

Historical Background of Present Day China

By KUANGCHI C. CHANG

To get a proper perspective of the Chinese as a people and as a fellow man, we must go back some four thousand years. These four thousand years may be conveniently divided into two periods of roughly two thousand years each. The first period, from the beginning of Chinese recorded history down to the middle of the third century B.C. may be described in simplest terms as a period of rule by virtue tuned to achieve social harmony. It was in this period that the Chinese had their classical examples of virtuous rulers, and it was also in this period that the Chinese had the longest dynasty in their history, the Chou dynasty, lasting over eight hundred years; and on the cultural heritage of this dynasty the Chinese people built their civilization for the next two thousand years.

This brings us to the second period in our discussion. In similar terms, this second period, from the middle of the third century B.C. to the middle of the nineteenth century A.D., may be described as a period of rule by law aimed to achieve social order. For time had marched on, human society had grown complicated and material prosperity had caught up with spiritual culture, whereby virtue was outmoded by law, and where, as before, social harmony had been the goal, now social order must suffice.

Politically, China was not a closely knit nation in the first two thousand years. At the beginning there were only tribal communities and these gradually grew into city-states until the Chou dynasty, when the Duke of Chou unified the country under a feudal system. The different city-states which had now assumed the proportions of small kingdoms became member-states of this feudal system, each owing allegiance to the central state of Chou. This loosely knit political organization worked well enough for the first four hundred years of the Chou dynasty, so long as virtuous rule prevailed and social harmony resulted among the member-states and between the member-states and the central state. But towards the latter half of the Chou dynasty, the member-states outgrew the central state in strength, force began to overrule virtue, and the member-states' ambition for indi-

vidual supremacy outweighed their desire for united harmony.

Thus ensued the age of "Warring States" in Chinese history, an age of chaos, anarchy, and breakdown of all religious, moral, and social traditions. Incidentally, however, this political upheaval set free the minds of men of the time, and these minds took up the challenge of the problems of the time. One of these minds belonged to Laotzu who gave the Chinese the mystic and naturalistic philosophy of "Tao"; another belonged to Confucius who later became the "Supreme Sage" and "Foremost Teacher" of the Chinese; and a third to Motzu who preached universal love, a teaching closer to Christianity than any religious thought the Chinese had.

But by far the more radical of these liberated minds belonged to a school of thinkers whom the Chinese historians call the Legalists. It was they who applied their minds to the formulation of more practical, more realistic, and more expedient measures to cope with the chaotic conditions and to meet the urgent demands of their age which they knew could no longer turn back to the graces and virtues of the ancients. So one of these legalists by the name of Wei Yang advocated a totalitarian policy in the state of Ch'in which was then the strongest of all the states at the end of the Chou dynasty. His policy was simple. He mobilized the entire manpower of his state in two directions. He first organized an army strong and large enough to take on not only any member-state, but any combination of member-states, and then put every able-bodied person who was not drafted into the

army to work on the farms to produce food. Thus, through his so-called policy of agriculture and war, he achieved a powerful totalitarian state and succeeded in securing for the Duke of Ch'in his coveted supremacy over the other states, including the central state of Chou.

Through this supremacy, the Duke of Ch'in eventually became the First Emperor of the Ch'in dynasty under which China for the first time in her history was unified into one great empire with one government, one law, and one language.

The First Emperor of Ch'in was a dictator. It was he who had the fifteen-hundred-mile long Great Wall of China built with conscript labor to keep out the barbarians, and burned books, and purged scholars in order to suppress the thoughts dangerous to his regime. While he deserved the infamy of being China's classical tyrant, we must concede to him the credit of having laid the foundation of a great empire from which emerged the modern China. But strange to say, this dynasty, so powerfully begun, lasted no more than fifty years, a mere day compared with other dynasties which are counted in hundreds of years. For the people did not long endure this totalitarian rule, and popular uprisings resulted in the founding of the Han dynasty which introduced a government of equity and justice, and set a pattern of rule by law for the next two thousand years.

However, in this second two thousand years, not all was smooth sailing. There is always the recurring cycle of peace

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and war. Each dynasty is founded by a strong leader. His successors ride on his wise and good rule and enjoy a period of peace and prosperity. This peace and prosperity soon lull the ruler and the ruled into a state of moral lassitude and physical indulgence which invariably lead to greed and corruption, then to disintegration, and finally to the war of the ruled against the ruler. Another leader arises among the masses and a new dynasty is founded. So, on goes the cycle of peace and war. History repeats itself and Chinese history most certainly does.

Nevertheless, the Chinese people have not always accepted the fate of history without a struggle. For instance, besides the totalitarian reformer whom we have just referred to, we may cite two more political reformers who tried to change the course of Chinese history. One of these, Wang Meng, lived in the middle of the Han dynasty, which corresponds to the beginning of the Christian era. He was a usurper to the throne from the eighth to the twenty-third year A.D. During that short period he tried the first socialistic reform in Chinese history. Here is a literal translation of his political measures: (1) Equitable Trading Plan; (2) Price Fixing Acts; (3) Loan Interest Control; (4) State Control of Commodities such as salt, wine, iron, and cloth; and (5) Land Nationalization by equal distribution and ban on private sales.

The next political reformer, Wang An-shih, came one thousand years later at the beginning of the Sung dynasty, in the eleventh century. His socialistic measures were even more thorough-going than those of the last. Here are his measures: (1) State ownership of all natural resources of the empire; (2) State management of commerce, industry, and agriculture; (3) Establishment of courts for the fixing of prices of provisions and merchandise; (4) For a certain number of years special taxes to be paid by the rich; (5) Money from these special taxes to be distributed to the old, the poor, and the unemployed; (6) Imposition of an income tax for the purpose of public works; (7) The state to be the sole owner of the soil, and the courts to parcel out land to cultivators and to determine the kind of crop to be raised; (8) Universal military service under which every family with more than one son to give one for the service of the state; this service to remain inactive in time of peace, but to come into force when danger of war threatens. How familiar these political measures sound to us of the twentieth century!

Well, these political reformers were each inspired by the desire to improve the economic conditions of the empire, but to

the people in those days who were used to some gentle and benevolent rule, these socialistic measures must have appeared much more radical and drastic than they appear to us today. Therefore, is it any wonder that in spite of their worthy aims all these political reformers failed in their attempts and history went on in its usual course—dynasties rose and fell according to pattern? Many of the dynasties in the last two thousand years are familiar: the Han, the Tang, the Sung, and the Ming; and in the last eight hundred years China went under alien rule twice, once between the Sung and Ming dynasties under the Mongols, and again after the Ming dynasty under the Manchus.

This brings us down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the end of our second period. Then from 1850 to 1950 is our third period. Although only one hundred years, events happened more fast and furiously in this period than in all the four thousand years before it. Before we review these events, let us take time out and examine what manner of a man is this person we call the Chinese at the middle of the nineteenth century. He is a peaceful, quiet, and rather reserved fellow. He loves nature and has a philosophical turn of mind. He is extremely loyal to his family and fairly decent to his fellow man; he is industrious, minds his own business, and shows little interest in politics. Here, it must be pointed out that this man we are examining is the composite Chinese. We know that since centuries ago the Chinese people have resolved themselves into four distinct social groups, namely, the scholars, the farmers, the artisans, and the merchants. These are flexible occupational classes rather than immutable social castes such as exist in India. Of these four classes, the farmers constitute the overwhelming majority, next come the artisans and merchants, and the scholars represent the smallest group. However, it is to this smallest group that traditionally goes the prerogative to govern. The farmers, artisans, and merchants, who realize their own deficiency in learning, respect the superior accomplishments of the scholars and willingly concede to them the power of government. The scholars, who on their part also realize their position of honor and privilege, look upon this prerogative to govern as a sacred trust from the people and endeavor to do their job well. Then, the farmers, artisans, and merchants, feeling that they have left the delicate job of governing in competent hands, devote themselves wholeheartedly to their own businesses. So these four classes of people work like a well-organized team—smoothly and happily, each doing its best for the interest of all. Therein lies the secret of a

social structure that has endured the vicissitudes of four thousand years.

Let us now go back to this Man, the composite Chinese. We find him at the middle of the nineteenth century in a well-ordered society, possessing a 4000-year old culture which is pre-eminently spiritual and which shows a singular lack of scientific interest. His great heritage has made him a cultured man but also a rather arrogant man. He likes to think that his land, the "Middle Kingdom," is the center of the universe and his race is Heaven's chosen people, and all that is beyond his empire is uncivilized. He might have been saved from disillusion, if it had been possible for him to keep on living in isolation. But unfortunately, and without his knowing it, the world beyond his empire, which he had considered unworthy of his attention, had in the meantime caught up with civilization and marched ahead.

Thus, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Man of the West had made very definite progress in his materialistic civilization. He now had machines for industry and ships for commerce. America had long been discovered and colonized and the War of Independence had been fought and won. In Europe, the era of colonization and economic expansion began. This Western Man, by whom I mean the composite man of Europe, mainly English, French, and German, had been in Africa and India in search of colony and market, and now knocked on the front door of the Chinese. The Chinese opened the door and found this Western Man, unexpected and uninvited. The Chinese and the Western Man stood face to face in close quarters for the first time. The Western Man had of course heard about this cultured Chinese before, but the Chinese still took this new Western Man to be the old barbarian whom he had been used to ignoring in the past. To think that this barbarian dared to knock at his door uninvited and actually wanted to come in to do business which he had no intention of doing—this seemed to the Chinese to be going a bit too far.

We must remember, this Chinese had lived the life of a hermit for four thousand years and knew nothing of the tremendous progress this Western Man had made, nor did he suspect that the time was here for free and open commercial intercourse between different peoples of the world. Therefore, from the very beginning, the East and the West met on a ground of miscomprehension; from miscomprehension, suspicion, distrust. Both being prejudiced, every action on the part of the Western Man was construed as aggression by the Chinese; likewise every reaction on the part

of the Chinese was viewed as discrimination by the Western Man. First the two exchanged arguments, arguments became quarrels, quarrels developed into fights. For the fifty years, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth, Chinese history is nothing but a record of humiliating defeats in wars which China neither wanted nor was prepared for.

This fifty-year period of incessant trouble with foreign powers opened with the Opium War, continued with quarrels that led to the loss of Hong Kong to Great Britain, Indo-China to France, northern frontiers to Russia, and Korea to Japan; and with secret treaties that created spheres of economic interest, and was finally climaxed in the inevitable outburst of pent-up anti-foreign feeling through the Boxer Rebellion that ended in the Eight-Power occupation of Peking in 1901.

In all these quarrels and fights, this Man of China who, in all his life had concerned himself with scholarly occupations and had always disdained materialistic achievements, was suddenly confronted by a man who challenged him with a deadly weapon using the very gunpowder which he himself had invented, but which he had never played with beyond the stage of firecrackers. To say the least, the impact of the West on China in this series of quarrels and fights had been most disconcerting and overwhelming. Then, on the heels of this penetration by the European Powers followed the threat of Japan's colonial ambitions on the Asiatic mainland. There was hardly any breathing space between the punches. The wonder is that China was not knocked out completely. Here, it must be pointed out that through all this scramble for special spheres of economic interest in China by the European powers, it was the "Open Door" policy advocated by the United States that kept off the wolves.

With each defeat China lost some territory or economic interests. With each defeat she also lost some of her self-conceit, which is good, but with it she lost much of her self-confidence, too, which is bad. Stunned, humiliated, and confused, China managed to pull herself up and started on a program of modernization by the turn of the present century. She was forced to admit that if she could not make the world go her way, she must learn to go its way.

China began sending students to America and Europe to study the secret of their material strength and economic power. These students now replaced the old scholars, as the ruling class. The earliest groups of returned students from America and Europe brought home the spirit of nationalism which eventually inspired the revolu-

tion of 1911, the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty, and the founding of the Republic of China in 1912. Since then thousands of students have gone abroad and returned during the twenty-five years between 1912 and 1937. Those returning from America brought back ideas of democracy; those from Germany and Japan, ideas of militarism; and those from Russia, ideas of communism. They spread these different ideas in education and in politics and laid the ground for the two opposing political parties in China, the Nationalists and Communists. However, these new political ideas had touched only the intellectual level, the educated class. The great mass of farmers, artisans, and merchants were still not politically minded.

Then in 1914, three years after the revolution from which China had had hardly time to get herself re-orientated in her new political situation, not mentioning time to recuperate from her wounds received in the half of a century past, World War I broke out in Europe. It had no immediate ill effect on China, but when Japan came to the realization that with all the other powers engaged in the War in Europe, she could now do whatever she liked with China, a new crisis was precipitated. From outside came the famous or rather the infamous "Twenty-one Demands" which Japan made on China in 1915. Had China yielded to these demands, she would have become a second Korea. From within, threatened a civil war among the war lords who intrigued with the Japanese militarists. In a desperate effort to enlist sympathy and support from the democratic powers against Japanese domination, China entered World War I on the Allies' side about the time the United States declared war on Germany. At the conclusion of World War I, the United States stood up once more for China's rightful claims against Japan and became China's traditional friend.

In the ten years following World War I, while Germany was busy rebuilding her power, while Soviet Russia was busy launching her multiple five-year plans, and while Japan was busy pushing through her expansion programs in Manchuria, China was split by civil wars among the various military cliques; and not until 1927 when General Chiang Kai-shek at the head of the Nationalist army successfully concluded his punitive expedition against these military cliques, did China become once more united. The next ten years, from 1927 to 1937, saw China earnestly busy with her programs of reconstruction and there were indeed signs of recovery and progress. Until then China had had no respite from external intrusions and internal strifes ever since the middle of the nineteenth century

when she was suddenly projected from her 4000-year long daydream into a twentieth century nightmare. She had not only to watch what was going on currently, but also to catch up as well on what she had missed and to get herself ready for what was coming. Considering all this, China did not do badly in the ten years between 1927 and 1937, and in fact she did so well that Japan was alarmed, could contain herself no longer, and fired the first shot of the Pacific War in July, 1937. This initially local Asiatic squabble became a part of World War II after Pearl Harbour. From there on China and the United States fought side by side.

When the end of World War II came in 1945, China, which had fought eight long years against Japan, was jubilant with victory, but bent with exhaustion. And instead of settling down to rest and recuperate, she was immediately confronted by forces of Communism which had bided their time during the war and were now ready to strike. From the very beginning, the Nationalists saw in the Communists as great a foe as the Japanese Militarists. With her home in shambles, China once more turned to her traditional friend for help. But this time, when she needed it most, her friend did not give the help outright. This friend seemed to think that there need not be any quarrel between the Nationalists and Communists, and tried to effect a reconciliation between them. This attitude of the friend's shocked and bewildered the Nationalists and eventually threw them off balance.

On the other hand, this same attitude tickled the Communists pink. They lost no time in taking advantage of it in their propaganda. The man in the street in China began to say to himself: "There must be something good about Communism, otherwise America would not do what she is doing." The farmers and laborers, who still did not know how to think for themselves politically, fell easy victims to this propaganda. By the time the reconciliation talks finally broke off, great moral damage had been done, and when the so-called White Paper was published and the corruptions of General Chiang's regime were publicized, the last veil of prestige of the Nationalist Government was stripped. The eventual victory of the Communists and the flight of the Nationalists to Formosa were foregone conclusions.

This brings us down to the Spring of 1949. The events since then are well known to the world. What strikes one as a piece of poetic irony is the fact that for all the moral advantages the Communists received from America's reconciliation efforts, they

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South for an objective, not to communize the South, but simply to unite the country. We could not stop at the 38th Parallel for a number of reasons:

(1) To stop there would have meant the possibility of future aggression on the part of a people who had been trained to aggression;

(2) To stop at the 38th Parallel would have voided the United Nations' possibility of achieving national solidarity in an area she had promised a free and open plebiscite—a plebiscite that had been offered in 1946 and rejected by the Russians who were then in control of North Korea;

(3) We couldn't stop at the 38th Parallel anyway because no matter whence the command came, the onrushing South Korean divisions were just as intent as had been the North Koreans at achieving their objective in the war—the unification of Korea.

The Russian objective in pushing the North Koreans into the war has backfired. They hoped to achieve a propaganda line showing America's aggression in the Pacific area. The United States countered with a United Nations war. The same may be said of Russia's inability to prove American military weakness. Malik's failure to achieve peace and the United Nation's drive northward have given this the lie.

What then of the future? Let us be brutally realistic. *We are in World War III.* This is not a war such as the wars we have been accustomed to, but it is World War III nevertheless. It is no less real and no less frightful because it is new and different. Perhaps never again will we be involved in a total war because mankind in general and Russia in particular know that such a war would lead to the destruction of civilization, in a conflict with only one outcome, an atomic race—or the human race.

China's Background . . .

now call Uncle Sam all sorts of names and are teaching the Chinese people how to hate their traditional friend. Now, whether this Communist regime in China is just another one of those political reforms which periodically pop up and burst, or whether the cycle of history is now due for a new turn, only the future can tell and that future is no longer China's alone.

The Young Rebel

A letter of Percy B. Shelley to an aunt, addressed as "Dear Kate," written when he was eight, closes:

"I am not
Your obedient servant
P. B. Shelley."

Reflection Seismograph Prospecting

How It Started

By WILLIAM SCHRIEVER

Imagine the calamity that would be caused by a complete lack of the essential products supplied by our petroleum industry! Millions of automobiles and trucks would stay in their garages; farm tractors would not move over the fields, and the production of food would all but cease; our tremendous earth-moving machines would not disturb a single clod; busses would not take on passengers; many municipalities would be without water, heat, and electric power; crack trains, both passenger and freight, would not move; many industrial plants would have to close for lack of heat, power, and light; ocean liners would stay in their harbors; air transportation would not exist; our Army would be immobilized and our Naval vessels would stay at anchor.

Yet, only thirty years ago this failure in the supply of petroleum would have caused only inconveniences, but no real national disaster. This change from a horse and coal economy to a petroleum-natural-gas economy has taken place almost entirely since 1920.

The discovery of sufficient numbers of oil fields to supply the necessary huge quantities of petroleum and natural gas required scientific methods of exploration. Up until the early nineteen twenties all scientific explorations were made by geologists who studied surface formations and prepared geologic maps which revealed surface indi-

cations of petroleum-bearing structures. As new oil fields became more difficult to find, new means of exploring for them were sought. Methods and instruments were required, with which it would be possible "to take a look" deep down below the surface of the earth. Such methods are called geophysical methods of exploration.

The first geophysical exploration for petroleum in the United States was made with an Eotvos torsion balance in 1922 by a crew working for the Amerada Petroleum Corporation under the direction of Dr. Everette DeGolyer, '11ba. In this same year Dr. DeGolyer also directed the work of a German refraction seismograph crew. The first salt-dome structures were discovered in 1924 in Fort Bend country, Texas; in the Nash area the torsion balance was successful, and the seismograph discovered the Orchard Dome. The Nash dome was the first oil field discovered by geophysical methods in the United States and perhaps in the entire world. The Orchard dome was the first oil field discovered by seismic methods in the United States—probably the first in the world; a refraction method with a mechanical seismograph was used.

More than a year before the first geophysical crew was working in Texas, several Oklahomans were testing their ideas concerning the reflection method of seismograph prospecting, the method which

About the Author

A bibliography of the scholarly papers which Dr. Schriever has written since coming to the University in 1919 as Assistant Professor of Physics would fill more than a page of this journal. His last article was with Louis E. Diamond: "Electromotive Forces and Electric Currents Caused by Metallic Dental Filings," Journal of Dental Research, April, 1952. The research was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research. He has been the faculty adviser for many students who have majored in physics and has long been a close friend of Dr. Karcher.

