and Itagaki and Okuma, samurai of Tosa and Hizen.[2] It was they who were behind the powers that brought about the end of the 700 years' reign of the Shogun and restored the governmental

[2] K. S. Latourette, *Development of Japan*, p. 127.

powers to the long oblivious imperial dynasty. And it was they who personally played the most important rôles in reorganizing the government and the finances, in framing the constitution and organizing the political parties, in founding a new army and a new navy and a new educational system, and in directing the national policies of war and diplomacy.

This leadership of the ex-samurai of the feudal age was powerful and effective, because they belonged to a governing class which was highly honored by the people and, which, with the support of the emperor, had almost unlimited powers to carry their policies into effective execution. It was so effective indeed that it was able to carry out all policies of Westernization in the face of a strongly anti-foreign resentment among the ignorant populace, and to avoid a premature foreign war even at the great cost of encountering a powerful rebellion led by the popular leader Saigo who favored an immediate war with Korea. For twenty years this leadership carried on its work of national reorganization with absolute and autocratic powers, and dictated a constitution when it saw the time had come for a constitutional monarchy.

Such an effective leadership was totally lacking in China. The age of political and militant feudalism had passed away more than two thousand years ago. A process of social leveling had been going on for so long that the social structure of the nation was almost completely democratized. There was no hereditary aristocracy that could last long decades without being relegated to the ranks of the common people. There was no primogeniture to preserve the big estates from being gradually reduced to nothing through the process of equal division of property among the sons of the family. Although there was always a hereditary nobility of the descendants of the imperial family, it, too, was periodically swept away by the dynastic wars and

by the usual processes of social leveling. The country was governed by a civilian bureaucracy recruited from the people through a system of fair and competitive examinations through which the sons of the poorest farmer or artisan could rise systematically to the highest administrative offices of the empire. But this bureaucracy was one of civil servants and was never born and bred to undertake the leadership of the nation. Great leaders there were, who arose to national pre-eminence and played important parts in times of national crises. But under an absolute monarchy, those statesmen had to rely upon the good-will and confidence of their emperors for power and for the opportunity to do their work which might be easily undone by the whimsical displeasure of the throne or by the succession of a new emperor. And they knew very well that there could not be permanence in any work they might achieve, for imperial confidence is fickle and the average length of the reign of an emperor is short. The great statesman Wang An-shih of the eleventh century had the complete confidence of his ruler for sixteen years; but when the emperor died, all his reforms were nullified in a single year. The modern reform leader K'ang Yu-wei succeeded in winning the confidence of the Emperor Kuang-shu who, in the year 1898, proclaimed a formidable series of governmental and educational reforms which, if persistently carried out, might have greatly accelerated the process of China's Westernization. But even the emperor was no free agent in his policy of reform! His period of great reforms lasted only 100 days and was swept away by the reaction led by his imperial mother.

From the middle of the nineteenth century to very recent times there were numerous men of intelligence and foresight who saw clearly that the advance of the Western civilization on the Asiatic continent could not be checked, and that that civilization was in many aspects superior to

our own. These men wrote and taught and tried to influence those who had powers to effect the needed changes. But these intellectuals themselves had no power to do anything on any large scale. Even Li Hung-chang—who was probably the most powerful leader and patron in practically all the early attempts of Westernization, such as the organizing of the new navy and army, the building of first railways and steamship lines, and the sending of first Chinese students to study abroad—even he could not always secure the support and confidence of an ignorant and suspicious court. When, in 1877, the Chinese Minister in London, Kuo Sung-t'ao, the most farsighted thinker of his time, urged him to go beyond the superficial reforms of the army and navy and to undertake a more fundamental program of national modernization, Li Hung-chang replied in these most pathetic words: "My official duty is to command the military; therefore I cannot but confine myself to the reorganization of the army and navy. Even if I wish to go beyond this and take up the more important and fundamental reforms, it is certain that I shall never be allowed to carry out my wishes. I can only endeavor to do what I can do." And Li Hung-chang lived to see that twenty years later (1898) even his Emperor was not allowed to carry out his wishes for reform!

What a contrast, when we compare this pathetic situation of total absence of effective leadership in China with the ease and efficacy with which the ruling class in Japan abolished the Shogunate, re-established the Mikado, and rejuvenated the whole nation! In the absence of a powerful ruling class, leadership in China could not be located anywhere. There was no enlightened despot, for the Manchu dynasty was already reaching its lowest ebb of racial vitality; no enlightened nobility, for the Manchu nobility and the Manchu military caste were long weakened and ruined by two and a half centuries of easy and parasitic

living; and no powerful intelligentsia, for long centuries of despotic domination, enticement of official life, and a purely literary and useless education had made the whole intellectual class passive, innocuous, and ineffective. The highest ambition of a Chinese scholar of the old times was to "gain the confidence of the monarch and secure power to carry out his policy" (*teh chun hsing tao*). But as such ideal opportunities rarely, if ever, came to him, he could only write books and teach disciples. And when, in a later period, he came to be more emancipated in his ideas, he would probably turn to preaching and plotting a revolution, as many of his class actually did when every hope for a peaceful reformation had disappeared.

This contrast may be best illustrated by comparing the lives of the leaders of the Japanese reformation with those of some of their Chinese contemporaries. Ito, one of the greatest of the remakers of Japan, began his life as a samurai of Choshu and was one of the supporters of the anti-foreign policy of his feudal chief. He soon became convinced of the necessity of reforming Japanese institutions after the Western models and desired to go to England to study. Against governmental prohibition, he secretly went to England with his few friends in 1863, working his passage before the mast.

After one year's stay in London, Ito had to hurry back to Japan when he heard of the disturbing events happening at home. In the subsequent years, he became one of the most powerful builders of modern Japan. It is interesting to note that the year after Ito's return to Japan a Chinese scholar and reformer, Wang T'ao (born 1828), also went to England at the invitation of James Legge, the translator of the *Confucian Classics*, and lived three years in England and Scotland. This Chinese contemporary of Ito's was one of those few early advocates of a radical reform of Chinese institutions and laws after the models of

the Western nations. In his youth, he tried to influence the leaders of the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion and advised them to establish better relationships with the Western powers. For this revolutionary connection he was persecuted by the Chinese government and had to flee to Hongkong for his life. While in Hongkong he acquired a better knowledge of English life and civilization through his close contact with the English people. In 1864, when Ito was studying in England, Wang T'ao petitioned Li Hung-chang and urged him to bring about reforms which should aim at the acquisition of occidental methods for the strengthening of national defense and the increase of national wealth. After his stay in the British Isles and a tour on the continent of Europe, he became all the more ardent in his advocacy of Westernization. He devoted his remaining years to writing editorials for newspapers in Hongkong and Shanghai and exerted great influence over the reading public of his time. He predicted that, in less than a century, the Chinese people would be able to master all the technique and methods of the Western world and excel the Westerner in his own inventions. But he also prophesied that the adoption of superficial and external things from the West would be worthless and unreliable if such adoption were not preceded by the more fundamental changes in the method of civil service examinations, the education system, military training and equipment, and the whole system of law and justice. He also often expressed his warm appreciation of the constitutional governments of Europe and mildly hoped that the political system of China might be remodeled after such Western, and especially English, forms.

When, in 1879, Wang T'ao visited Japan, he was enthusiastically received by the Japanese intellectuals, for his writings were also read by the Japanese scholars who could read Chinese. Had he been born as a member of the governing class in Japan, he could have easily made him-

self an Ito, an Okubo, an Okuma, or at least a Saigo. But here he was welcomed by his Japanese admirers as a great classical scholar, a poet, and an editorial advocate of a modernized China! He died an editorial writer, but he lived long enough to see his Japanese contemporary, Ito, write his laws of financial reform and frame, almost single-handed, the Japanese Constitution—when Wang T'ao himself was still writing editorials!

The intellectual history of China of the last seventy years is full of such instances of tragic failures of great intellects who wasted their lives and efforts in vain hopes and dreams for a peaceful and orderly reformation of the empire. Kuo Sung-t'ao, the most modern mentality of his age, was banished by the government and persecuted by his own people as a traitor. Ma Chien-chung and Yen Fu, two of the best informed concerning the cultural heritage of the West, began their careers as young prophets of the new civilization and died with only a few books and translations as their contributions to China's modern civilization, the former having written the first systematic treatise on Chinese grammar, the latter having translated some of the works of Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, T. H. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer. K'ang Yu-wei came very near the good fortune of his Japanese contemporaries when he reached his heyday during the "Hundred Days' Reforms" in 1898; but he, too, had to live many years abroad as a political exile and returned to his native country only after the dynasty, which he had sought to modernize and rejuvenate, had already been overthrown by the newer movement of revolution. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Republic, too, in 1894, tried to influence Li Hung-chang by presenting to him a long memorandum embodying what he considered the four fundamental principles of the Western civilization; but he received no response from the old viceroy and had to de-

vote his energies to what he had already conceived as the only possible road to a new China, namely, the road of a political and social revolution. And historically he was quite right, for, in the absence of a powerful and effective leadership in any stratum of the social structure, there was no short-cut to national modernization except the long and arduous path of revolution.

Let us now return to the second group of facts in our comparative study of the history of the cultural readjustment in China and Japan—the facts of the presence in Japan, and the absence in China, of a highly trained and socially respected military caste, and their effect on the process of Westernization in the respective countries, especially in the mastery of the martial phase of the Western civilization, which is the most coveted and at the same time the most difficult for an oriental race to learn. This phase of Western culture, including the army, the navy, their organization and equipment, and the arts and methods of warfare, is the most coveted because it was precisely this which first forced the non-European races to recognize in the Western invader their most dangerous enemy with weapons of war far superior to their own. It was the thing most easily recognized, most feared, and therefore most coveted by all races with whom the Western culture came into contact. It was recognized by the primitive savage as well as by the most civilized of the old nations. And it was this phase which always served as the beginning of the introduction of the other elements of Western civilization into these non-European countries. The utility and efficacy of Western firearms and cannon were very early recognized and accepted by the Japanese samurai and by the Chinese generals fighting the Manchus in the seventeenth century. And it was the same phase which forced China and Japan in the nineteenth century

to make the first attempts in the direction of Westernization.

Unfortunately, this most easily recognizable and most eagerly coveted phase of Western culture is not always easily attainable by every nation. Indeed, it is probably the most difficult aspect for most older nations to acquire. A Chinese scholar once remarked: "It is easy for China to acquire the civilization of the West, but it is very difficult to master its barbarism. Yet I suppose we must first master this barbarism before we can feel at home in this new civilization." By barbarism, he means the military side of the Western culture, which does not consist of mere up-to-date equipment, nor mere efficient organization, nor mere resourcefulness in man and money power, but which must presuppose the existence of what may be vaguely termed "the martial spirit," under which term may be included the love for adventure, the almost primitive delight in competitive combat, the instinctive love and worship of the warrior, the painstaking cultivation of bodily strength, the habits of obedience, and the readiness to fight and die for an impersonal cause.

Although all these attitudes of the martial spirit are natural and universal, they can be dwarfed or even suppressed by long periods of conscious education and unconscious social disapproval. Europe has perpetuated these traits from the days of feudalism; and the existence of fully armed nations, rivals in conquest and expansion during all these centuries, has allowed them to be well preserved in the face of counteracting influences arising from intellectual and industrial revolutions. But some of the Asiatic civilizations are conspicuous by the absence of these traits. One of the outstanding examples is China, where political, religious, and social factors have combined to suppress all manifestations of the martial spirit. Two thousand years of unified empire, the absence of warring nations, the com-

paratively long periods of peaceful reigns during the intervals between dynastic revolutions—all these have tended to discourage the cultivation of the martial habits. The prevailing systems of moral and ethical teaching of both the Confucian and the Taoist schools have also emphasized the importance of the habits of peace and order, and disapproved the cultivation of the arts of war. Buddhism, which dominated Chinese religious life for twenty centuries, has reinforced the pacifist tendencies of an already too peaceful people. Even the most warlike barbarians, who from time to time invaded China, could not help catching the contagious influence of this pacifist people and civilization; and in the course of centuries of racial intermixing, all these militant conquerors were rapidly demilitarized by the conquered people. As a result of early disappearance of the Feudal Age and as a result of very long processes of social leveling through relegation of aristocratic families to the ranks of the common people, and through the rise of sons of the lowly to the status of high officials by the method of civil service examination, the whole social structure has become so democratized that there has been no special class of the military that could maintain itself for any length of time. The Manchus did try to maintain such a class, but in little more than two centuries it has entirely disappeared. The soldier has always been regarded as a kind of social outcast, not much better than the bandit. "No good iron will be made into a nail, no good son will make a soldier." Such a proverb merely reflects the universal sentiments of a people molded by long ages of pacifist teaching and peaceful living.

In such an atmosphere it was impossible for China to create a new army and navy recuited from, and officered by, men of the well-to-do and educated class. The stuff that made the soldier and the sailor was the illiterate and unruly of the superfluous population of the country. The

government had no respect for it; and society in general paid no attention to it. There was absolutely no enthusiasm for it. The first schools for the training of military officers had to recruit their students, not only by free tuition and board, but also by paying the students a monthly allowance for coming to attend the schools. General T'ien Chung-yu, who rose slowly from a cadet school graduate to the military governorship of Shantung, told me in 1924 that when he enrolled in the military academy established at Shanhaikuan it was not for any love of the country or glory of the army, but merely for the sake of the three and a half taels' monthly allowance which he wanted to save up for the support of his large family left destitute by the death of his father. It was inevitable that the early Chinese attempts at military and naval reorganization were bound to fail. It had to wait for a revolution and decades of nationalistic agitation and education to gradually elevate the position of the soldier in society and inculcate a little of the martial spirit into the youths of the nation.

In this particular aspect, Japan was the most favorably predisposed nation with which the Western culture has ever come into contact. There the military caste, which included 300 daimyo and 260,000 families of samurai,[3] was for centuries the governing class, ranking higher than any other class in the country and receiving the highest esteem from the whole nation. The education of the samurai was very thorough, beginning from early childhood and including not only the arts of war, but also a very rigid system of intellectual, moral, and religious teaching. And the prestige of this class was so great that the lower classes naturally imitated the ways and manners of the samurai. For, as Confucius wisely said, the masses follow the upper classes just as the grass bows to the wind. This militant fashion and spirit of the Feudal Age made it very easy for the

[3] I. Nitobe, *Japan*, p. 104.

Japanese *bushi* (knight) to transform himself overnight into the modern soldier when he was equipped with new weapons and taught the new arts of war. The conscription law was issued in 1873, and the Japanese accepted it without a murmur. The military caste dictates and the whole nation accepts its leadership. The fact that the Japanese army is to this day still dominated by the former adherents of the fief of Choshu, and the navy by those of Satsuma, shows how tremendous the influence of the feudal military caste has been in the reorganization of this particular phase of national life after the models of the West.

Precisely because the introduction of this military phase of Western civilization was invariably motivated by the fear of imminent danger and the recognition of the necessity of national self-preservation, the success or failure of this phase would very often determine the ease or difficulty with which the other phases of Westernization could be effected. For success in this phase means national security from external invasion, which will greatly strengthen public confidence in the reforms and in their leaders, and thereby make orderly controlled modernization possible. Japan's great victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 vindicated the leaders of the early Meiji reforms and silenced all further opposition to modernization. But, it must be remembered, it was the same war that brought about the disgrace and banishment of Li Hung-chang, the leader of Chinese military reorganization, who did not recover his popularity until the peace negotiations after the Boxer War of 1900—a war which was the embodiment of anti-foreign and anti-modern reaction running wild after the early military and naval reforms had failed to insure national security against foreign aggression.

Lastly, we come to the third group of facts for our comparison—the easy success of Japan in establishing a stable

government as the center of control in her work of modernization, and the lamentable failure of China in the same direction.

Much of Japan's political success, as I have already pointed out, has been due to the existence of a powerful ruling class. But there were two peculiar circumstances in the historical development of Japan which laid the foundations for an easy success in this political reformation. For almost 1,200 years, the imperial dynasty had been deprived of actual powers of government, first by the 500 years of regency of the powerful house of Fujiwara, and later by the 700 years of military dictatorship under the Shoguns. For all these centuries the emperors lived in complete oblivion and retirement, retaining the imperial title only by the grace of the real rulers, and subsisting on the meager income from the imperial allowance, which was sometimes so small that some emperors were recorded to have had to carry on small trades in order to make a tolerable living.

Meanwhile, there came from China a new factor to give moral support to this imperial dynasty in absentia. The moral philosophy of Chu Hsi (died 1200) was introduced into Japan and soon made itself felt in its political implications. The special emphasis on the virtue of loyalty and the ideal of a unitary empire under the "Son of Heaven" as the ultimate source of political power tended to awaken in the Japanese scholars and samurai a new consciousness of the pitiful position of the imperial dynasty, and to attribute to it all the spiritual authority and sanctity unsoiled by actual deeds of misrule, of which the emperors, in their state of oblivion, were incapable. The Tokugawa Shogunate was digging its own grave by its patronage and promotion of the teaching of Chu Hsi.

So, when the time came for political reorganization, all thought naturally turned to the long overshadowed dy-

nasty which had grown into a real source of national devotion and worship. What was most fortunate for transitional Japan is the fact that the imperial dynasty, which had for 1,200 years "done no wrong," was best suited to be made into a constitutional monarchy after the European pattern. Thus the ruling class in Japan was able in the sixties of the last century to abolish the Shogunate and the feudal system by rallying its support to the imperial dynasty; and twenty years later (1889) to establish it as a constitutional monarchy. Tracing its divine descent from time immemorial, sanctified by a long tradition, and reinforced by the artificial means of education and the Shinto religion, the imperial dynasty has been and probably will be able to maintain itself as one of the most firmly imbedded monarchies of the world.

No such good fortune, however, ever graced the political development of China. The ruling dynasty there was of an alien race which had come into China in the seventeenth century, and which, by the nineteenth century, was already greatly weakened by long periods of luxury and intoxication of unlimited power. The imperial household no longer produced such great monarchs as K'ang Hsi, Yung Cheng, and Ch'ien Lung; and the occupants of the throne were largely ignorant weaklings, often short-lived and incapable of having heirs. The nobility was as ignorant and corrupt as the Imperial Court itself. The Manchu military garrisons, intended to keep the Chinese in subjection, were corrupt and degenerate and often no longer capable of bearing arms.

All these weaknesses were suddenly exposed to the nation in the middle of the last century, when the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion (1850–65) arose from the southwest and devastated a third of the Empire in the brief space of a few years. This rebellion, led by a few peasant converts to some form of Protestant Christianity, was a curious mix-

ture of a peasant revolt, an anti-Manchu revolution, and a religious crusade of most terrible Christian iconoclasm. A primitive rebellion it was, with primitive weapons, primitive ideas, and organization. Yet it was enough to break down all resistance put up by the government officials and troops. The imperial government was incapable of coping with the rebellion which soon captured Nanking and made it the capital of the "Heavenly Kingdom of Everlasting Peace." The Manchu dynasty seemed to be on the eve of a complete collapse.

Then a group of Chinese scholars came to the rescue of the tottering dynasty and organized a kind of volunteer army which ultimately suppressed the rebellion and allowed the Manchu dynasty to continue in its moribund state for another half-century. This they did, not out of any great love for the Manchus but because they had been greatly alarmed by the acts of wanton devastation and especially the savage iconoclastic destruction of the fanatic rebels, burning down every Buddhist, Taoist, or Confucian temple in their way, reducing all ancestral temples to ashes, and threatening to destroy all roots of the old civilization. These Chinese scholar-officials were carrying on what they believed to be a war in defense of the traditional civilization against the devastation by rebels seemingly poisoned by outlandish missionaries.

The suppression of the rebellion, however, did not much help the cause of the Manchu dynasty. It only brought into national prominence a group of Chinese statesmen to whom the nation now looked for leadership. But the ignorant court and nobility were jealous of their popularity and influence. Although these Chinese leaders were given titles of "Prime Ministers," they were not asked to stay in Peking and participate in the work of the central government. They were usually made viceroys of the provinces. But their great prestige soon made the provinces more im-

portant than the imperial court. The tendency to political disintegration had begun with the rebellion and was thus shaping itself in the rising political preponderance of the provincial governments over the central.

This political disintegration continued to increase in irresistible rapidity until, in 1900—when the imperial court and government were patronizing the anti-foreign and anti-Christian massacres by the ignorant Boxers—four great viceroys of the provinces, including Li Hung-chang and Yuan Shih-kai, were able openly to defy the absurd edicts of the throne and declare what amounted to the "independence" of their provinces. The imperial dynasty completely forfeited the sympathy of the Chinese nation by a desperate effort to keep out all influences of enlightenment and reform, by the defeat of the reform movement of 1898, and, above all, by the shameful madness of the Boxer War of 1900 which humiliated the nation to the rank of an uncivilized race, and cost the people an indemnity of 400,000,000 taels of silver. The dynasty which had barely escaped downfall at the hands of the T'ai-p'ings and which the Chinese leaders had more than once tried to revive and rejuvenate was beyond hope of resurrection, and wilfully headed for self-destruction. When ten years later the revolution came, the rotten edifice crumpled to dust without the slightest semblance of resistance.

But, from the rise of the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion in 1850 to the founding of the Republic in 1912, fully 60 years were wasted in all those futile attempts at breathing life into a dying dynasty, at patching up irreconcilable prejudices between the Chinese and the Manchu, and at seeking to build up a reform government on the impossible foundations of an ignorant and reactionary court. And in these 60 years of gradual breakdown of central authority many new forces and impediments had come up, which the leaders of the revolution and the Republic were to spend many

more years in combating. One of these new obstacles was the wild tendency toward decentralization and provincial autonomy; another was the rise of new military commanders who, in troubled times, have rapidly assumed positions of greater importance than the civilian leaders. When the Republic was established it soon found itself constantly menaced by the danger of domination by reactionary forces backed by the military, and by the difficulty of re-establishing authority of the central government against the powerful centrifugal forces of provincialism. So 20 more years have been wasted in the long political struggles, which, though extremely chaotic and confusing to the casual observer, are historically intelligible as phases of one great movement—that of a new China seeking to build up a unitary modern state in the face of strong forces of reaction and disintegration.

Thus, while Japan succeeded in establishing her new political framework 70 years ago, China has sought in vain for 80 years to bring about a political reformation and as yet has failed to achieve a strong and stable government. Such a contrast is as significant as it is striking. It does not merely mean that China dissipated almost a century's energy and intelligence in unsuccessful political reforms when she ought to have spent it on more important and fruitful activities. It also means that, under such conditions, a steady and orderly progress in the work of cultural readjustment, such as has taken place in Japan, is not to be expected in China. China's cultural readjustment was doomed to be slow, spasmodic, discontinuous, and wasteful. For orderly and continuous reformation must of necessity rely upon some stable political order as a nucleus, as a center of gravity, around which all separate and individual efforts may gravitate, accumulate, and be perpetuated into a continuous whole. Progress in any enterprise means the continuous accumulation of effort and im-

provement over past achievements. Such progress is impossible where there is no political stability to guarantee continuity, without which there can be no planning for the future and any individual achievement may be undone or destroyed by great political upheavals.

These three groups of sharply contrasting facts, which I have presented in detail, are not intended to rob Japan of her glory of a rapid modernization, or to justify China's many failures in her cultural readjustment. Nor are they intended merely to explain why Japan's modernization has been more rapid, more orderly, and less wasteful than that of China. My main purpose in drawing these contrasts has been to drive home a fact which has not been given sufficient attention by scholars treating problems of cultural conflict and control. I wish to point out that, when cultural conflicts take place in such vastly different historical backgrounds as we find in Japan and China there necessarily arise equally divergent types of cultural readjustment; and that these types vary with nations just as responses to cultural contacts vary with individuals of different heredity and environment. Indeed, there are so many divergent types of cultural adjustment that they really baffle enumeration. The cultural transformation in the United States is radically different from that of Germany during the nineteenth century. The revolutionary experiments in Soviet Russia represent another type of cultural readjustment. What is happening in India, again, presents another distinct type. And the examples may be indefinitely multiplied. What is important is that each type can only be understood in the light of its own historical cultural background, and must not be judged by any single criterion.

What has happened in Japan during these 70 years of modernization only represents one peculiar type, which we

may call the type of "centralized control." Such orderly and efficient progress in a gigantic task of nation-wide reformation is only possible under such exceptional circumstances as have been described above. Its advantages are most apparent, but it is not without very important disadvantages. The Japanese leaders undertook this rapid transformation at so early a time that even the most farsighted of them could only see and understand certain superficial phases of the Western civilization. Many other phases have escaped their attention. And, in their anxiety to preserve their national heritage and to strengthen the hold of the state and the dynasty over the people, they have carefully protected a great many elements of the traditional Japan from the penetration of the new civilization. One of the most evident examples is the state patronage and protection of the Shinto religion. The peculiar extra-constitutional powers of the military caste in the government is another example of compromise. The position of women may also be cited. In short, the rapid cultural transformation in Japan has been achieved with too great a speed and at too early a date to allow sufficient time for the new ideas and influences to penetrate into the native institutions and attain a more thorough cultural readjustment. The whole affair has assumed the form of ingrafting an alien culture on the stock of traditional Japan. Much of the traditional medieval culture is artificially protected by a strong shell of militant modernity. Much that is preserved is of great beauty and permanent value; but not a little of it is primitive and pregnant of grave dangers of volcanic eruption.

On the other hand, we find in China a different type of cultural response which may be called the type of "diffused penetration," or "diffused assimilation." In the absence of a powerful ruling class, no centralized leadership in cultural control was possible. Yet, in all these years of

cultural contact, there has been undeniably a slow penetration of the influences of the Western civilization into almost every phase of Chinese life and institutions; and in some cases there has been a conscious cultural transformation. Whereas cultural control in Japan has been in the hands of the ruling class, the cultural changes in China have always begun from the people, sometimes from no one knows where. Opium is an ancient example; bobbed hair is one of most recent origin. Even in those cases of conscious reform, the leadership has always come from private individuals who began as small minority advocates and gradually won over a larger following. So even conscious reforms must also take the form of persuasion and permeation. Such changes are necessarily slow; but sometimes they can be very rapid. It took less than a year for bobbed hair to become a fashion in all the cities; and only a few years for the new punctuation marks in writing and printing to be generally accepted. Even the use of the spoken language (*pei hua*) in writing both prose and poetry in place of the classical literary language, became a fashion among all young students in the course of only three or four years.

The disadvantages of such diffused processes of cultural penetration are numerous: they are slow, desultory, sometimes blind and indiscriminate, and often wasteful because much undermining and erosion are necessary before anything can be changed. And the most apparent defect is that, without centralized control, such big undertakings as militarization, political reformation, and industrialization on a large scale, cannot be easily achieved. But there are also undeniable advantages. They are voluntary; that is, a new idea or usage must first convince the people of its distinct superiority in utility or convenience before it can acquire general acceptance. They are evolutionary and gradual: the changes often come about by almost imper-

ceptible replacement or modification of the old by the new. The best example is the change in men's shoes. The Chinese shoes of older days were made without following the natural shapes of the feet; the housewife found it more convenient to make the same shoes for both right and left feet, and no husband dared to complain that these interchangeable shoes pinched and deformed his feet. But, in the last twenty years, under the influence of the Western leather shoes and rubber soles, Chinese shoes have undergone a fundamental change which has been adopted, no one knows how, throughout the country, and we are happy to report that the feet of the present and future generations may be saved from the pain and deformity suffered by my generation in our boyhood days.

In this way practically all of our ideas and beliefs and institutions have been freely allowed to come under the slow contact, contagion, and influence of the Western civilization, and undergo sometimes gradual modifications and sometimes fairly rapid and radical changes. If anything is retained of the old, or any of the old things are thrown overboard, both the conservation and the change have been voluntary and probably practical and reasonable. We have not concealed anything, nor have we dogmatically withheld anything from this contact and change. It is, in short, the type of cultural change through "long exposure" and slow permeation. In this way China has also succeeded in bringing about a cultural transformation, which, though painfully slow and piecemeal, and often lacking co-ordination and coherence, may yet culminate in solving some of our pressing and basic problems of life and culture, and achieve a new civilization not incompatible with the spirit of the new world.

II

RESISTANCE, ENTHUSIASTIC APPRECIATION, AND THE NEW DOUBT: CHANGES IN CHINESE CONCEPTIONS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

IN MY last lecture I tried to show that there are various types of cultural response, of which the Japanese type may be called one of "centralized control," and the Chinese type one of "diffused penetration and permeation." In the absence of the exceptionally favorable conditions for effective control of cultural adaptations such as were found in transitional Japan, the cultural readjustment in China has taken the form either of unconscious modifications through long contact with Western civilization, or of conscious reforms led by private advocates and achieved through persuasion and education. In some cases it has been necessary to undermine and destroy the old obstacles and vested interests in order to accomplish a change; in such cases, the conscious movement amounts to a revolution and often requires long periods of persuasion and propaganda. In other cases old ideas and institutions are rejuvenated by suggestive influences from the West, and reforms are brought about peacefully and without serious break with the past. In still other cases long association with the new culture has made certain new ideas and practices so self-evident and so natural that they are quietly adopted and old institutions are modified or replaced without much ado.

In such diffused changes of culture two factors are necessary: contact and understanding. Understanding and appreciation presuppose contact or association, or at least

originate from people who have had opportunity to come into intimate contact with the new culture. A happy contact invariably leads to appreciative understanding and insight. And much of the early resistance of the non-European peoples to the Western civilization is explainable by historical experiences of unfortunate first contacts.

Where the first contacts are carefully planned and wisely handled it is quite possible for divers civilizations to fall in love at first sight, although such hasty love affairs do not always eliminate the possibility of later domestic troubles and divorces when the parties have come to know each other better.

The great success of the Jesuit missions in China during the seventeenth century is a good example of cultural appreciation almost at first sight, and will serve as an instructive contrast to the unfortunate encounters between China and the Western powers in the nineteenth century. The Jesuits had learned that a Christian mission to China could never succeed if it were not in a position to show and convince the Chinese intelligentsia of the superiority of the European culture. So the Society of Jesus took great pains to select and train the first missionaries for China and these men brought with them not only their religion, but also the latest mechanical inventions and scientific knowledge of the Europe of 1600. They had learned that China was then in the midst of a long controversy over the possible reforms of the calendar which had been in use for over 250 years and was no longer considered sufficiently accurate in the prediction of the eclipses and other stellar phenomena. So the first Jesuits were all trained in astronomical science; and the greatest leader and pioneer of them was the famous Matteo Ricci, the favorite pupil of Father Clavius, who was one of the chief authors of the Gregorian Calendar.

After learning the language and culture of the Chinese

people, these Jesuits began to establish contacts with the young intellectuals of the country. Their great learning, saintly devotion, and kindly manners soon won for them the attention and respect of Chinese scholars, of whom some became their friends, pupils, and converts to their religion. The Jesuit missionaries, through their influential disciples, offered to assist the government in the reform of the imperial calendar. There were already three schools of astronomers in the country competing for ascendancy; and the astronomers of the new school from the West were assigned a separate office and observatory on the same level with the native schools. Their relative merit and accuracy in the astronomical predictions and calculations were to be the final test on which the government was to select the men for the reform of the calendar. From 1629 to 1643, for a period of 15 years, the competitive tests in astronomical exactness went on, and the scientists of the four schools prepared tables of calculation and prediction, the results of which were rigidly compared by the government. All such tests resulted in the absolute superiority of the new science from Europe. Some of those scientific competitions were quite spectacular and were watched by the scholars of the whole empire. In the case of a moon eclipse on February 22, 1636, the Jesuit astronomers, fearing that the tests might be spoiled by local rain or clouds, prepared exact predictions for Peking, Szechuan, Honan, and Shansi, and requested the government to send observers to all these stations to record the time and extent of the eclipse. When the eclipse was over, all the three provinces reported that the Jesuits predictions were accurate to the second, while those of the other three schools were discredited by their great inaccuracies. The scientific triumph of the Jesuits was complete, and the new astronomy was finally recognized by the government, which in 1643 promulgated the new calendar revised by the Jesuits as the official cal-

endar of the Ming Empire. Although the Ming Empire fell the next year, the new calendar was adopted by the Manchu Dynasty and remained the calendar of the empire until its abolition in favor of the solar calendar in 1912.

Such scientific triumphs greatly aided the success of the spread of the Christian religion, which won over a number of the most brilliant and serious-minded scholars of the age. Among them was Hsu Kuang-ch'i (died 1632) who arose to be one of the imperial ministers of state and was the Director of the Imperial Observatory. He was so deeply impressed by the saintly character and profound scientific knowledge of these Jesuit teachers that he most ardently wished that this Christian religion, which could produce such excellent learning and character, should be adopted as the national faith of China for the salvation and regeneration of the people. In a letter to a friend, he said: "Buddhism has been in China 1800 years; but the morals and customs of the nation have continued to deteriorate, and the Buddhist faith has not been able to produce men of good character. I am convinced that the Christian religion will be able to transform every man into a good and virtuous character, to elevate society to the high level of the best ages of classical antiquity, and to place the government and state upon the solid foundation of everlasting peace and order. All this can be easily tested upon a small community."

Two hundred years after this first happy association, and over one hundred years after the dying out of Jesuit influence in China, China was again in direct contact with the West. This time the encounters were most unfortunate and sowed the seeds for two wars (1840 and 1860) and for a long period of Chinese resistance to the Western civilization. In these contacts the Europeans were no longer remembered as the heralds of a wonderful science and a re-

ligion of love: they were only recognized as pirate-traders and, most conspicuously, as traders of opium. Opium had come into China for a long time and, through the processes of gradual penetration and permeation, was poisoning a very large number of Chinese people. Before the government began to realize the situation, this drug was draining annually a large amount of silver from the country, and was fast becoming a curse to the nation. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the government tried to prohibit all import of opium into China. But in a country where no effective leadership could be located either in the government or in the social classes, such prohibitions were never really carried out in the face of great temptations of profit. By 1829 the opium import amounted to $10,591,760 gold, forming 49 per cent of all British imports to China. In 1834, it was $11,381,930 gold, forming 51.4 per cent of the British imports. It brought about the Opium War of 1840 and the Nanking Treaty which gave Hongkong to England and opened five ports to foreign commerce and residence. It was the first Chinese defeat in war with any European power. China paid for the defeat, but she never could understand why any civilized country would resort to war for the sake of keeping trade open and, least of all, for the sake of maintaining the commerce in a poisonous drug.

The attitude of suspicion and resentment brought about in these unfortunate events of the early contacts took a long time to wear off. It was only very slowly and gradually that the Chinese came to form a better opinion of the Western nations and of their civilization. This change was slowly brought about by the new opportunities of contact. With the traders there had come also the missionaries who started schools and hospitals in China, who began to agitate against such social evils as foot-binding and even opium-smoking, and who were known to have carried on

an anti-opium campaign in their home countries. Some of these missionaries were men of high learning, sympathetic understanding, and admirable character; and they, especially the Protestant missionaries, succeeded in making contacts with the intellectuals of the nation. The new treaty ports, especially Shanghai, Canton, and the leased island of Hongkong, which had been intended for foreigners to trade and reside in, soon attracted a large Chinese population, who in those devastating years of the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion, began to seek refuge and shelter in the foreign settlements. In spite of numerous unpleasant experiences common to Chinese residents in these settlements, the treaty ports furnished great opportunities for the Chinese to observe and know the Western ways and manners of life, trade, and government.

The participation of English, French, and American soldiers and commanders in the suppression of the T'ai-p'ing rebels in the lower Yangtze Delta, furnished the first occasion for the Chinese and foreigners to work together for a common political cause; and some Chinese statesmen, like Li Hung-chang, learned through such close contacts to appreciate not only the efficacy of Western arms, but also the valor and character of the Western soldier. One incident may be cited to show how an old prejudice and contempt for the foreigner was broken down by such contacts of working together and fighting together. For a short time the Chinese city of Shanghai was in the hands of the rebels and the Chinese authorities were unable to collect the customs dues in that port. When the region was recovered by the government troops the foreign authorities remitted to the Chinese government a fairly large amount of money as the dues they had collected in the absence of the Chinese officials. This display of political honesty on the part of the foreigners was a great surprise to the Chinese officials who had always regarded them as more or less suspicious

characters trading in opium and the like. The great leader of the age, Tseng Kuo-fang, expressed his surprise in a letter to a friend in which he said: "Even *they* also have some of the virtues of a gentleman."

By this time better ways of contact were being found in the sending of Chinese diplomatic representatives to Europe and America and in the occasional visits of Chinese scholars and students to the West. Some of the early ministers to Europe have left good records of their travels and observations; and in some of these records the civilization of the West was favorably and sympathetically presented to the Chinese public. Kuo Sung-t'ao's report of the Western civilization was so eulogistic that it brought forth a public outcry of protest, and the book was once placed under ban. But others after him continued to interpret to the Chinese people what they actually saw and appreciated in the social and political life which had come to be regarded as more important and more fundamental than the rifles and cannons, the steamship and the railroad, the commercial and industrial enterprises.

The following quotation from an essay on English government by the scholar-editor Wang T'ao will suffice to show the appreciative understanding which Chinese thinkers of the last quarter of the nineteenth century had of the civilization of the West. He said:

> The real strength of England lies in the fact that there is no barrier between the government and the governed; and that this close relationship between the government and the people forms the basis of national stability and solidarity. My observation is that the political life of England embodies the best ideals of our classical antiquity.

Then he went on to praise the system of popular election of men to office, the majority rule, and the judiciary. He was most deeply impressed by the government by law under which no governmental official, however powerful, is allowed to do an illegal deed or kill an innocent person. He

noted the absence of torture for the purpose of forcing a confession from the suspected criminal, and was apparently embarrassed by a comparison with the horrors of the Chinese law courts.

> When a convicted criminal is confined in a prison, he is supplied with food and clothing, and taught to work. He is visited every week by preachers and is never maltreated by those in charge of the prison. The prison system of this country, I must admit, is what China has never had since the days of the Golden Age.

Then he described the power of Parliament and paid special tribute to its control over policies of war and peace. He noticed that government in England was far more expensive than that in China, and that the fundamental principle of governmental finances was not limiting expenditure by income, as was the customary practice in China, but the contrary idea of devising income to meet the expenditures of the annual budget. But, he hastened to add, "all the money comes from the people and is spent in the interest of the people. Therefore the Government is able to tax the people heavily without ever arousing opposition or resentment from them." And he concludes in these words of unreserved praise: "From all these, we can see that the English people are not only superior to others in military strength, but also superior in the art of government. Their political excellence is only comparable to the ideal reigns of Chinese antiquity. They certainly deserve their leading position in power and prosperity among the nations of the world."

Wang T'ao sometimes indulged in speculation about the future of the civilizations of the world, and some of his speculations are full of prophetic insight. He said:

> Now that the ingenious inventions of the steamship and the railway are enabling the European peoples to reach every corner of the earth and every strange tribe of mankind, the beginning of a world unity is here. When scattered races and nations are brought together, then

> divers civilizations will also gradually become unified. Our ancient sages made a distinction between the *tao* [the way of life] and the ch'i [the tools]. The ways of life cannot be immediately unified; they must first be brought together by the tools or implements of human invention. The steamship and the railroad are the carriages of the ways of life. . . . . Therefore, these great inventions, which the western powers are using for their encroachment upon China, are the very things which the sages of a future age will utilize as the means for the unification of the ways of life of all the nations of the earth.

In these words, he was prophesying the unification of the civilizations through the conquest of distance by the new inventions of science.

Wang T'ao was the Chinese assistant to James Legge in the translation of the *Confucian Classics* into English, and he was also the assistant to many Protestant missionaries in translating into Chinese books on the life and institutions of the West. During the last quarter of the last century there were produced in the treaty ports a number of books on the history, government, and civilization of the Western nations as well as works on the various physical sciences and their applications. Through these books a large number of Chinese scholars were able to acquire some intelligent understanding of the institutions of the Western peoples. And from these books there grew up the reform movements which were often led by intellectual leaders who had never been outside their own country, but who had learned to appreciate the civilization of the West through diligent reading and personal contacts with foreign missionaries and teachers. The war with France over Annam (1883–85) and the more crushing defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) gave fresh impetus and vigor to these movements for radical reforms in government and education. These movements culminated in the reforms of 1898 which ended in tragic failure. But the period of the hundred days of reforms under the intellectual leadership of K'ang Yu-

wei was truly spectacular and aroused the greatest enthusiasm of the intellectual class throughout the whole country; and its equally spectacular failure, together with the subsequent years of downright reactionism, convinced the nation of the impossibility of peaceful reformation and turned the minds of the more radical leaders toward the road of revolution.

After the humiliating defeats in the wars with foreign powers had convincingly exposed all the weakness of the Chinese political and military organization, and after the debacle of 1898 and 1900 had more convincingly revealed all the corruption and helplessness of the court, the officialdom, and the literati—after these, there began the period of searching self-reproach and glowing appreciation of the new civilization of the West. The popular novels of this period were chiefly of the muckraking type and full of exposures of the corruption and ignorance of Chinese officialdom, and the rottenness of Chinese life in the family and in society. The essays in the most influential periodicals, on the other hand, were full of enthusiastic appreciation of the life and institutions of the West.

Even as early as 1894 Dr. Sun Yat-sen, at the age of 28, having had his foreign education in a medical school and having traveled abroad, was formulating for Li Hung-chang what he had conceived as the four fundamental principles of the Western civilization. They are: "to enable man to exert his utmost capability; to utilize land to its utmost fertility; to use nature to her utmost utility; and to circulate goods with the utmost fluidity." In these concise words the future leader of the Chinese revolution was outlining a most enthusiastic idealization of the scientific, technological, and democratic culture of the West.

But the greatest representative of this period of appreciative interpretation of Western civilization was Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (died 1929), who was one of the leaders of the

reform movement of 1898 and who, after its downfall, lived many years in Japan and made an extensive tour in the United States. A young man, barely thirty years old, but with a very good training in the classical and historical tradition of his own people and with the fresh but bitter experiences of a defeated reformer, Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao started in 1903 a new magazine which he called *The New (Renovated) People*, and he signed his articles "One of the Renovated People of China." To this magazine he contributed a series of 16 essays under the general title "The Renovation of a People." With one of the most powerful pens ever wielded by man, and with his rich store of historical knowledge of China, he tried in this series of essays to expound his main thesis that in order to rejuvenate the Chinese nation it is absolutely necessary to acquire the new virtues and traits which have made the Western nations great and progressive. Of the new virtues he has attributed to the peoples of the West, we may mention: civic morality (as distinct from the private morality of the Eastern peoples); nationalism; the jealous regard for one's rights and liberties; the sense of duty; the love of freedom; self-discipline; self-respect; the love of adventure; the martial spirit; perseverance; progressiveness; the ability to unite and organize; respect for economic independence.

In his introductory essay he asks the question, "What people shall we take as our model in our effort to renovate the nation?" And he frankly answered this question thus: "Of all the races, the Caucasian race; of all the Caucasian peoples, the Teutonic; and of all the Teutonic peoples, the Anglo-Saxon." Therefore, all the new virtues he advised his people to adopt are those for which the Anglo-Saxon people have been most noted. Of every one of these new virtues he quotes numerous historical examples both from the East and the West, eloquently lauds his occidental heroes, and complains of the deplorable absence of such

admirable and necessary qualities in our own people. His enthusiasm for the Western people and their civilization knows no limit; and his powerful style and glowing appeals opened the eyes of thousands of readers and captivated them and made converts of them. These new virtues, he told us, are the foundations of the strength and glory of the Western nations; and these are the qualities we must learn to admire and emulate.

But, as you must have noticed, all these new virtues so eloquently and vehemently preached by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao are almost without exception the individualistic virtues most admired in the Victorian Age. Mr. Liang wrote immediately after the death of Queen Victoria and was conspicuously under the magic spell of the glory of that most remarkable age. He was totally blind to the new movements and tendencies which had already arisen in the midst of that age of individualism and liberalism, and which were already loudly challenging the economic and social structures created by those individualistic virtues most admired by this Chinese convert. Moreover, he was a journalist by training, and received no systematic modern education. Therefore, he was silent on the scientific and technological phases of the Western civilization. And, in spite of his most enthusiastic eulogies of the new culture of the West, he was a product of the old classical tradition and was never free from a fundamental bias, namely, that, while there were all those admirable virtues in the Western culture, the old morality as taught by the best teachers of the Confucian and neo-Confucian philosophers was still the backbone of the Chinese nation and civilization and must not be undervalued and discarded.

The first two decades of the new century brought about new facilities for still easier and closer contacts between the Chinese and the West. Thousands of young students were given opportunities to study in Japan and Europe

and America. In particular, the return of a portion of the Chinese indemnity to the United States and its exclusive use for the education of Chinese students in this country, made it possible for our students to spend longer periods in the American universities and to come into intimate contact and association with the life and institutions of America. With these government students there have come also their friends and relatives who are able to pay their university education without governmental aid. Numerous students have also gone to study in the European universities where living expenses are lower than in the United States. With these longer and closer contacts, and the increase in linguistic facilities acquired through the new schools, a better understanding of Western civilization has been made possible.

During the first decade of the Republic (1912–23), the attitude of the Chinese intellectuals toward Western civilization continued to be one of appreciation and admiration. But the emphasis shifted from those virtues of individualistic liberalism to the method and results of science and technology. The new intellectual leader of the period, Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu, advised the youths of the nation to worship only two gods: Science and Democracy. Another veteran thinker, Mr. Wu chih-hui, believes that science and technology alone have been responsible for the creation of the civilization of the West.

About the year 1922, Liang Shu-ming, a young scholar influenced by Buddhist and Confucian thought, published a book under the pretentious title, *The Civilizations of the East and the West and Their Philosophies*. In this work he propounds the thesis that Western civilization which is admirably suited to the needs of the present age will be succeeded by the Chinese civilization which emphasizes the importance of always maintaining the golden mean; and that the age of the Chinese civilization will ultimately

be followed and replaced by that of the Indian civilization which is characterized by the ideal of negation.

This pessimistic view brought forth protests from a number of writers who jumped to the defense of the civilization of the West. Mr. Wu Chih-hui, who was approaching his sixtieth birthday, vigorously attacked the older civilizations of the East, and in particular that of India. A master of historical knowledge, he pointed out that the influence of the religion of India has been responsible for the social and racial degeneration of the Chinese people; that the preponderant influence of Buddhism in the neo-Confucianist moral philosophy has given to China of the last seven centuries a reign of inhumanity, cruelty, and oppression; and that there has been in reality very little moral or spiritual life under such civilizations as shun life and glorify poverty and sickness. With equal vehemence he defends the Western civilization which through science and technology multiplies the tools of man, provides for his ever-increasing needs, seeks to realize all the wildest ideals of the human imagination, and has thereby brought about a society the moral level of which is unknown in past history. He says, "I believe that the more material progress is advanced and the more goods are multiplied, the nearer will be the ideal of human unity and the easier will be the solution of all the complicated perplexities of the world."[1]

But, while these discussions were going on in China, great changes of unprecedented historical significance had taken place in the West; and the civilization which was so heatedly debated in China, was also seriously challenged in the Western world itself. The World War had raised in

[1] Cf. Hu Shih, "The Civilization of the East and the West," in *Whither Mankind*, ed. by Charles A. Beard. Mr. Wu agrees with and supports the ideas I express in that essay. Also see my study of Wu Chih-hui in "Some Thinkers of the Last Three Hundred Years," in *Hu Shih's Collected Essays*, Third Series, Vol. I.

many minds much doubt as to the stability and permanent value of the Western civilization. The great revolution in Russia was sending forth weighty challenges to many of the basic institutions of this civilization. Its scientific achievements were attacked by theologians and defenders of spiritual values as being too materialistic and leading man to the brutal ways of the machine. Its economic and industrial system which had been the most important force to utilize the new discoveries of science and to help to bring them from the laboratory to the market-place and the home, was most ruthlessly condemned as capitalistic, as the exploiter of the sweat and blood and brain of the many for the exclusive benefit and enjoyment of the few. Even its political ideal of democracy and parliamentary government, which had been accepted as the highest embodiment of the political genius and inspiration of the race, was severely criticized as the historical accompaniment of the capitalistic system, as the instrumentality of the rich and strong for the government and oppression of the poor and the weak, and as a wasteful and inefficient system better suited for the division of spoils than for the effective ordering of society and the state.

All these transvaluations of values in the Western civilization have had their reverberations in all the non-European countries. In China the effect of these criticisms is particularly noticeable because here these ideas have the strongest appeal to those who have been apologizing for the so-called spiritual values of the East, and to those who have found it difficult and uncomfortable to be in the age of the machine civilization which seems so radically different from the ideas and habits of the agricultural society. A nation which is only on the threshold of political democracy and capitalistic industrialism, therefore, begins to congratulate itself on not having gone very far in imitating blindly a civilization of which the fundamental blunders

are being so loudly exposed by a unison of the voices of the Marxian Communists, sentimental social workers, pious religious leaders, anti-religionists, imperialistic junkers, and anti-imperialist reformers. Mr. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, who twenty years ago had been the most eloquent champion of Westernization, came out in 1919 as the standard-bearer to sound the warning of "the imminent bankruptcy of the scientific civilization." The young men of the country, who have never seen what a capitalistic civilization is like, are coming out with hundreds of pamphlets condemning the imperialistic and capitalistic systems of economics and government, and advocating Marxism, revolution, and dictatorship of the laborer and the farmer. Even the one-time liberals are wavering from their faith in democracy and are being attracted by the newer tendencies of fascism and other forms of dictatorship.

Thus has come the period of the "new doubt." All the values have been turned upside down, and the nation is standing at the parting of the ways, wondering which road to take, which prophets to follow. Will these new doubts retard the processes of China's modernization? Or, will these criticisms and challenges help China better to understand the real nature and meaning of the Western civilization which has probably been oversimplified by the earlier enthusiasts who, in their excessive zeal, saw only one side of the shield?

I, for one, am of the opinion that this new attitude of doubt and criticism is on the whole a healthy improvement over the older attitude of uncritical appreciation. Underneath all this apparent criticism and condemnation we are beginning to see a deeper unanimity in the appreciation of those fundamental values of this new civilization. Are not the leaders of Soviet Russia the most ardent champions of science and technological progress? Are they not also working out a gigantic program of nation-wide industrial-

ization by the best aids of science and technology, even though the benefits of that industrialization may be intended for a different and much larger class of the people? And, lastly, are we not tempted or even justified in viewing these socialistic and communistic movements not as tendencies alien and extraneous to the Western civilization, but as an integral part of it, as the logical consequence in the fulfilment of its democratic ideal, and as merely supplementary to the earlier and more individualistic ideas of democracy?

III

THE CHINESE RENAISSANCE

"THE RENAISSANCE" was the name given by a group of Peking University students to a new monthly magazine which they published in 1918. They were mature students well trained in the old cultural tradition of the country, and they readily recognized in the new movement then led by some of their professors a striking similarity to the Renaissance in Europe. Three prominent features in the movement reminded them of the European Renaissance. First, it was a conscious movement to promote a new literature in the living language of the people to take the place of the classical literature of old. Second, it was a movement of conscious protest against many of the ideas and institutions in the traditional culture, and of conscious emancipation of the individual man and woman from the bondage of the forces of tradition. It was a movement of reason versus tradition, freedom versus authority, and glorification of life and human values versus their suppression. And lastly, strange enough, this new movement was led by men who knew their cultural heritage and tried to study it with the new methodology of modern historical criticism and research. In that sense it was also a humanist movement. In all these directions the new movement which began in 1917 and which was sometimes called the "New Culture Movement," the "New Thought" movement or "The New Tide" was capturing the imagination and sympathy of the youth of the nation as something which promised and pointed to the new birth of an old people and an old civilization.

Historically, there had been many periods of Chinese Renaissance. The rise of the great poets in the T'ang Dynasty, the simultaneous movement for a new prose literature modeled after the style of the Classical period, and the development of Zen Buddhism as a Chinese reformation of that Indian religion—these represented the First Chinese Renaissance. The great reform movements in the eleventh century, the subsequent development of a powerful secular neo-Confucianist philosophy which gradually overshadowed and finally replaced the medieval religions —all these important developments of the Sung Dynasty may be regarded as the Second Renaissance. The rise of the dramas in the thirteenth century, and the rise of the great novels in a later period, together with their frank glorification of love and the joys of life, may be called the Third Renaissance. And lastly, the revolt in the seventeenth century against the rational philosophy of the Sung and Ming dynasties, and the development of a new technique in classical scholarship in the last three hundred years with its philological and historical approach and its strict emphasis on the importance of documentary evidence —these, too, may be called the Fourth Renaissance.

Each of these historical movements had its important rôle to play and contributed to the periodic renewals of vitality in an old civilization. But all these great movements which rightly deserve the term of "renaissances," suffered from one common defect, namely, the absence of a conscious recognition of their historical mission. There was no conscious effort nor articulate interpretation: all of them were natural developments of historical tendencies and were easily overpowered or swept away by the conservative force of tradition against which they had only dimly and unconsciously combated. Without this conscious element, the new movements remained natural processes of revolution, and never achieved the work of revolu-

tions; they brought in new patterns, but never completely dethroned the old, which continued to co-exist with them and in time absorbed them. The Zen movement, for instance, practically replaced all the other schools of Buddhism; and yet, when Zen became the officially recognized orthodoxy, it lost its revolutionary character and resumed all the features against which its founders had explicitly revolted. The secular philosophy of neo-Confucianism was to replace the medieval religions, but it soon made itself a new religion embodying unwittingly many of the features of medievalism. The new critical scholarship of the last three centuries began as a revolt against, and ended as a refuge for, the fruitless philosophizing and the sterile literary education, both of which continued to dominate and enslave the vast majority of the literati. The new dramas and the new novels came and went, but the Government continued to hold the literary examinations on the classics, and the men of letters continued to write their poetry and prose in the classical language.

The Renaissance movement of the last two decades differs from all the early movements in being a fully conscious and studied movement. Its leaders know what they want, and they know what they must destroy in order to achieve what they want. They want a new language, a new literature, a new outlook on life and society, and a new scholarship. They want a new language, not only as an effective instrumentality for popular education, but also as the effective medium for the development of the literature of a new China. They want a literature that shall be written in the living tongue of a living people and shall be capable of expressing the real feelings, thoughts, inspirations, and aspirations of a growing nation. They want to instil into the people a new outlook on life which shall free them from the shackles of tradition and make them feel at home in the new world and its new civiliza-

tion. They want a new scholarship which shall not only enable us to understand intelligently the cultural heritage of the past, but also prepare us for active participation in the work of research in the modern sciences. This, as I understand it, is the mission of the Chinese Renaissance.

The conscious element in this movement is the result of long contact with the people and civilization of the West. It is only through contact and comparison that the relative value or worthlessness of the various cultural elements can be clearly and critically seen and understood. What is sacred among one people may be ridiculous in another; and what is despised or rejected by one cultural group, may in a different environment become the cornerstone for a great edifice of strange grandeur and beauty. For ten long centuries, by a peculiar perversion of aesthetic appreciation, the bound feet of Chinese women were regarded as beautiful; but it took only a few decades of contact with foreign peoples and ideas to make the Chinese people see the ugliness and inhumanity of this institution. On the other hand, the novels which were read by the millions of Chinese but which were always despised by the Chinese literati, have in recent decades been elevated to the position of respectable literature, chiefly through the influence of the European literature. Contact with strange civilizations brings new standards of value with which the native culture is re-examined and re-evaluated, and conscious reformation and regeneration are the natural outcome of such transvaluation of values. Without the benefit of an intimate contact with the civilization of the West, there could not be the Chinese Renaissance.

In this lecture I propose to tell the story of one phase of this Renaissance as a case study of the peculiar manner of cultural response in which important changes in Chinese life and institutions have been brought about. This phase

is sometimes known as the Literary Renaissance or Revolution.

Let me first state the problem for which the literary revolution offers the solution. The problem was first seen by all early reformers as the problem of finding a suitable language which could serve as an effective means of educating the vast millions of children and of illiterate adults. They admitted that the classical language which was difficult to write and to learn, and for thousands of years incapable of being spoken or verbally understood—was not suited for the education of children and the masses. But they never thought of giving up the classical language, in which was written and preserved all the cultural tradition of the race. Moreover, the classical language was the only linguistic medium for written communication between the various regions with different dialects, just as Latin was the universal medium of communication and publication for the whole of medieval Europe. For these reasons the language of the classics must be taught, and was taught, in the schools throughout the country. All the school texts, from the primary grades to the university, were written in this dead language; and teaching in the primary schools consisted chiefly in reading and memorizing the texts which had to be explained, word for word, in the local dialects of the pupils. When European literature began to be translated into Chinese, the translations were all in this classical language; and it was a tremendous task and exceedingly amusing to read the comic figures in the novels of Charles Dickens talking in the dead language of two thousand years ago!

There was much serious talk about devising an alphabet for transcribing Chinese sounds and for publishing useful information for the enlightenment of the masses. The Christian missionaries had devised a number of alphabets for translating the Bible into the local dialects for the

benefit of illiterate men and women. Some Chinese scholars also worked out several alphabetical systems for the mandarin dialect, and publicly preached their adoption for the education of illiterate adults. Other scholars advocated the use of the *pei-hua*, that is, the spoken tongue of the people, for publishing periodicals and newspapers in order to inculcate useful information and patriotic ideas in the people who could not read the literary language of the scholars.

But these scholar-reformers all agreed that such expedient measures as the use of the vulgar tongue or the adoption of an alphabet were only necessary for those adults who had had no chance to go to the regular schools. They never for a moment would consider the idea that these expedients should be so universally used as to replace the classical language altogether. The *pei-hua* was the vulgar jargon of the people, good enough only for the cheap novels, but certainly not good enough for the scholars. As to the alphabet, it was only intended for the illiterates. For, they argued, if the pupils in the schools were taught to read and write an alphabetical language, how could they ever hope to acquire a knowledge of the moral and cultural heritage of the past?

All such attempts of reform were bound to fail, because nobody wanted to learn a language which was despised by those who advocated it, which had no more use than the reading of a few cheap magazines and pamphlets that the reformers were kind enough to condescend to publish for the benefit of the ignorant and the lowly. Moreover, it was impossible for these reformers to keep up enough enthusiasm to continue writing and publishing in a language which they themselves considered to be beneath their dignity and intelligence to employ as their own literary medium. So the *pei-hua* magazines were always short-lived and never reached the people; and the alphabetical sys-

tems remained the fads of a few reformers. The schools continued to teach the language of the classics which had been dead over two thousand years; the newspapers continued to be written and printed in it; and the scholars and authors continued to produce their books and essays and poems in it. The language problem remained unsolved and insoluble.

The solution of this problem came from the dormitories in the American universities. In the year 1915 a series of trivial incidents led some Chinese students in Cornell University to take up the question of reforming the Chinese language. My classmate, Mr. Chao Yuen-ren, and I prepared a series of articles on this question. He took the position that it was possible to alphabetize the Chinese language; and he proposed certain details of procedure and answered all possible arguments against alphabetization. I took the position that, while an alphabetized language might be the ultimate goal, it was necessary to consider intermediate steps to make the ideographical characters more teachable in the elementary schools, and I also proposed certain methods of reform. These articles were read in English and published in the *Chinese Students' Monthly*. They attracted no comment and were soon forgotten.

But other disputes arose among some of my literary friends in the United States and led me to give more thought to the problem of Chinese language and literature. The original dispute was one of poetic diction; and a great many letters were exchanged between Ithaca, New York City, Cambridge, Poughkeepsie, and Washington, D.C. From an interest in the minor problem of poetic diction I was led to see that the problem was really one of a suitable medium for all branches of Chinese literature. The question now became: In what language shall the New China produce its future literature? My answer was: The classical language, so long dead, can never be the medium of a

living literature of a living nation; the future literature of China must be written in the living language of the poeple. "No dead language can produce a living literature." And the living language I proposed as the only possible medium of the future literature of China, was the *pei-hua*, the vulgar tongue of the vast majority of the population, the language which, in the last 500 years, had produced the numerous novels read and loved by the people, though despised by the men of letters. I wanted this much despised vulgar tongue of the people and the novels to be elevated to the position of the national language of China, to the position enjoyed by all the modern national languages in Europe.

With the exception of a Chinese girl student in Vassar College, all my literary friends in the American universities were opposed to this outrageous theory of mine. They had to admit that the spoken tongue of the people was good enough for the popular novels, for that had been clearly demonstrated by the great novels of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. But they all maintained that the vulgar language of the people, which had never been polished and refined by the great writers and poets of the nation, could not be used as the medium of poetry. I defended my position by pointing out that, throughout the history of Chinese poetry, all the best remembered verses of the great poets were written in the simplest language which, if not strictly the living tongue of the people, must be very close to the living speech of the time. In spite of the copious examples I cited to prove my thesis, my friends were not convinced, for it must be admitted the poets of the past never consciously wrote in the plain language of the people; they only slipped into it unwittingly and only on rare occasions of true poetic inspiration. The greatest bulk of Chinese poetry was composed in strictly conservative, highly polished, literary diction.

Being a pragmatist in philosophy, I proposed to my friends to experiment with the *pei-hua* in writing my own poetry. On July 26, 1916, I announced to all my friends in America that from now on I resolved to write no more poems in the classical language, and to begin my experiments in writing poetry in the so-called vulgar tongue of the people. Before a half-dozen poems were written, I had already found a title for my new volume of poetry: it was to be called *A Book of Experiments*.

In the meantime, I began to study the history of our literature with a new interest and with a new methodology. I tried to study it from the evolutionary standpoint and, to my great surprise and unlimited joy, the historical development of Chinese literature presented to me a continuous though entirely unconscious movement of struggle against the despotic limitations of the classical tradition, a continuous tendency to produce a literature in the living language of the people. I found that the history of Chinese literature consisted of two parallel movements: there was the classical literature of the scholars, the men of letters, the poets of the imperial courts, and of the élite; but there was in every age an undercurrent of literary development among the common people which produced the folk songs of love and heroism, the songs of the dancer, the epic stories of the street reciter, the drama of the village theater, and, most important of all, the novels. I found that every new form, every innovation in literature, had come never from the imitative classical writers of the upper classes, but always from the unlettered class of the countryside, the village inn, and the market-place. I found that it was always these new forms and patterns of the common people that, from time to time, furnished the new blood and fresh vigor to the literature of the literati, and rescued it from the perpetual danger of fossilization. All the great periods of Chinese literature were those when the master minds of the age were attracted by these new literary

forms of the people and produced their best works, not only in the new patterns, but in close imitation of the fresh and simple language of the people. And such great epochs died away only when those new forms from the people had again become fixed and fossilized through long periods of slavish imitation by the uncreative literati.

In short, I found the true history of Chinese literature to consist in a series of revolutions, the initiative always coming from the untutored but unfettered people, the influence and inspiration often being felt by the great masters in the upper classes, and the result always bringing about new epochs of literary development. It was the anonymous folk songs of antiquity that formed the bulk of the great *Book of Poetry* and created the first epoch of Chinese literature. It was again the anonymous folk songs of the people that gave the form and the inspiration in the developments of the new poetry in the Three Kingdoms and later in the T'ang Dynasty. It was the songs of the dancing and singing girls that began the new era of *Ts'ĭ* or songs in the Sung Dynasty. It was the people that first produced the plays which led to the great dramas of the Mongol period and the Mings. It was the street reciters of epic stories that gave rise to the great novels some of which have been best sellers for three or four centuries. And all these new epochs have originated in new forms of literature produced by the common people, and in the living language of the people.

So my argument for a new national literature in the spoken language of the people was strengthened and supported by a wealth of undeniable facts of history. To recognize the *pei-hua* as the national medium of Chinese literature was merely to bring into logical and natural culmination a historical tendency which had been many times thwarted, diverted, and suppressed by the heavy weight of the prestige of the classical tradition.

This line of historical thinking was embodied in an arti-

cle which I published on the first day of the year 1917 under the modest title, "Some Tentative Suggestions for the Reform of Chinese Literature." It appeared simultaneously in the *Quarterly* published by the Chinese students in America, and in a new liberal monthly called *The Youth*, edited by Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu, one of the old members of the revolutionary movement, who years later became the founder of the Chinese Communist Party. To my great surprise, what had failed to convince my friends in the American universities was received with sympathetic response in China. Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu followed my article with one of his own, under the very bold title "On a Revolution in Chinese Literature." In this article, he said:

> I am willing to brave the enmity of all the pedantic scholars of the country, and hoist the great banner of the "Army of the Revolution in Literature" in support of my friend Hu Shih. On this banner shall be written in big characters the three great principles of the Army of Revolution:
>
> 1. To destroy the painted, powdered, and obsequious literature of the aristocratic few, and to create the plain, simple and expressive literature of the people;
> 2. To destroy the stereotyped and monotonous literature of classicism, and to create the fresh and sincere literature of realism;
> 3. To destroy the pedantic, unintelligible and obscurantist literature of the hermit and the recluse, and to create the plain-speaking and popular literature of a living society.

These articles were followed by my other essays, one "On the Historico-evolutionary Conception of Literature," and another on "A Constructive Revolution in Chinese Literature." They aroused a great deal of discussion. The revolution was in full swing when I returned to China in the summer of 1917.

What surprised me most was the weakness and utter poverty of the opposition. I had anticipated a formidable opposition and a long struggle, which, I was confident, would ultimately end in our success in about 20 years. But we met with no strong argument; my historical arguments

were never answered by any defender of the cause of the classical literature. The leader of the opposition was Mr. Lin Shu, who, without knowing a word of any European language, had translated 150 or more English and European novels into the language of the classics.[1] But he could not put forth any argument. In one of his articles, he said: "I know the classical language must not be discarded; but I cannot tell why"!! These blind forces of reaction could only resort to the method of persecution by the government. They attacked the private life of my friend and colleague, Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu, who was then Dean of the College of Letters in the National University of Peking; and the outside pressure was such that he had to resign from the University in 1919. But such persecutions gave us a great deal of free advertising, and the Peking University began to be looked upon by the youth of the whole nation as the center of a new enlightenment.

Then an unexpected event occurred which suddenly carried the literary movement to a rapid success. The Peace Conference in Paris had just decided to sacrifice China's claims and give to Japan the freedom to dispose of the former German possessions in the province of Shantung. When the news reached China, the students in Peking, under the leadership of the students of the Peking University, held a mass meeting of protest and, in their demonstration parade, broke into the house of a pro-Japanese minister, set fire to the house, and beat the Chinese minister to Tokyo almost to death. The government arrested a number of the students, but public sentiment ran so high that the whole nation seemed on the side of the university students and against the notoriously pro-Japanese Government. The merchants in Shanghai and other cities closed their shops as a protest against the peace negotia-

[1] This was done by an assistant who verbally translated the original text into spoken Chinese which Mr. Lin re-translated into the classical language.

tions and against the government. The Chinese Delegation at the Paris Conference was warned by public bodies not to sign the treaty; and they obeyed. The government was forced by this strong demonstration of national sentiment to release the students and to dismiss from office three well-known pro-Japanese ministers. The struggle began on May 4, and lasted till the final surrender of the government in the first part of June. It has been called the "May Fourth Movement."

In this political struggle, the Peking University suddenly rose to the position of national leadership in the eyes of the students. The literary and intellectual movements led by some of the professors and students of the university, which had for the last few years been slowly felt among the youths of nation, were now openly acknowledged by them as new and welcome forces for a national emancipation. During the years 1919–20, there appeared about 400 small periodicals, almost all of them published by the students in the different localities—some printed from metal types, some in mimeographs, and others on lithographs—and all of them published in the spoken language of the people—the literary medium which the Peking University professors had advocated. All of a sudden, the revolution in literature had spread throughout the country, and the youths of the nation were finding in the new literary medium an effective means of expression. Everybody seemed to be rushing to express himself in this language which he could understand and in which he could make himself understood. In the course of a few years, the literary revolution had succeeded in giving to the people a national language, and had brought about a new age of literary expression.

The political parties soon saw the utility of this new linguistic instrument, and adopted it for their weeklies and monthlies. The publishing houses, which at first hesi-

tated to accept books written in the vulgar language, soon found them to sell far better than those in the classical style, and became enthusiastic over the new movement. Many new small book companies sprang up and published nothing but books and periodicals written in the national language. By 1919 and 1920 the vulgar tongue of the people had assumed the more respectable name of the "National Language of China." And in 1920 the Ministry of Education—in a reactionary government—reluctantly proclaimed an order that, from the fall of the next year, the textbooks for the first two grades in the primary schools were to be written in the national language. In 1922 all the elementary and secondary textbooks were ordered to be rewritten in the national language.

Thus the problem of a new language for education, which had puzzled the last generation, was automatically solved by starting from a different angle of attack. The advocates of a revolution in literature had indirectly solved the problem of finding a suitable medium of education. For, as I have said before, no one wishes to learn a language which the men of letters are ashamed to use in producing their own poetry and prose. When I first returned to Peking in 1917, I tried to convince the leaders of an association for the unification of the national language that no language is fit for the schools which is not fit for the poets and prose writers; and that the language of the schools must of necessity be the language of literature. When these leaders raised the question of standardizing the national language, I told them that it was quite unnecessary. The poets, the novelists, the great prose masters, and the dramatists are the real standardizers of languages. In my article on "A Constructive Revolution in Chinese Literature," I pointed out that

> . . . . when we have a literature written in a national language, then, but not until then, shall we have a national language of literary worth.

Therefore, the first step is to produce in the national language as much good literature as possible. The day when novels, poems, dramas, and essays written in the national language are widely circulated in the country is the day when a truly worthy national language is finally established. Those of us who can write prose in the *pei-hua* at all have not learned it from textbooks or dictionaries, but have acquired its use through our early reading of the great novels written in it. Those great novels which we all loved in our boyhood days have been our most effective teachers in the use of the *pei-hua;* and the *pei-hua* used in the new poetry and prose of the future will be the standard national language of the China of the future.

In this prediction I was vindicated sooner than I had expected. The nation did not wait for the literature of the future to create a standard national language. It was already there, already standardized in its written form, in syntax, in diction, all by the few great novels which have gone to the heart and bosom of every man. When the call came for young writers to express themselves in a living tongue, they suddenly found, to their happy surprise, that they were already in possession of an effective literary medium which was so easy and so simple that they had acquired it without ever having been taught it and without even knowing it!

In order to understand the causes of such a remarkably rapid success in the literary revolution, in establishing the living national language in place of the classical language as the recognized medium of education and of literature, we must first analyze the qualifications which a national language ought to possess. The history of all the modern national languages of the European nations has revealed that a national language is always a dialect which, in the first place, must be the most widely spoken and most generally understood of all the dialects of the country; and which, second, must have produced a fairly large amount of literature so that its form is more or less standardized and its spread can be assisted by the popularity of the literary masterpieces. The Italian language began as the

Tuscan dialect which was not only the most widely known but also the medium in which Dante and Boccaccio and other masters produced their new literature. Modern French began as the French of Paris which was fast becoming the official language of France. In the sixteenth century Francis I ordered all public documents to be written in the French of Paris, and it was in the same language that the poets known as the Pléiade consciously wrote their poetry, and Rabelais and Montaigne wrote their prose works. The same is true of the national languages of Germany and England. Modern English began as the Midland dialect which, being the language of London and the two universities, was the most widely understood dialect of the land, and which was the medium in which Wycliffe translated the Bible, Chaucer wrote his poetic tales, and the dramatists of the pre-Elizabethan and the Elizabethan eras produced their dramas.

It will be easily seen that the national language of China possesses both of these qualifications. In the first place, the mandarin dialects which form the basis of the national language are undoubtedly the most widely spoken dialects of the country, being spoken from Harbin in the northeast to the provinces of Yunnan, Kweichow, and Szechuan in the southwest, covering more than 90 per cent of the territory of China proper and Manchuria. The people from any part of this vast territory can travel to any other part without ever feeling the need of changing their dialect. There are, of course, local variations; but it is a real fact of national importance that students from Yunnan and Kweichow and Szechuan can travel thousands of miles to study in Peking and find, on arriving there, that their dialects are regarded as the the most generally understood dialects of the country.

Second, the mandarin dialects have been the most popular vehicle for the literature of the people during the

last 500 years of its continuous development. All the folk songs of these provinces are composed in these dialects. The popular novels were all written in them: the earlier novels were written in the popular language of the north and of the middle Yangtze Valley, some in the dialect of Shantung, and the more recent ones such as the famous *Dream of the Red Chamber* in the pure dialect of Peking. All these great novels have been most widely read by almost everybody who can read at all; even the literati who pretended to condemn them as vulgar and cheap know them well through reading them stealthily in their boyhood days. They have been the greatest standardizers and the most effective popularizers of the national language, not merely within the region of the mandarin dialects, but far into the heart of the regions where the old dialects still reign. I, for example, came from the mountains of southern Anhwei where the people speak some of the most difficult dialects, and yet I read and immensely enjoyed many of those novels long before I left my ancestral home. It was from these novels that I learned to write prose in the *pei-hua* when I was only 15 years old. The hundreds of young authors who have come into literary prominence in the last 15 years have mostly learned their art and form of writing through the same channel.

The question has often been asked, Why did it take so long for this living language of such wide currency and with such a rich output in literature to receive due recognition as the most fitting instrumentality for education and for literary composition? Why couldn't it replace the dead classical language long before the present revolution in Chinese literature? Why was the spoken language so long despised by the literary class?

The explanation is simple. The authority of the language of the classics was truly too great to be easily overcome in the days of the Empire. This authority became

almost invincible when it was enforced by the power of a long united empire and reinforced by the universal system of state examinations under which the only channel of civil advancement for any man was through the mastery of the classical language and literature. The rise of the national languages in modern Europe was greatly facilitated by the absence of a united empire and of a universal system of classical examination. Yet the two great churches in Rome and in East Europe—the shadowy counterparts of the Roman Empire—with their rigid requirements for advancement in clerical life, have been able to maintain the use of two dead classical languages throughout these many centuries. It is therefore no mere accident that the revolution in Chinese literature came ten years after the abolition of the literary examinations in 1905, and several years after the political revolution of 1911–12.

Moreover, there was lacking in the historical development of the living literature in China the very important element of conscious and articulate movement without which the authority of the classical tradition could not be challenged. There were a number of writers who were attracted by the irresistible power and beauty of the literature of lowly and untutored peasants and dancing girls and street reciters, and who were tempted to produce their best works in the form and the language of the literature of the people. But they were so ashamed of what they had done that many of the earlier novelists published their works anonymously or under strange noms de plume. There was no clear and conscious recognition that the classical language was long dead and must be replaced by the living tongue of the people. Without such articulate challenges the living language and literature of the people never dared to hope that they might some day usurp the high position occupied by the classical literature.

The greatest contribution of the recent literary revolution was to supply this missing factor of conscious attack on the old tradition and of articulate advocacy of the new. The death knell of the classical language was sounded when it was historically established that it had died at least two thousand years ago. And the ascendancy of the language and literature of the people was practically assured when, through contact and comparison with the literature of the West, the value and beauty of the despised novels and dramas were warmly appreciated by the intellectuals of the nation. Once the table of values was turned upside down, once the vulgar language was consciously demonstrated to be the best qualified candidate for the honor of the national language of China, the success of the revolution was beyond doubt. The time had been ripe for the change. The common sense of the people, the songs and tales of numberless and nameless men and women, have been for centuries unconsciously but steadily preparing for this change. All unconscious processes of evolution are of necessity very slow and wasteful. As soon as these processes are made conscious and articulate, intelligent guidance and experimentation become possible, and the work of many centuries may be telescoped into the brief period of a few years.[2]

[2] The story of the Literary Renaissance in China is vividly told in Dr. Tsi C. Wang's *The Youth Movement in China* (New York: New Republic Press, 1927).

IV

INTELLECTUAL LIFE, PAST AND PRESENT

IT HAS often been said that the vast difference now existing between Western civilization and the civilizations of the East is a new thing, dating back only to the seventeenth century. Before 1600, before the rise of the new science and the Industrial Revolution, it has been pointed out, there was no real difference between the East and the West. In certain aspects, it may even be said that the East, in particular the East as represented by the civilization of China, was superior to the West. Professor R. H. Tawney says:

> China had mastered certain fundamental arts of life at a time when the West was still ignorant of them. Like her peasants, who ploughed with iron when Europe used wood, and continued to use it when Europe used steel, she carried one type of economic system and social organization to a high level of achievement, and was not conscious of the need to improve or supersede it." "The phenomenon which disturbed the balance was the rise of the great industry, first in England, and then, a generation later, on the continent of Europe and in the United States.[1]

I myself made practically the same remark a few years ago when I said:

> The difference between the Eastern and Western civilizations is primarily a difference in the tools used. The West has during the last two hundred years moved far ahead of the East merely because certain Western nations have been able to devise new tools for the conquest of nature and for the multiplication of the power to do work. The East, whence have come a number of the epoch-making tools of ancient civilization, has failed to carry on that great tradition and is left behind in the stage of manual labor while the Western world has long entered the age of steam and electricity.[2]

[1] *Land and Labour in China*, p. 1.

[2] In *Whither Mankind* (ed. Charles A. Beard), p. 27.

While not questioning the evident correctness of these facts of recent history, one is tempted to raise a more fundamental question: Whether or not there was some fundamental difference between the intellectual tradition of the East and that of the West which may account for the vast differences in the later stages of their respective cultural development. A comparative study of the history of the intellectual developments of India and China, and of the European group, from the ancient Greeks to the seventeenth century, has convinced me that there is a real difference between these cultural groups which goes far back to the earliest beginnings of intellectual life among these peoples and which is traceable throughout all their later periods of intellectual development. Indeed, the difference is so great and so basic that one is almost justified in saying that all the vast differences in the most recent times which so sharply mark off the Western civilization from the Eastern have been determined or predetermined by this early difference in intellectual pursuit and endeavor.

One of the simplest methods for such a comparative study is to prepare a comparative chronology of the intellectual history of these various peoples, beginning with the earliest periods and coming down to our own times, indicating in every period the great leaders of thought and belief, and the essential characteristics of their activities, methodology, and permanent contributions to the intellectual heritage of their own civilization. Such a procedure, simple as it is, is very often tale-telling and brings out in prominent relief the fundamental differences among the intellectual classes of these cultural units. Such a comparative chronology will show that these three peoples were already becoming quite different from one another as early as their first periods of intellectual maturity. The ancient leaders of India were developing great religious

systems, the Chinese were working out their moral and political philosophies, and the Greeks, who could rival their Chinese contemporaries in their philosophizing about morals and government, were remarkably different from them in their predominant interest in the objects of nature, in mathematics, in geometry, and in mechanics.

The difference, it is true, has been one of degree of emphasis. But it is a difference in degree, which, in the course of time, becomes a difference in kind. It is true there were Chinese thinkers like Mo Ti, whose preserved writings clearly indicate that they had been interested in the problems of number and of geometric figures; just as there were Greek thinkers whose moral and social ideas often bear striking resemblances to the school of Confucius and Mencius. It is true that both Confucius and Aristotle taught the doctrine of the mean, the *via media;* but what a difference existed between these two philosophers when we remember how great was Aristotle's interest in the study of physics, of physiology, and of biology! It would be impossible to imagine a Chinese Aristotle patiently collecting specimens of plants and animals, and classifying and describing them. And, what a great difference, when we remember the continuous development of geometry from the Egyptians down to Euclid! In our comparative chronology, it will be seen that Mencius was almost contemporaneous with Aristotle and Euclid; and Archimedes was exactly contemporaneous with Hsun Tze. When Mencius was theorizing about the innate goodness of human nature, Euclid was perfecting the science of geometry and laying the foundation of European science. And when Hsun Tze was proving, against the kindly Mencius, the essentially brutal nature of man, and vehemently condemning all theorizing about solidity and color, Archimedes was working out the laws of mechanics.

These are not isolated instances when we think of the

scientific interest in all the Greek philosophers from Thales to Aristotle. We are reluctantly led to the conclusion that, even in that very early age, the intellectual developments of the Chinese and the Greeks were already taking radically divergent directions—the Chinese almost exclusively in the direction of ethical and political theories, and the Greeks in the study of plants and animals, of mathematics and geometry, of tools and mechanics.

This difference in intellectual interest and pursuit may be traced throughout the subsequent ages. Even in the medieval ages, when religion reigned supreme in the East as well as in the West, there was discernible in Europe a gradual revival of interest in the scientific tradition of the Greeks. Medicine and mathematics continued to be cultivated; and the first of the medieval universities was a great medical school. The modern student may smile at those ceremonious dissections of the human body in the medieval universities; yet they are significant indications of a scientific interest deplorably absent in the intellectual life of medieval China. Throughout medieval China intellectual life tended to be farther removed from the objects of nature, and more and more deeply submerged either in empty contemplation or in purely literary pursuits. The medieval religions taught man to contemplate nature, to be in harmony with it, to obey it, but not to divulge its secret and subjugate it. And the institution of the literary examinations which furnished the only channel to social honor and political office was effectively molding Chinese intellectual life into purely literary gymnastics.

The Confucianist or neo-Confucianist Renaissance in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries made grandiose promises of a new scientific era. The school of Cheng-yi and Chu Hsi taught that the method of knowledge was "to go to the things or objects and investigate into the reasons thereof." The philosophical slogans of the age were: "Go

to the things" (*ke wu*); "Learn the reason of all things" (*ch'iung li*); and "Extend your knowledge to the utmost" (*chih chih*). And the scope of "things" was as extensive as nature itself. "From your own body to the reason of being of heaven and earth, everything is an object of investigation." "Every grass and every shrub must be studied." The scope of study as thus defined by Cheng Yi is exactly the scope of natural science.

But how shall one proceed to investigate the reason of things? These philosophers tell us: "Investigate one thing at a time. Understand one thing today; another tomorrow. When you accumulate sufficient knowledge, you will suddenly understand the whole." But how? Without a scientific tradition such as the Greeks and the medieval doctors bequeathed to modern Europe, these Chinese philosophers were greatly handicapped. They had the scientific spirit; but they had no method. There was not even the tradition of collecting and classifying specimens. The only method was observation and reflection. It must be admitted that some of their observations are full of scientific insight. Chu Hsi, for instance, made this remarkable observation: "I have noticed shells are found on high mountains, sometimes in the rocks. The rocks were the soils of old days, and the shells once lived in the water. The low places became high, and the soft mud turned into hard rock." He was unaware that he was thus anticipating Leonardo da Vinci by 300 years in understanding the true nature of fossils. He also observed from the existence of shells on high mountains and from the wave-like form of mountain ranges that the mountains had once been under water. He told the disciples to think more deeply so that they might understand.

But it was very difficult for these philosophers to carry out this ambitious scientific program of inquiry into the reason of things without feeling they were being defeated

at every turn of their effort. And, after all, what has the reason of fossil-formation or even mountain-formation to do with the moral well-being of the individual? Has not the other great philosopher, Cheng Hao, the elder brother of Cheng Yi, said that one may lose one's moral determination by playing with things? So these philosophers began to narrow down the scope of "things" to be investigated to three categories: "understanding the principles taught in the books; finding out the right and wrong in history; and knowing how to deal with men." By this retraction they went back to the old emphasis on ethical and political theorizing and to the bookish and literary pursuits, and forsook the path of an ambitious venture to investigate the reason of all things in nature.

This retraction, though unfortunate, was probably unavoidable. Without a scientific tradition back of it, without the habit of handling the objects of nature, and without apparatus necessary to aid the sense organs, such an ambitious program of scientific investigation was impossible. In the early years of the sixteenth century the great philosopher Wang Yang-ming ridiculed this procedure of Chu Hsi by showing how impossible it was to carry it into effect. He said:

> The great philosopher Chu told us to investigate all things in nature. Have you ever tried it? I have tried it. My friend Mr. Chien and I decided to practise what the great philosopher has taught us to do. We decided to begin with an inquiry into the "reason" of the bamboo in my courtyard. Mr. Chien sat by the bamboo and began his investigation. He sat there three days and three nights, and gained no insight into it. Then I myself took his place and sat there seven days and seven nights. I was terribly exhausted, but the tree refused to reveal any of its reasons. So in the end we concluded that we were probably not qualified to become philosophers since we had not the ability to investigate the reason of things!

So Wang Yang-ming taught a new philosophy which held that reason was not in things, but within us; and that to

understand things must mean to awaken in us the innate and intuitive knowledge which is the standard and criterion of right and wrong in all things.

But the scientific spirit preached by Cheng Yi and Chu Hsi could not easily be killed by the ridicule of the School of Wang Yang-ming. It lived on and brought about an age of scientific scholarship in the humanities—in the study of the classical and historical literature of the past. Chu Hsi himself initiated this critical scholarship by his patient and painstaking commentaries on the classics, and on the other extra-canonical works of antiquity. He raised numerous problems for critical study: textual criticism, philological reconstruction of the meaning of old words, and the determination of authorship and date of ancient texts. In all these fields of work, the Chinese scholars found themselves quite at home, and the scientific spirit which had failed of application in the study of things in nature began to produce remarkable results in the study of words and texts.

This new critical scholarship reached its maturity in the seventeenth century under the leadership of two great scholars, Ku Yen-wu (died 1681) and Yen Jo-chu (died 1704), the former founding the science of Chinese phonology, and the latter, higher criticism of the classics. Both of them were also interested in historical and geographical studies and helped to place them on a critical and scientific basis. Both of them were conscientiously scientific in their methods which required every theory, every philological reconstruction, every historical statement, to be supported by evidence. Ku Yen-wu, for example, once offered 160 evidences to prove the ancient pronunciation of a single word! The philosophy of scientific investigation of the twelfth century had at last found a workable scientific method in the seventeenth. This scientific spirit and methodology placed the new scholarship on a solid basis, and

produced the age of scientific research in the humanistic and historical studies during the last three hundred years.

But what a difference there still was between the East and the West, when we compare the Chinese learning of these three centuries with that of modern Europe! If we make a comparative chronology of the leaders of Chinese and European learning during the seventeenth century—the formative period both for the new science in modern Europe and the new learning in China—we shall see that four years before Ku Yen-wu was born (1613), Galileo had invented his telescope and was using it to revolutionize the science of astronomy, and Kepler was publishing his revolutionary studies of Mars and his new laws of the movements of the planets. When Ku Yen-wu worked on his philological studies and reconstructed the archaic pronunciations, Harvey had published his great work on the circulation of blood, and Galileo his two great works on astronomy and the new science. Eleven years before Yen Jo-chu began his critical study of the *Book of History*, Torricelli had completed his great experiment on the pressure of air. Shortly after, Boyle announced the results of his experiments in chemistry, and formulated the law that bears his name. The year before Ku Yen-wu completed his epoch-making *Five Books* on philological studies, Newton had worked out his calculus and his analysis of white light. In 1680, Ku wrote his preface to the final texts of his philological works; in 1687, Newton published his *Principia*.

The striking similarity in the scientific spirit and method of these great leaders of the age of new learning in their respective countries makes the fundamental difference between their fields of work all the more conspicuous. Galileo, Kepler, Boyle, Harvey, and Newton worked with the objects of nature, with stars, balls, inclining planes, telescopes, microscopes, prisms, chemicals, and numbers and

astronomical tables. And their Chinese contemporaries worked with books, words, and documentary evidences. The latter created three hundred years of scientific book learning; the former created a new science and a new world.

This all too long historical introduction is not meant merely to indulge in an idle speculation on what I have considered as one of the possible real differences between the civilization of China and that of the West. It is meant to present here the historical background of the intellectual changes that are now taking place in present-day China. In this background two things stand out pre-eminently. First, by a difference in emphasis, the intellectual life in China has in all these centuries been confined to the sphere of ethical, social, and political philosophy, and the purely literary training of the intellectual class has tended to limit its activities to the field of books and documents. And, second, in the last 800 years, there has grown up a scientific tradition, first as an intellectual ideal taught in the most influential school of philosophical thought, then as a scientific technique, even though it was applied not to the objects of nature but to humanistic and historical studies. The ideal is to investigate the nature of all things and to understand them. The technique is to build up every theory or hypothesis on the firm ground of sufficient evidence.

Because of the long-established humanistic and literary tradition, it has not been easy for our older scholars to take up the natural sciences and their applications without radically changing their working habits. It was not easy for them to discard their flowing robes to put on the aprons of the laboratory worker, and to soil their delicate fingers in handling test-tubes and boiling unpleasant solutions. It was not easy for them to leave their books to work with the strange things of nature. Without long and thorough

training under able leadership it is always a temptation for even younger students to regard science as another form of book knowledge. The laboratory habit and the love for instruments of precision will require a long time to cultivate among Chinese youth.

But, fortunately, there is this scientific tradition which makes the Chinese feel not entirely at sea in the scientific age. When Western science first came to China it was necessary to find a suitable translation for the term "science," and the name chosen was "*ke—chih*," that is, "go—extend," an abbreviation of the old philosophical slogan, "Go to the things and extend your knowledge to the utmost." That term remained in use for almost half a century until it was gradually replaced by the new name "*ko—hsueh*" which means "systematic knowledge." There was no open resistance to the new science from the West, which was from the very beginning hailed by the Chinese intellectuals as a useful extension of the Chinese ideal to investigate the reason of all things. The only resistance was an unconscious one, the resistance of the old literary and bookish habits. It was a very important gain for the nation when the intelligentsia could look upon the new science with appreciation and welcome it with enthusiasm. So the scholars helped the early missionaries to translate the science textbooks into Chinese, and wrote and preached that the new generation must learn all the wonderful store of knowledge in mathematics, mechanics, the science of light, sound, and electricity, and in chemistry—the knowledge which is the foundation of the power and prosperity of the Western nations. But they themselves naturally continued to write their classical compositions and carried on their researches in the old books and documents.

The period of Chinese scientific activity did not begin until the first years of the Republic. The older reformers had only introduced a book knowledge of the sciences,

without fully understanding their intellectual significance, without adequate equipment for laboratory work, and without adequately trained leaders to organize the studies and researches. Most of the textbooks on science were translated by men who admired science most sincerely but who had only a very superficial book knowledge of the subjects in the Japanese schools, and never did real laboratory work or undertook field expeditions. The schools were beginning to have classroom experiments in physics and chemistry, and botanical and zoölogical specimens; but they were as bookish as the textbooks, and were useless for the training of scientific workers.

But the increase of young students in the American and European universities brought many of them into well-equipped scientific laboratories and under the leadership of able scientists. The thorough training they received abroad enabled them, on their return to China, to become leaders of the new sciences, builders of modern laboratories, and founders of new institutes of scientific research. The Science Society of China, which now has a membership of a thousand, was founded in 1914 by a group of undergraduate students at Cornell University, and the first scientific monthly, the organ of that society, was edited in the rooms of one of the private boarding houses in Ithaca, New York. The Geological Survey was founded in 1913 by Mr. V. K. Ting, a graduate of the University of Glasgow. And one of the founders of the national Academia Sinica, the most comprehensive organization for corporate research with nine research institutes, was Mr. Yang Chuan, a graduate of Cornell.

The National Geological Survey is only 20 years old, and the Academia Sinica only 6 years old. All the scientific progress in China has been the work of these 20 years. The progress cannot be very great; and yet, as we look back on these brief 20 years, we can at least say that a very good

start has been made, and in spite of disturbing conditions throughout the country, in spite of great financial distress, much progress has been achieved in a number of the sciences, notably in geology, biology, archaeology, and other historical sciences. In geology and paleontology, because of the exceptionally able leadership of three native geologists, V. K. Ting, W. H. Wong, and J. S. Lee, and because of the excellent co-operation of their foreign colleagues, in particular, Dr. A. W. Grabau of America and Dr. J. G. Andersson of Sweden—in these sciences China has in the 20 years not only succeeded in catching up with the general progress made outside of China, but has also made valuable contributions to these sciences which are freely acknowledged as of great importance. These versatile geologists, in their successful work in reading the history and resources of the earth in China, have had the surplus energy and leisure to take up many scientific explorations not strictly within their field of work. They are responsible for the discovery of neolithic culture in Honan and Manchuria, for the soil survey and fuel research, and for the more famous discovery in Choukoutien of the "Peking Man," the *Sinanthropus Pekinensis*.

While these important advances were being made in the various branches of the natural sciences, a great change was coming over the study of the humanities and the historical sciences. These studies had long been the exclusive fields of Chinese scholars trained in the critical tradition of the last three hundred years of native scholarship. No modern and foreign-trained students were supposed to have sufficient training and qualification to intrude into the sanctuary of the older scholars. But, from 1917 on, young scholars trained in the American and European universities began to invade this sacred realm of old learning and to become professors of Chinese philosophy, literature, and history. They brought with them not only the

new and more fully developed technique of historical criticism and research, but also new points of view which saw the old problems in a totally different and sometimes revolutionary light. Many of the old problems which had perplexed generations of old scholars became quite intelligible in the hands of the modern trained workers. Philological studies were greatly facilitated by the aid of the comparative technique perfected by the philologists of the West. Historical researches were revolutionized by the new insistence on the evidence, not merely of books and documents, but of real objects and monuments unearthed by archaeological excavations. The old methodology, critical and scientific though it was, had to be supplemented and made more conscious by the modern developments. In the course of less than twenty years a complete revolution has been brought about in almost all the fields of historical research once monopolized by the old scholars.

This revolution, which constitutes the humanist movement of the Chinese Renaissance, has been achieved in several ways. In the first place, the scope of the work has been greatly widened. The old scholars were essentially students of the classics of the Confucianist school, and their field was restricted to the narrow circle of these classics and the dynastic histories. Modern scholarship, on the other hand, contended that the scope of historical research must be as extensive as the whole history of Chinese civilization in all its aspects, and must include the non-Confucianist and non-classical materials. Moreover, the history of Chinese cultural institutions cannot be fully understood without reference to the neighboring cultures with which China came into close contact in various periods of her cultural development. Therefore, this study must include all the cultural histories of the races that had relationship with the Chinese at one time or another.

Second, new materials have been brought in for com-

parative studies. It was found that the old books could not be studied without the aid of the materials introduced from outside the books themselves. The reconstruction of historical pronunciations of Chinese words, for example, cannot be achieved merely with the aid of old dictionaries and rhyme-books which were the only materials used by the older scholars, but must make use of the older dialects in Southern China, especially in Canton, and the old pronunciations preserved in the Japanese, Korean, and other neighboring languages.

Third, a new spirit has been introduced into these studies. The spirit of doubt, which had already been in existence among the seventeenth-century scholars, is now seriously entering into the sinological studies as one of the most powerful guiding principles. When, in 1917, I began my course on the History of Chinese Philosophy with the age of the poets and ignored all the previous periods of sage-rulers, the treatment was considered by the conservative students as so outrageous that it almost created a revolt in my class. But a few years later, one of the students of that class published a series of historical studies in which he not only repudiated the legendary eras and sage-emperors, but seriously questioned the historical existence of the Hsia Dynasty, one of the three dynasties of antiquity.[3] This spirit of doubt is not merely negative, but is essentially creative, in that it emphasizes the supreme importance of establishing belief on the solid basis of evidence.

And lastly, the critical methodology of the older scholarship has been subjected to new improvement and revision and thereby made more effective. It was not enough to offer evidences for a theory; the evidences must first be rigidly tested as to their authenticity. It was not enough to make use of historic monuments accidentally unearthed;

[3] *Autobiography of a Chinese Historian*, translated by A. W. Hummel, 1932.

it is necessary to excavate them systematically and scientifically, and they must be studied together with their origin and environment. It was not enough to have a critical method; the method must be self-conscious so that it may be able to criticize itself and guard itself against loose application. The older methodology was often lacking in the historico-evolutionary standpoint; Ku Yen-wu, who founded the scientific study of Chinese phonology, actually hoped that his studies might help to bring about a restoration of Chinese speech to the classical pronunciation of the ancients! Such unconscious errors, common to all scholars of the older tradition, are now slowly passing away with the introduction of the genetic and evolutionary methods.

By this revolution in sinological studies,[4] by this invasion of modern scientific scholarship into the historical fields, the critical and scientific tradition of the last three hundred years has been given a new recognition and new meaning. It has made Chinese youth understand that the so-called procedure of science is, after all, not so alien and strange to the Chinese intellectual tradition. It has become possible to make the general public better understand the nature of this new procedure by its application to those historical studies which it can best grasp. And, most important of all, this critical and scientific research into the cultural past of the nation will probably have the desirable effect of lessening the force of conservatism, by undermining dogmatism, by discrediting ill-founded credulity, by illuminating what once was only unfathomable darkness and mystery.

[4] Leadership in this field is now chiefly located in the Institute of History and Linguistics, of the Academia Sinica.

V

RELIGION IN CHINESE LIFE

IT HAS often been observed that the Chinese people are not interested in what the Christians understand as religious life. It has even been said that the Chinese people are not religious.

It is true that the Chinese are not so religious as the Hindus, or even as the Japanese; and they are certainly not so religious as the Christian missionaries desire them to be. Practically all the prominent leaders of thought in China today are openly agnostics and even atheists. And the young men are even openly anti-religious. Although the fierce anti-religious movements of a few years ago have now subsided, it cannot be denied that the educated people in China are indifferent to religion and that the whole intellectual tendency there is not favorable to any religious movement or revival.

But I wish to point out that it is entirely wrong to say that the Chinese are not religious. No people is really incapable of religious life or experience. But there is always a difference in the definitions. And there is always a vast difference in the degree of religiosity or piety, varying from the modern churchgoer to the medieval saint. In the eyes of the medieval saint no one in this audience who listens patiently to a "heathen" lecturing on comparative religion can be said to be religious! Similarly, a people who may not have cultivated such habits as church-going, grace-saying, hymn-singing, and praying, and who may take no interest in the problems of the second person in the trinity, of transubstantiation, of the proper degree of submergence in baptism—such a people may have their own re-

ligion which may not necessarily be worse than that of any other people.

The Chinese word for "religion" is *chiao* which means teaching or a system of teaching. To teach people to believe in a particular deity is a *chiao;* but to teach them how to behave toward other men is also a *chiao.* The ancients did say that "the sages founded religions (*chio*) on the ways of the gods." But it is not always necessary to make use of such supernatural expedients. And the Chinese people make no distinction between the theistic religions and the purely moral teachings of their sages. Therefore, the term *chiao* is applied to Buddhism, Taoism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, as well as Confucianism. They are all systems of moral teaching. Teaching a moral life is the essential thing; and "the ways of the gods" are merely one of the possible means of sanctioning that teaching. That is in substance the Chinese conception of religion.

The other factor, the degree of piety, which is in reality a degree of religious fanaticism, is always a result of historical circumstances. It is as accidental as the number of gods worshiped or the color of the vestments of the priests. In the life of every people with a long history there are always periods of varied intensity in religious experience. The Greek philosophers calmly discussed their gods, and some ridiculed them; the Romans tolerated them and the Christians destroyed them all in favor of their one God; the medieval saints lived and had their whole being in God; the modern Christian peoples fought long and bloody wars over their religious differences and burned witches and heretics in the name of their God; and the present age seems to be again returning to the attitude of the Greek sophists.

The Chinese people, too, went through all kinds of vicissitudes in their religious development. There were long

periods in Chinese history when this people also became so fanatically religious that a pious monk would burn a finger, or an arm, or the whole body, willingly and devoutly, as the supreme form of devotion to his Buddhist faith. There were times when every fourth man in the population would be a Buddhist monk or a Taoist priest. There were times when the court and the people spent millions of ounces of silver yearly to build grand temples and monasteries, and millions of acres of land were donated to the monasteries as voluntary offerings to the gods. No student of Chinese history can say that the Chinese are incapable of religious experience, even when judged by the standards of medieval Europe or pious India.

But there were a series of historical factors of very great importance which tended to make the Chinese people less other-worldly than the other historical races of the earth. One of these was the fact that our civilization began in the north-temperate zone where the bounty of nature was never abundant and the struggle for existence was always hard. This produced a hard working, simply living, but never wildly imaginative people. They had no time to indulge in speculating about the ways of the gods, or in effusive praises of the wonderful benevolence of heaven which they never enjoyed. They had a very simple religion consisting chiefly in a worship of their own ancestors, a belief in the spirits and the powers of the natural forces, a worship of a supreme God or heaven (which was probably evolved out of the worship of natural objects), and a belief in divination. To these they added a belief in the idea of retribution of good and evil. There was neither Hell nor Paradise; no life after death, only a firm belief in the importance of the perpetuation of the family line, probably primarily for economic reasons. This was the original religion of the Chinese. The extreme simplicity of this racial religion was the most remarkable in the history of man-

kind. There was little mythology, and little elaborate ritualism. It never had a generic name, and I have elsewhere[1] proposed to call it "Siniticism."

Another important historical factor is the fact that this already very simple religion was further simplified and purified by the early philosophers of ancient China. Our first great philosopher was a founder of naturalism; and our second great philosopher was an agnostic. Laotze taught that heaven and earth were unkind: they treated all beings like dogs and grass. He revolted against the anthropomorphic conception of a supreme God. There was only a natural process which he called the "Tao," or way. Everything becomes such of itself. The Tao does nothing; and yet it achieves everything. It was this naturalistic conception of the universe which in later ages always came up to serve as an effective weapon against superstition and anthropomorphic religion.

Confucius was a humanist and an agnostic. When asked about death and the proper duties to the spirits and the gods, he replied: "We know not about life, how can we know death? And we have not learned how to serve men, how can we serve the gods?" Life and human society are the chief concern of Confucianism and, through it, the chief concern of the Chinese people. Confucius also said: "To say that you know a thing when you know it, and to say that you do not know when you know it not, that is knowledge." That is his formulation of agnosticism.

A historically minded man, Confucius did not openly repudiate the spirits and the gods of the people. But he told one of his disciples: "Revere the gods, but be aloof from them." And in the *Analects*, this rule was laid down: "Worship *as if* something were present; worship a god *as if* he were present." This is no hypocrisy, but the psychology

[1] Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," in *A Symposium on Chinese Culture* (ed. Mrs. Sophia Chen Zen), Shanghai, 1931.

of religious reverence. As his followers have put it, "When you have purified yourself for the worship and put on the grand sacrificial robes, the solemnity of the occasion naturally makes you feel *as if* the objects of worship were really above you, and on the right and left of you." And it is not uncommon today to find written on the village shrines in big characters the Confucian motto: "As if he were above you" (*ju tsai ch'i shang*)!

Laotze and Confucius were teachers of a naturalistic attitude toward religion. The former taught us to follow the course of nature; the latter, to abide by fate. "Life and death are ordained, and wealth and honor are determined in Heaven." This deterministic attitude, while quite religious in itself, was not favorable to the older belief in the efficacy of appeasing the gods for favors or for averting misfortunes. "A gentleman," says Confucius, "sorrows not, nor fears. As long as he finds no inward guilt, why should he sorrow, and what should he fear?"

And the Confucianists actually tried to found a new religion of filial piety without the benefit of the gods. This religion centers around the idea that the human body is the sacred inheritance from the parents, and must always be regarded as such. "There are three forms of filial piety: the highest is to glorify one's parents; next, not to degrade them; and lastly, to support them." "This body is inherited from our parents. How dare we act irreverently with this inheritance? Therefore, to live carelessly is a sin against filial duty; so is disloyalty to our princes; so is dishonesty in office; so is faithlessness to friends; and so is lack of courage on the battlefield. Failure in any one of these five duties will disgrace one's parents. Dare we act without reverence?" "The dutiful son never moves a step without thinking of his parents; nor utters a word without thinking of his parents." The parents thus take the place of God or the gods as a new moral sanction of human action.

But all these rationalistic simplifications were of course too sophisticated for the general populace. The people carried on their Sinitic religion as of old, and from time to time they added to it the new increments acquired by contact with other races. And from time to time, great religious movements arose under the leadership of men more pious and inspired than Laotze and Confucius.

Thus there arose the great religion of Moism in the fifth century B.C. under the great religious reformer Mo Ti who was dissatisfied with the rationalist tendencies of the age and who tried to revive the old Sinitic religion by purifying it and giving it a new and more inspiring meaning. He taught a personal god who wills and knows and has the power to reward and punish, and whose will is love—unlimited love for all men without distinction.

Thus again there arose the great religious movement in the second century B.C. under the Confucianist leader Tung Chung-shu, who tried to found a state religion of Siniticism under the disguise of Confucianism. The heart of this new religion of the Han Dynasty was the old Sinitic idea of a teleological god and of retribution for good and evil. He taught that "the action of man, when it reaches the highest level of goodness or evil, all flows into the universal course of Heaven and Earth, and causes responsive reverberations in their manifestations." When the government has done an evil act, God will give warning in the form of such catastrophes as fire, floods, famines, earthquakes, and mountain slides. And when the warnings are not heeded, then heaven will cause strange anomalies to appear on earth to terrify the rulers into repentance. The class of "anomalies" include such things as comets, sun eclipses, the growing of beards on women, etc. And it is only when these anomalies fail to check misgovernment that final ruin and destruction shall befall the empire. For God is always kind to the rulers of man. This religion, which apparently had the political motive of attempting to

check the unlimited power of the despots, was zealously perpetuated by the scholars throughout the later centuries.

Then, about the first century B.C., there came the great cultural invasion from India, the introduction of Buddhism. No one really knows how this came about. By 65 A.D. it had already been embraced by a prince of the imperial family; by 165 it was accepted by an emperor who worshiped Buddha together with Laotze. By 200 it was defended by one of the Chinese intellectuals in Southern China. By 300 it was talked about by all educated Chinese and was becoming the most popular religion of the people.

China had never seen so elaborate and spectacular a religion. The very simple faith of Siniticism was overwhelmed, and it was speedily conquered. The Chinese people were dazzled, baffled, and carried away by this marvelous religion of rich imagery, beautiful and captivating ritualism, and wonderfully ingenious metaphysics. There was not only a heaven, but thousands of heavens; not only a hell, but 18 hells of ever increasing severity and horror. The religious imagination of the Indian people seemed so inexhaustible and always of such marvelous architectonic structure. China readily acknowledged her crushing defeat.

China was so completely Buddhist that everything that came from the Buddhist country of India was readily accepted and became a fashion. Even the worst features of Mahāyāna Buddhism were blindly taken up by Chinese believers. The practice of burning one's body as a sacrifice was frequently encouraged by the extreme fanatics; the lives of monks who burned themselves to death were recorded in the Buddhist biographies in a special section as exemplary achievements of supreme devotion and piety. Under the T'ang dynasty, some strange monk from India would bring a piece of human bone and call it a sacred relic of the Buddha; and he would be so devoutly believed that

the imperial court and the whole population would suspend all business and march in solemn processions to greet the Buddha relic. Truly had humanist China lost her head and gone completely mad under the powerful enchantment of this imported religion from India!

But the native rationalistic mentality of the Chinese intelligentsia gradually reasserted itself and revolted against this humiliating domination of the whole nation by a foreign religion which was opposed to all the best traditions of the native civilization. Its celibacy was fundamentally opposed to the Chinese society which emphasized the importance of continuation of the ancestral lineage. Its mendicant system was distasteful to the Chinese social and political thinker who was naturally alarmed by the presence of millions of monks and nuns living as parasites on society. Its austere forms of asceticism and self-sacrifice and suicide were fundamentally against the idea of filial piety which regarded the human body as a sacred inheritance from one's parents. And its wonderfully abstruse mythology and metaphysics, never ending in the most ingenious inventions of new gods and new titles of the gods, and never failing in the most hair-splitting differentiations and sub-differentiations, were most foreign to the simple and straightforward ways of thinking of the native tradition. And, most important of all, the whole scheme of salvation as taught in Buddhism seemed to the Chinese thinker as most selfish and anti-social. Each man endeavors to become an arahat, a bodhisattva, or a buddha. But, the Chinese began to ask, for what end? What value is there in a salvation which must require the forsaking of the family and the desertion of all one's duties to the family and the state?

The Chinese revolt against Buddhism took many forms. At first it was an attempt to replace it by some native imitation of the imported institution. The native religion of

Taoism, which rose in the centuries after the gradual invasion of Buddhism, was a revival of the old Sinitic religion of the people under the influence of the impact of Buddhist ideas and practices. First unconsciously, and then fully consciously, Taoism undertook to kill its foreign rival by imitating every feature of it. It invented a founder by superimposing this popular Sinitic religion on Laotze who was then elevated to the position of a supreme god. A Taoist trinity was modeled after the Buddhist. A Taoist canon was gradually but consciously forged after the model of the Buddhist sutras. Heavens and hells were taken over from the Indian religion, and given Chinese names, and they were presided over by Chinese gods deified from the historical heroes of the race. Orders of priests and priestesses were formed in imitation of the Buddhist monasteries and nunneries.

Then they began to persecute the foreign religion of Buddhism. Several great and nation-wide persecutions took place in 446, in 574, in 845, and in 955. In each case, the motive was clearly one of a nationalistic attack on an alien faith.

In the meantime, the Chinese Buddhists themselves had started their revolt against Buddhism. They could not long swallow the whole output of the wonderful ingenuity of Indian metaphysical obscurantism and religious imagination. They began to simplify it to two essential elements: meditation and insight. Then they began to see that even meditation was not quite necessary. So they threw overboard all that complicated machinery of meditation, beginning with breath-control and ending in the attainment of the supreme stages of quietude and the mastery of supernatural powers. Soon they began to preach that all the ritualism and verbalism, and all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, all the sutras and charms and spells were useless and must be discarded. The Buddhahood is

within you; the law is within you; and salvation is within you. And salvation must be sought through the ripe awakening of one's own understanding, through intellectual enlightenment, for which no external assistance could avail, and which must be the result of the individual's patient seeking and traveling and coming into contact with the best minds of the age. This was the meaning of the development of Dhyana or Ch'an or Zen Buddhism in China.[2]

Then the Chinese Confucianist scholars arose in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and dealt the fatal blow to this already much-battered Buddhist religion. The Confucianists began to understand the religion of Buddhism as simplified by the Zennists, and they proceeded to reinterpret the classical literature of Confucianism in the light of what they had learned from the medieval religions. To their delight and surprise, they could find all the problems of the Zen schools in the philosophers of the classical period. There was the ideal of the perfection of the individual through intellectual training. But the perfection of the individual was never an end in itself, nor was it merely for the sake of individual salvation in which the Chinese philosophers were never interested. The perfection of the individual was only the necessary step for the ordering of the family, the state, and the world. The whole aim must be the improvement of society. The ideal was to be a social one.

All this they found in a little book of post-Confucian origin, called the *Great Learning*, a booklet of 1,700 words, which had been a part of the *Li Ki* and had attracted very little attention from the scholars for hundreds of years until the Sung scholars began to dig it out of its long oblivion. From this little book, the neo-Confucian philosophers slowly built up a secular philosophy which became the

[2] Hu Shih, "Development of Zen Buddhism in China," in *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, January, 1931.

orthodox moral and social teaching for more than seven centuries. The new philosophy appealed to the humanist tradition of the Chinese, and began to have the sanction of the government and the public. After this philosophy had attained official recognition and was taught in all Chinese schools, the medieval religions began to fade away and die out without another persecution. The best minds of the nation no longer patronized their teachings, and even the Zen schools no longer produced first-rate leaders. Their vitality had been sapped away by the vogue of the more humane and social and more intelligible native systems of thought. The revolt of China against the religion of India had succeeded.

The development of critical and scientific scholarship from the seventeenth century down has tended to make the new Confucianist thought drift still farther and farther away from the influence of the medieval religions. The new intellectual life, which was characterized by the development of the humanistic and historical studies, was a continuation of the tendency traceable back to the early days of the Chinese revolt against Buddhism.

But, with the contact of the various religious sects of Christianity, there began in the last decades of the nineteenth century a new movement to give China a native religion. It was thought by some leaders of the reforms that probably at least one of China's weaknesses was the lack of a national religion which could uplift the morals of the people and unite the feelings and sentiments of the whole nation. The outstanding leader of this line of thought was K'ang Yu-wei, the reformer of 1898, and the religion he proposed to establish as the national religion of China was Confucianism. He wrote and preached in favor of this political establishment of Confucianism. He initiated the practice of dating Chinese history from the birth of Con-

fucius (551 B.C.), after the fashion in the West of dating history in terms of the Christian era.

But he belonged to a school of classical scholarship which believed that a large portion of the classics, the portion that was originally written in the so-called "ancient script," was a forgery made in the Han dynasty. He tried to prove, with copious evidences, and with audacity and critical methodology, that these texts were forged by a clever scholar of the beginning of the Christian era, by name Liu Hsin, who fabricated them as a moral support to the usurper-emperor Wang Mang. His arguments were quite convincing to many scholars, and this new critical school has a large following even to this day. But his ardent advocacy of a political establishment of Confucianism as a state religion was received with little or no enthusiasm. Even his great disciple, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, was opposed to it. The explanation was quite simple. The few classics he had tried to dethrone were the most readable and the most influential of all the classics. If they were to be condemned as forgeries, very little would be left of Confucianism. The remaining texts were difficult to understand and contained little moral teaching. The new interpretations which K'ang's school had tried to read into them were quite as abstruse as the texts themselves. To establish Confucianism after such a radical expurgation would be as ridiculous as to see *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark left out.

As late as 1915 and 1916, K'ang Yu-wei and his followers tried to influence Yuan Shih-kai and the Constitutional Convention to incorporate a clause in the new Constitution of the Republic, establishing the teaching of the Confucian school as the basic system of moral education in China. Under the influence of Yuan Shih-kai, this clause was accepted by the framers of the draft Constitution. But the new leaders of the intellectual class, notably Ts'ai Yuen-p'ei, Wu Chih-hui, and Ch'en Tu-shiu, fought hard against

its adoption in the final text of the Constitution. The words of Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu are worth quoting as indicating the new temper of the age. He said: "All religions are useless as instruments of government and education. They are to be classed with the other discarded idols of a past age. Even if we may concede that a religion may be needed by an uneducated people, are we justified in disregarding all the teachings of the other religions? We shall be guilty of encroaching upon the religious liberty of the people, if the other religions are ignored and Confucianism alone is constitutionally recognized." And he went on to show that Confucianism was the very system of thought which had justified and rationalized the political institution of despotic rule throughout all these centuries, and which must go with the final disappearance of the unlimited monarchy. "The morals taught by Confucius and his school, belonged to the age of feudalism, and are mostly unsuited to an age of democracy." The anti-Confucianists won their fight in the end. Mr. Yuan Shih-kai, who supported this Confucianist establishment, tried to make himself an emperor, and failed. Mr. K'ang Yu-wei, who led this movement, took part in the abortive movement in 1917 to restore the Manchu Monarchy with the aid of a reactionary general. The restoration lasted 12 days and then failed completely. These political intrigues greatly discredited the new Confucianist movement, which, as the radical thinkers had predicted, was proved to be in league with the reactionary and monarchist movements.

It is interesting to note that the leaders of anti-religious thought in the first decade of the Republic were largely men of mature age and old scholarship. Ts'ai Yuen-p'ei and Wu Chih-hui were both outstanding figures of the older generation. Ts'ai was a Hanlin, that is, a member of the old literary Academy, and was then Chancellor of the National Peking University. In 1917 he gave a public lec-

ture in which he frankly expressed his conviction that the religions of the world were obstacles to human progress and that the Chinese mentality was not favorable to religious attitudes. He proposed a peculiar substitute for religion. He thought that religion was essentially a product of the instinctive love for beauty and sublimity, and that it might be replaced by a universal education in aesthetics, a training which should lead men to love the beautiful and the sublime in human conduct as well as in nature.

In 1923 there arose in the Chinese periodicals a long controversy over the relationship between science and the outlook on life. The post-war pessimism of Europe had by that time made itself felt in Chinese circles through the writings of Mr. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and his friends, who were telling the country that science had proved itself bankrupt as the new savior of mankind, and that the solution of the riddle of life could not be found through the channels of science. The defenders of science hastened to reply to these attacks, and the controversy lasted more than a year. When a part of the controversial literature was collected, it amounted to over 250,000 words. With the exception of a few conservative scholars trained in German philosophy through the Japanese schools, the majority of those who took part in this debate were on the side of science which they held to be capable of dealing with all problems of human life and conduct.

The most significant event of this controversy was a long essay of 70,000 words by the veteran thinker Mr. Wu Chih-hui. It had this title: "A New Conception of the Universe and of Life, Based upon a New Belief." In this essay the old scholar unreservedly accepted the mechanistic conception of the universe, and built up a philosophy of life which, in his own words, "ruled out the term 'God' and banished the soul or the spirit." He defined man as the animal with two hands and a big brain which enable him to make

tools. This tool-making animal has been able to create a wonderful civilization merely through the accumulation of tools with which he subdues nature and betters his own living. The greatest achievement of man is science together with all its applications which greatly multiply the power of man to do work and to produce things for his enjoyment and betterment. Mr. Wu holds that the moral life of mankind has greatly improved with the advancement of science and technology; and that man has never achieved a moral life anywhere or at any other time in history which can be proved to be higher than that of the age of science and its machines.

He maintains that no religion, but science alone, will be needed to make mankind even better and more moral. He tries to prove that all the moral sentiments expressed in the old religious systems and moral philosophies were merely empty words without the ability or the tools to realize them in actual life. It is science alone which has given man not only the new sympathy, but the new capability to do good which the mendicant saints of medieval times could never possess. Man must therefore rely upon himself, and himself alone, in his ceaseless endeavor to increase his tools, to extend his knowledge and power to the utmost, and thereby to make himself more and more moral by being in possession of greater power to solve the perplexities and difficulties of life. "I firmly believe that men of this age are far superior to those of any previous age; and I believe that men of the coming ages will be even better than ourselves. And I firmly believe that the more material progress is achieved, the more goods will be produced, the more needs will be met, and the more easily will man be in a position to solve all the most perplexing problems of the world."

Mr. Wu Chih-hui is now sixty-eight years old. In him we see the intellectualistic and rationalistic philosophy of

life, which is not merely the result of scientific influence from the West, but is the happy combination of that influence with the whole naturalistic and rationalistic tradition of the Chinese people. It is that combination which makes us feel completely at home in this world; and it is that which has led some of us better to appreciate the intellectual and moral significance inherent in Western civilization which the Western philosopher, because of the tremendous weight of a religious tradition, has not always been willing to recognize.[3]

[3] Cf. Hu Shih, "My Credo and Its Evolution," in *Living Philosophies*, New York, 1931.

VI

SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION AND READJUSTMENT

The ways of life cannot be immediately unified; they must first be brought together by the tools or implements of human invention. The steamship and the railway are the carriages of the ways of life. . . . . Therefore, these great inventions, which the western powers are using for their encroachment upon China, are the very things which the sages of a future age will utilize as the means for the unification of the ways of life of all the nations of the earth.

—WANG T'AO

WHEN the Chinese thinker made these remarks over half a century ago he probably had in mind the possibility of the Chinese ways of life as taught by the ancient sages gradually being carried to the West and influencing or even replacing those of the Western peoples. He probably never dreamed that, half a century after he had written those words, all the social and political institutions of his own country would be rapidly undermined and replaced by new forms and new ways which the steamship, the railway, and the printed book had brought to Chinese shores and sent into the interior provinces.

But Wang T'ao was essentially right in prophesying that it was the new tools of the West that would unify the ways of life of the nations of the world. For all the social changes in China can be traced to their early beginnings in the days when the new tools or vehicles of commerce and locomotion first brought the Chinese people into unavoidable contact with the strange ways and novel goods of the Western peoples. Naturally, the first things accepted by the Chinese people were material goods which seemed to be capable of satisfying the daily needs more effectively than the

native products, and which, at their first appearance, were never suspected as being prejudicial to the existing social life and institutions. The clock, which had come with the Portuguese traders and the Jesuit missionaries, remained in use long after the decline of Jesuit influence in China. Throughout the nineteenth century, various kinds of manufactured goods gradually came in and became, first the luxuries of the élite, then the necessities of the cities, and finally articles of everyday use by the people. Slowly and imperceptibly, but irresistibly, the imported goods found their way into the villages and farms, and replaced all their rivals of native make. Thus matches replaced the old-fashioned tinder-box of iron and flint; the kerosene lamp, the vegetable oil; the cigarette, the old water pipe and the long bamboo pipe; and the piece goods of Lancashire the home-spun cloth. Even paper of Western manufacture is completing its conquest of the country of its invention. And the story is true of practically every article of modern invention and mass production.

Old handcrafts are driven out of existence; gigantic factories and monstrous trading companies are rising in the cities; sales agents are penetrating into every corner of the country; peasants are flocking to the manufacturing and trading centers to find new employments. New ways of transportation and communication—the steamship, the railway, the new roads, the telegraph, the post service—are assisting the spread of the goods, the migration of peoples, and the transmission of new manners and ideas. And with them have come the new technique and processes of commercial and financial transaction and organization. The mill dollar has replaced uncoined silver; and the copper coin has killed the old cash. The banks, the paper notes, the joint stock company, and lastly, the stock exchange—all these are bringing about an economic and industrial revolution in an old country.

And the rapidity of it all! Within my own life, I read all the beloved novels by lamps of vegetable oil; I saw the Standard Oil invading my own village, I saw gas lamps in the Chinese shops in Shanghai; and I saw their elimination by electric lights. In the field of locomotion, I traveled in sedan chairs, wheelbarrows, and small river boats rowed by men; in 1904 I first saw the streets of the International Settlement in Shanghai crowded at night by sedan chairs carrying beautiful singing girls hurrying to their calls; the horse carriage was then the fashion in Shanghai, the most modern city. I saw the first tramway operated in Shanghai in 1909, and wrote a poem protesting against its dangers to the ricksha. My first trip on a steamship was when I was only two years old, but I never rode in a motor car before coming to the United States in 1910, and did not travel in the air until 1928. And my people have traveled with me from the vegetable oil lamp to electricity, from the wheelbarrow to the Ford car, if not to the aeroplane, and this in less than forty years' time.

It is true that not all these material transformations have touched the vast hinterland of China; they have taken place only in the cities. But three great events have helped to make the effects of these changes spread far and wide: the rapid migration of people to the cities; the founding of the new schools; and the political revolution.

The city is always the center of radiation of the forces of change and progress. Trade and industry and the facilities of education draw people from distant regions. These people may live permanently in the cities or may return to their home villages. They may work in the shops and factories with their families left behind in the country, or they may migrate to the cities with their wives and children. In either case, the influence of urban civilization cannot be overestimated. It means the breaking-up of old homes, the removal from family and clan ties, the change

of living and working habits, contact with new forms of social organization, the entrance of women and children into the factories, the reliance of the individual upon himself for good or for evil, new temptations and new wants.

The new education which began with the founding of new schools throughout the country produced changes far more revolutionary than its moderate curriculum would seem to warrant. It is revolutionary when it is compared with the meager content and narrow extent of the old village school. The old education was purely classical and literary, and was intended only for those who were to take the literary examinations and to become officials. The sons of the ordinary farmer and artisan, if they went to school at all, wanted to know no more than a few hundred characters; only exceptionally clever boys were encouraged to go beyond that. But the new education, however inadequate and bookish, was meant for everybody who came to take it; it was planned as education for citizenship. The content has become so different that a new world, far more interesting and far more intelligible than the moralizings of the ancient sages, is brought within the comprehension of the average boy and girl. New ideas and ideals are consciously instilled and new ambitions developed in the minds of the school children as well as in their parents. If the education does not give the pupils new capabilities, it has at least taught them to be dissatisfied with their lot and with their old environment. They know enough to see that foot-binding of the girls is bad, that marriage arranged by parents is bad, and that superstitions of all kinds are bad. Well, this would be enough to make trouble and set parents at variance with their own children. And the troubles increase with the advance of the school grade and with the growing complexity of thought-currents that come with the new fads of the cities. And of course the newspapers from time to time bring new troubles to the schools

and to the homes. Every important political crisis, especially when foreign aggression is involved, creates new vibrations and fresh troubles even for the village community in the backward parts of China.

And lastly, the political revolutions from 1911 to the present time have done more to bring about tremendous social changes everywhere than even the economic and industrial changes and the new schools. However skin-deep and unsuccessful the revolution of 1911–12 may seem to the outside critic, its most important meaning to the common people is that "even the emperor must go!" What else can have greater permanence than the institution of the emperor which had stood the test of time for thousands of years? And with the downfall of the imperial dynasty, there were gone all the numerous institutions which had been for centuries its accompaniments—the parasitic nobility born to power, the Manchu garrisons stationed in various parts of the country, the thousands of useless offices which earlier reformers had failed to abolish gradually and peacefully, the public sale of office, the open corruption of a class of untitled petty clerks who controlled the departments and the magistral offices and who, because of their permanence and technical knowledge, were more powerful than the ministers and the magistrates. All this had immense effects on the life of the nation in dislocating old social classes and necessitating the rise of new professions. On the other hand, revolutions also bring into power new groups of people who are energetic, unscrupulous, and capable of fishing in troubled waters. The rise of the new politicians and the military men is particularly noticeable.

And revolutions always mean the breakdown of old authority. In a country where there was no ruling class, this sudden collapse of political authority was truly a serious matter. It brought about long periods of social disorder and anarchy. Nobody was leading; and everybody seemed

lost in a sea of uncertainty. New ideas were filling the air: single tax; woman suffrage; free love; destruction of temples and idols; anarchism; socialism; federalism; party government, etc. Some of these died away in the speeches and in the magazines; others like the destruction of Buddhist and Taoist temples and the forming of political parties for a time penetrated into the interior districts.

On the whole, the political revolutions made possible many of the intellectual and social changes which would have been impossible in the old days of the empire. The old political powers which were incapable of effective leadership for reforms were in a position to block and suppress the new movements. The tragic failure of the reforms of 1898 clearly showed that important changes could not take place without first overthrowing the age-long authority of the dynasty and its appendages. The nascent intellectual and literary movements would not have been permitted to go on under the Manchu dynasty; a memorial to the throne from one of the imperial censors would have been sufficient to imprison the leaders and kill these movements in the bud. Similarly, most of the social changes that have come in recent years have been greatly facilitated and accelerated by the political movements since 1911.

The most important effect of the political revolutions on social change lies in the fact that the conservative gentry in the various localities was swept aside by the overthrow of the old political power. In the province of Hunan, where the old gentry had successfully opposed many a reform movement in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the revolution of 1911 drove the reactionary leaders away from the province, and the more radical revolution of 1926–27 publicly executed many of them after sham trials by mob tribunals. This province, whose conservative gentry and people in 1872 actually mobbed and stoned one of its leading citizens for the outrageous act of hiring a for-

eign steamboat to hurry back to Changsha to attend a family funeral, became the hotbed of radicalism in the first years of the revolution and was the center of communist activity a few years ago. Radical social revolutions are made possible by the removal of the forces which were once the bulwarks of the institutions and usages of the old society.

The most conspicuous change in Chinese society has been the rearrangement in the social classes. The old tradition of class division gave the scholar highest rank, the farmer next, the artisan next, and the merchant at the bottom. This division was never literally observed, for the merchant who had the money power was never really at the bottom of the social scale even in the good old days. The public sale of office under the last decades of the Manchus gave an opportunity to the rich merchants to buy titles or even high offices and to achieve political position far more rapidly than the poor scholar who had to climb the regular ladder of the state examinations. But even this did not fully raise the merchant above the social contempt which the scholarly class cherished toward him, because the social prestige of the successful candidate in the higher literary examination was so great that the merchant who held high offices through the power of money was still regarded as "smelling the odor of copper" and no scholar would willingly give up the literary future, however uncertain, for the contemptible profession of the money-maker. The banker was called the money devil; and the compradore was regarded as the slave of the foreign trader. But the rise of new industries, new banks, and new trading and importing companies which demanded a highly educated personnel rapidly changed the situation. Prominent retired officials were invited to become directors; modern trained students did not hesitate to take up jobs with these

new business concerns; and in recent times it is not uncommon to see ex-ministers of foreign affairs and ex-prime ministers becoming general managers or chairmen of boards of directors in big trading or manufacturing companies. The merchant class which could not buy social esteem with money has been elevated by raising its own intellectual level.

The same is true of the rise of the soldier class. The personal successes of military men like Chang Tso-lin and Tsao Keun did not remove the contempt in which the soldier was formerly held by the public. It was the initial successes of the student army of the Huang Pu Cadet School as a well-disciplined revolutionary army that first attracted thousands of secondary-school graduates and university students to leave their schools and flock to Canton to be trained as the new soldiers for the salvation of the nation. And the splendid battles recently fought against Japan by the new armies both in Shanghai and in Kupeikou and Nantienmen have greatly enhanced the social prestige of the new soldier as the defender of the nation.

Many other new professions have accelerated the change in the social strata. The engineer, the modern trained doctor, the lawyer, the woman teacher, the nurse, the broker, the seaman, the railway worker, the factory hand, the party worker are each finding an important place in the new society. In one year (1921), there suddenly sprang up in Shanghai over 70 exchanges of stocks and bonds; and the effect was electrifying: hundreds of school teachers deserted their profession to enlist in the new business that promised greater rewards and less drudgery.

Of these, the rise of the legal profession is probably the most significant. China had developed her own law codes and her own theories of jurisprudence; but she never developed the institution of public pleading by specially trained lawyers on behalf of the parties in a law suit. The

absence of the legal profession has been largely responsible for many of the injustices and tortures in the old law courts. Through the ages, however, there grew up a class of "masters of litigation," often also known as "rascals of litigation," who operated as secret managers of law suits, writing the papers for the litigants, coaching them in the requirements of the law and the courts, and sometimes acting as go-between in bribing corrupt magistrates. The law and the government never recognized this underhand institution, and always tried to suppress and punish these "rascals of litigation" as corrupters of men and disturbers of the peace. And they were usually bad characters, who knew very little of law, but plenty of its abuses and corrupt practices. The advent of the modern lawyer in China does not merely mean the rise of a new profession, but also the coming of a new age in the administration of law and justice.

Another very important change is the breakdown of the old family. Improved means of transportation have enabled immigrants to the cities to bring their wives and children with them; the high cost of living in the cities has placed a necessary check on the size of the family, confining it to the immediate members; and the long absence from the home community has weakened the old hold of the elder over the younger generation. New ideas and strange temptations have begun to play on the young people. Old ties have gradually loosened. The wage-earning members of a family no longer find it possible to support the other unproductive members; the young women no longer wish to live with their mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; the large family naturally breaks up into smaller units. Marriages and funerals become simple affairs of hours and minutes, instead of elaborate communal events of days; and ancestral worship is usually discontinued by the city

dweller. New and loose relations between the sexes, which would be impossible or at least severely censured in a village community, pass without notice in the busy life of the cities.

The young students who leave their homes to get an advanced education in the cities find it difficult to return to live and work. They have come under new intellectual influences and new social contacts which make them dissatisfied with the old ways of life back in their ancestral villages. They break their old betrothals and even marriages, and often carry out what they commonly call "revolutions of the home" at the grave cost of being disowned by their parents or deprived of financial support from home. Some of them openly attack the old ideas of filial duty, and such criticisms receive applause or silent approval from thousands of their generation. Under the influence of a movement to induce students to go to France to work and study, under the allurement of the slogan of "Hard Work and Inexpensive Education," thousands of young men deserted their families and ran away to seek their new education and new life in post-war France, only to find there no work, no employment open to them, and to find themselves stranded in a strange land. Some of them had to request their families to send them money; others simply drifted and landed in the midst of radical revolutionaries and communists.

All these disintegrating tendencies soon began to worry the conservatives in the old society. For a time they tried to make scapegoats of the leaders of the new intellectual movements, and rallied their attacks on them. But such reactions only gave the new movements greater publicity and therefore wider currency. They falsely accused Mr. Ch'en Tu-shiu of changing the old proverb "Adultery is the first of all sins, and filial piety, the first of all virtues," into a new dictum, "Filial piety is the first of all sins, and adul

tery, the first of all virtues." While the charge was entirely groundless, that peculiarly effective way of wording what the conservatives had perceived as the tendency of the younger generation was a clear indication of the signs of the times. The age-honored idea of filial duty which had degenerated into a mere demand of the parents for material support and unconditional obedience from their sons, no longer appealed to the reason and imagination of the young generation, and was definitely passing away as a moral force in the new and disintegrating society. And, while the new leaders never exalted adultery to a first virtue, they did openly attack the traditional conceptions of the double standard of sexual morality which legalized and rationalized the institution of concubinage for men, but which used all forms of social sanctions (government award of public eulogy, special honorable mention in local annals and national histories, and stone monuments erected at public expense, etc.) to encourage widows and even unmarried virgins to die or to refuse to marry in memory of their dead husbands or betrothed. The conservative defenders of the old order could not answer these adverse criticisms and had to resort to force and persecution. When these failed, they resigned themselves in despair.

The discussion of sex morality leads us to a consideration of the changed status of woman in the family and in society, which is one of the most important phases of the social revolution in China. At the outset, it is necessary to point out that the position of women in the old family was never so low as many superficial observers have led us to believe. On the contrary, woman has always been the despot of the family. The authority of the mother and the mother-in-law is very well known. Even the wife is always the terror of the husband; no other country in the world can compete with China for the distinction of being the

nation of hen-pecked husbands. Certainly, no other country has produced so many stories of hen-pecked husbands. The wife built up her strong position sometimes upon love, sometimes upon beauty or personality, but in most cases upon the fact that she could not be dislodged from her position: she could not be divorced!

It is true that there was no law forbidding divorce; and that the Classics laid down seven conditions for divorcing a wife. Jealousy, or failure to bear sons, or even talking too much, would be sufficient to divorce her. But the same classics also gave three conditions under which she could not be sent away: (1) if she has shared with the husband a three-year mourning for one of his parents; (2) if the husband has become rich or attained high official positions since marriage; or (3) if she has no home to go back to. These conditions were very common and almost made divorce absolutely impossible. Particularly the last condition was a most powerful protection of the wife, for as China came more and more under the inhuman influence of the medieval religions and began to condemn remarriages of widows, the divorced woman found herself with nowhere to go except to death or the nunnery. If she still had parents, they would be ashamed of her; and if she had no parents, she could not live on her brothers and sisters-in-law. She had no property of her own; and no face to encounter the disapproval of a pitiless society. Therefore, there has grown up in society and in religion a peculiar sentiment against divorce. History tells us that Confucius, his son, and his grandson all divorced their wives. But when China came out of her medieval age there was no more divorce in respectable families. A wife threatened with divorce could only commit suicide or become a nun; and both would be terrible blows to the respectability of the family. So, by the Ming dynasty, the only justifiable cause for sending away a wife had been narrowed down to adul-

tery, short of which no husband could really divorce a wife without inviting the strongest social condemnation.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century a great writer, Pu Sung-ling, gave a great deal of thought to the problem of unhappy marriages, and wrote many short stories on the theme of husbands maltreated by horrible wives. One of the stories he developed into a great drama of 70,000 words; and later he enlarged it into a serial novel of about one million words under the title *A Marriage That Will Awaken the World.* It deals with a truly terrible wife with only one eye, who is guilty of every conceivable crime and who maltreats her own parents, her parents-in-law, and in particular her husband whom she treats with most brutal cruelty and whom she twice tries to murder. But there is no way of escape, except for the husband to run away from home and seek a new life in Peking and later in Szechuan, but she followed after him, and he had to tolerate her and suffer her cruelties. But she never committed adultery; and social usage and religion conspired to protect her from being sent away or divorced. After writing a million words, the author came to the only possible conclusion that such a marriage must be the result of accumulated retribution of a past existence in which the tables were turned, and the oppressed was once the oppressor and the oppressor, once the oppressed. The causal chain could not be broken except through resignation to fate and through a determination never again to create causes for revenge in a future existence by short-sighted measures of human invention.

In the last years of the nineteenth century a well-known scholar, Wang shih-t'o, died and left an interesting diary in which he told all his horrible sufferings at the hands of his wife. He said in effect: "I cannot fight you, nor can I escape from you. But you are an illiterate and cannot read what I write down about you. And you cannot answer

back. I hereby solemnly and truthfully set down and charge against you ninety points of your unpardonable crimes. . . . . This is the only means I have to revenge myself!" He, too, never thought of divorce as a possible way of escape.

But what a change has come in these recent years! Let me read a few articles from the new Civil Code, promulgated December 3, 1930.

ART. 1049: Husband and wife may effect a divorce themselves where they mutually consent to it.

ART. 1050: Divorce by mutual consent is effected in writing and requires the signatures of at least two witnesses.

ART. 1052: Either spouse may apply to the Court for a divorce provided that one of the following conditions exist:

1. Where the other spouse has committed bigamy;
2. Where the other spouse has sexual intercourse with another person;
3. Where the spouse receives such ill-treatment from the other spouse as to render it intolerable to live together;
4. Where the wife has so ill-treated the lineal ascendants of the husband, or has been so ill-treated by them that life in common becomes intolerable;
5. Where the other party has deserted the spouse in bad faith and such desertion still continues;
6. Where the other has made an attempt on the life of the spouse;
7. Where the other party has a loathsome disease which is incurable;
8. Where the other party has a serious mental disease which is incurable;
9. Where it has been uncertain for over three years whether the other party is alive or dead;
10. Where the other party has been sentenced to not less than three years' imprisonment or has been sentenced to imprisonment for an infamous crime.

Will the new social consciousness make it possible for the divorced wife to live without public censure and to remarry without losing respectability? It has, at least in the cities. The law now provides for compensation if the woman cannot support herself after divorce. Under the new code, daughters are entitled to an equal share with their brothers in the inheritance of property from parents. And

the private property of the wife, if she chooses to keep it separate from the property of her husband, is protected by law.

These emancipations remove the modern woman from the invulnerable position enjoyed by the undivorcible wife in the old society. But in no longer becoming an unremovable terror, she also ceases to be a nuisance. She has won her new position by her own right. She is no longer to be married away without her consent. She must win her position by her own charms, her education, and her personality. With the new rights have come also new responsibilities. She must live her life as a useful member of society. And in many cases, she is thrown out into the new world, unprotected to work with men. She is facing her perils, making her own successes and failures all alone. What type of womanhood these new rights and responsibilities will make of her, time alone will tell.

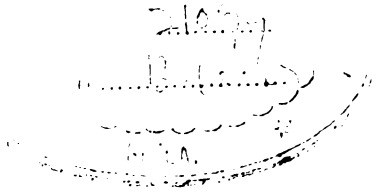
These are a few of the important changes in the social life of the Chinese people. As we look back on them and view them in the light of historical development we cannot but hail them as the greatest gains which Chinese civilization has received from its contact with the life and institutions of the West. Even the break-up of the old family, which is often lamented by well-meaning critics, must also be considered as one of the greatest achievements in China's social progress. For the Chinese family of old times rarely, if ever, possessed the valuable virtues which have sometimes been attributed to it or read into it. The Chinese family is theoretically built on the foundation of suppressing individuality for the sake of the well-being of the whole. The real basis was economic: it was always cheaper to live together and cook together in a large family than for the separate married couples to start life independently; and it was considered more economical for

the incompetent members to be helped and supported by parental or ancestral charity, or by the communal income made by the more enterprising and productive brothers. But the disadvantage of such a system is very great. It is false economy to place too great a burden on the promising members of the family. Very often when a boy shows literary gifts and wins a degree in the examination, the whole family look to him for future maintenance; and sometimes a father retires from active work at forty-five when his son is capable of earning a respectable living. And this family burden not only often breaks the back of the productive young man, but also imposes an immoral obligation on him to find employment for his good-for-nothing relations. And even today we often read advertising of public officials in the newspapers thanking their relations for recommending assistants but deeply regretting there were not enough rice bowls to go around.

Moreover, the old family system is undesirable because it is often a nest of frictions, suspicions, intrigues, oppressions, and even suicides. The constant quarrel between sisters-in-law is proverbial in China. The oppression of daughters-in-law by the mother, and the suffering of the mother in the hands of unreasonable and impossible daughters-in-law, are both common occurrences. History tells us that there was a famous Chang family in the seventh century which was able to keep nine generations living together without separation. When the emperor of the T'ang dynasty visited the family and inquired how such a feat was ever possible, the old patriarch who was too feeble to speak, asked permission to submit his answer in writing. And the answer consisted of one hundred copies of the one word, "Forbear!" When forbearance is necessary it is certain that the peaceful externality of a large family covers underneath an impossible demand for the sacrifice of individuality on the part of every man and woman; and the

suffering, because it is always silent and undemonstrative, is beyond the comprehension of those whose family system has long outgrown it. All the much-idealized virtues of filial piety simply could not exist; and in those rare cases where they were consciously cultivated, the price paid for them was nothing short of intense suppression resulting in mental and physical agony.

The new changes, therefore, are on the whole for the better. They release the individual from the collective responsibility of the whole family, and recognize in him the new rights and duties of an independent member of a larger society. The old framework has gone to pieces, not because of external attacks or criticisms, but because it was incapable of holding itself together in the face of the new forces which claim its members, men or women, for the school, the factory, the shop, and the world at large.



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