

LIKE THE West itself, China possesses an ancient civilization of great complexity that is difficult to comprehend quickly and fully.

Before 1514, Europeans learned of China mainly through intermediaries, a few travelers, and luxury imports. In the sixteenth century China was thought to be a "Mightie Kingdome," technologically more advanced than Europe. The Europeans of the seventeenth century were told by the Jesuits that China had a rational society of great antiquity and continuous development that would have to be incorporated, by one means or another, into their Christian, monogenetic view of the world. Both the Jesuits and the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment saw China as a model of Enlightened Despotism. Artists and connoisseurs of the eighteenth century were intrigued with China as the source of exotic *objets d'art* and as the home of

an imaginary, happy people who came to life in the paintings on porcelain. The reaction against China as a rational model and as a source of exotic delight came in the nineteenth century. While Sinologists sought to understand the China of historical reality, other Europeans esteemed Chinese poetry and culture as being aesthetically superior, and worthy of study and imitation. There were Westerners who also derided China as a stagnant, inferior society that had nothing to offer the West but problems. The modernizing, nationalizing, and communizing of China produced the contemporary fear of China as a nemesis of Western culture.

I

In antiquity China gradually received a delineation in Western thought which set it apart from the rest of Asia, especially India, as an independent civilization. Trade on an important scale convinced the Romans of China's advanced technical capability, but the ideas of China, even in arts and crafts, left few deep or lasting imprints upon Roman culture. From the fourth century A.D. to the return of Marco Polo to Venice, nearly a millennium later, medieval Europe almost lost sight of China as an independent civilization and it again became an undifferentiated part of a vague or mythical Asia.

The restoration of overland communications by the Mongols from 1215 to 1350 permitted Christian missionaries and merchants to visit China (Cathay) and enabled them to prepare accounts of their experiences there. But even commentators as acute as Marco Polo and Odoric of Pordenone were unable to provide insights into Chinese thought, probably because they did not command the language. What the European reporters of the Mongol era accomplished was to reawaken interest in China as an advanced, wealthy, and independent civilization. It was not until the establishment in the sixteenth century of permanent relations by the sea routes that Europe began to acquire a sense of the depth and sophistication of Chinese thought and culture.

The sea passage opened to India by the Portuguese

in 1499 was extended to the coast of south China by 1514. With the establishment of direct intercourse the Portuguese and their associates in Europe eagerly sought information on the merchandise, military potential, religion, and customs of the Chinese. Their concern to learn about religion and customs was originally inspired by the fear that the hated Muslims might be firmly entrenched in China, as they were in India and southeast Asia. The Portuguese were quick to learn, however, that the obstacles to intercourse with China were not created by the Moors but by the Chinese themselves. The Ming policy of isolation severely restricted foreign intercourse, but a few Europeans still managed to penetrate China illegally. The earliest reports to reach the West based upon direct experience came from Europeans who were prisoners in China.

In Europe the accounts of the Portuguese prisoners were used as sources by the chroniclers of the discoveries, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda and João de Barros. The chroniclers also garnered whatever information they could from the oral reports of European merchants and sailors and natives coming from China itself, or from Eastern ports where information on China was current. Barros had a Chinese slave who read and abstracted materials for him from Chinese books that had been expressly collected for this purpose in the East. The Portuguese chronicles, like most of the previous accounts, are limited to descriptions of the physical aspects of life, political institutions, and history, and the most striking and obvious social practices.

Observers and writers of the Catholic orders provided the first glimpses of China's religious and intellectual life. The Portuguese Dominican, Gaspar da Cruz, after spending several months in south China in 1556, presented in his *Tractado...* (Evora, 1569) a rounded and detailed account of life in China. In obedience to orders from Pope Gregory XIII, the Spanish Augustinian, Juan González de Mendoza, completed his comprehensive *Historia... del gran Reyno de la China* (Rome, 1585). It was quickly translated into most European languages and soon became one of the best selling and most widely quoted books of the day. The first systematic Jesuit work in which China figures prominently is the compendium of Giovanni Petri Maffei entitled *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI* (Florence, 1588). Maffei's sketch of China is based in large part upon the manuscript descriptions prepared by Alessandro Valignano, the notable Jesuit Visitor to the Asian mission. Richard Hakluyt in his *Voyages* (1599) published, in English translation, a small discourse prepared by the Jesuits in China which summarized briefly what the missionaries had learned of Chinese civilization to that time.

In their descriptions of China the sixteenth-century religious observers in the field and the compilers in Europe show a fresh and lively interest in Chinese language, customs, arts, thought, and religious practices. The Jesuits are the first to undertake the systematic study of the Chinese language, the tool essential to the penetration of learning. Aside from describing the peculiarities of the Chinese language, certain of the more sophisticated commentators begin to speculate on the possible relationships between Chinese pictographs, Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the Amerindian

languages of the New World. Chinese books on ceremonies, laws, sciences, arts, and history were collected and sent to Europe. Excerpts from some of these books were translated in the Philippines and then relayed to Europe. Mendoza, apparently on the basis of such translations, seeks to give a complete list of the names, chronological limits, and great achievements of the Chinese dynasties. All of the writers comment admiringly on the architectural monuments, great cities, and excellent social organization of the Chinese. Close attention is paid to Chinese methods and organization in education and to the examination system for state offices. The religious writers comment favorably on the treatment of women, and on the maintenance by the state of almshouses and hospitals. While their admiration in these cases is genuine, it should also be remembered that the religious commentators were always writing for the edification of their European readers.

Certain of the sixteenth-century religious writers are highly critical of the content of Chinese learning. More than once the Europeans remark with disdain on the unsophisticated character of Chinese astronomy, mathematics, and geography. The knowledge of the Chinese in these fields is judged to be limited to empirical observations of the sort that people everywhere make. Chinese science is esteemed to be in the same primitive state that the European sciences were in before Aristotle organized them and before Christianity enlightened them.

In their social life the Chinese are said to suffer from gross superstition, inhumane tortures, unnatural practices, and excessive preoccupation with pleasures of the flesh. Their three principal religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—do little, in the estimation of the Christians, to raise the moral tone of Chinese personal life. Confucianism, with its stress upon attaining the five virtues and an orderly society, approaches truth more closely than the other two faiths. Buddhism, which teaches a primitive notion of immortality, is otherwise fraught with obvious errors that are easily refuted. Neither the Taoists nor the Buddhists show any interest in learning and their priests are reviled for their evil and servile behavior.

To the Europeans of the sixteenth century, China was a "Mightie Kingdome" whose major art was government, or the effective political and social organization of a large and heavily peopled nation. Its civilization was admired for longevity, continuity, and cohesiveness. In the arts and crafts it was thought to be as advanced as Europe, perhaps even more so. Its limitations in theoretical science, in personal morality, and in appreciation of religious truth were attributed to its ignorance of Christianity. Once China had been evangelized, the inference is clear that it would necessarily become worthy of emulation by Europe.

II

The Jesuits of the last generation of the sixteenth century had directed their efforts toward the development of a policy and program that would help them to penetrate the Chinese mainland and establish relations with the highest levels of cultivated society. On the basis of their experiences at Macao, the Jesuits under Valignano's leadership decided to pursue a policy of "accommodation," or cultural compromise. It was

in this conciliatory spirit that the Jesuits began to study seriously Chinese language, customs, and learning. Matteo Ricci, an Italian priest, appeared on the Chinese mainland in 1583, established cordial relations with Chinese officials and scholars, and ultimately made his way to the imperial court in Peking.

Ricci resided at Peking from 1601 to his death in 1610. During that decade he won the confidence of the Ming Emperor and the Confucian literati through his gracious and dignified bearing, his polite and intelligent absorption in Chinese learning, and his sincere and sophisticated efforts to explain Western science and Christian teachings in terms that could be appreciated and understood by the learned and tolerant. While writing of Western thought and religion in Chinese, Ricci composed a manuscript history of the introduction of Christianity to China. His Italian text, and references from his *Journals*, were translated into Latin by Father Nicolas Trigault while on a sea voyage from China to Europe. Trigault published Ricci's work in five books under the title *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas...* (Rome, 1615). This account was quickly accepted throughout Europe as the official, best informed, and most recent exposition on China and the progress of Christianity there. Within a few years after its appearance, translations were issued in French, German, Spanish, and Italian. The first and the last of Ricci's books deal with China; the others are mainly concerned with the history of the mission.

Ricci, unlike Mendoza, was a close student of China's thought and religions. Since he lived in China at a time when Buddhism and Taoism were degenerating, his works exhibit forthright scorn for them. Especially repellent are Buddhist practices which appear to be devilish parodies of Christian rites. The "delirium" and "ravings" of the Taoists about Lao-Tze he attributes to the inspiration of the devil. Confucianism, the official thought of the literati, is much more to Ricci's taste. Confucius he sees as the equal of the best pagan philosophers of antiquity and superior to many of them. The emphasis in Confucianism upon morality, rationalism, public order, and teaching by precept and ex-

ample appeal to Ricci as being in accord with Christian principles. He points out further that the Confucianists have no idols, believe in one God, and revere the principle of reward for good and punishment for evil.

The Chinese literati convinced Ricci that Confucianism was not a competing faith but rather a set of moral precepts which was used for the proper government and general welfare of the state. Ricci was also led to believe that Confucianism "could derive great benefit from Christianity and might be developed and perfected by it" (Gallagher, p. 98). It was Ricci's simplistic presentations of early Confucianism, uncomplicated by the subtleties of later exegesis, that led several generations of Jesuits to believe that China could best be won by close study of the Confucian Classics, by alliance with a native literati devoted to its moral precepts, and by conversion of the leading lights of the realm and the emperor himself to Christianity. To the Jesuits at home such a program seemed congenial and likely, for it paralleled closely the educational,

social, and conversion policies that they were then following in Europe.

The Jesuit successors of Ricci in China included a number of mathematicians and scientists who continued to advance the cultural mission. Reports on their progress began to appear in Europe at mid-century. Alvaro Semedo, a Portuguese Jesuit, published at Madrid in 1642 a work on the empire of China in which he pays far greater attention to secular affairs than Ricci had. He also gives the text of and explanatory notes for the Nestorian monument found at Sianfu in 1625. He informs Europe about the wars being fought between the Ming and the Manchus. More material on the calamitous events taking place in north China was provided with the publication of Father Martin Martini's *De bello Tartarico historia* (Rome, 1654). In the following year Martini published his *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam), the first scientific atlas and geography of China and one that remains a standard reference work. In 1658 Martini published at Munich his *Sinicae historiae*, the first history of China written by a European from Chinese annals. In the meantime Father Michel Boym had returned to Europe to announce in 1654 the conversion to Christianity of members of the expiring Ming family and court. Far more important for European science and thought was the publication of Boym's *Flora Sinensis* (Vienna, 1656), a work comparable in intellectual merit to Martini's *Atlas*.

The Jesuits also published Latin translations of selected Confucian Classics. Prospero Intorcetta issued the translation by Ignatius da Costa of the *Ta Hsüeh* ("Great Learning") in his *Sapientia sinica* (Goa, 1662). At Paris in 1673, Intorcetta published his own translation of the *Chung yung* (*Doctrine of the Mean*). Fourteen years later a group of French Jesuits headed by Philippe Couplet published the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Paris) and dedicated it to King Louis XIV. It contains translations of the Classics previously published as well as the *Lun Yü* ("Analects"). Francisco Noël in his *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex* (Prague, 1711) republished the earlier translations and added to them his own version of the *Meng-tzu* ("Mencius"), the *Hsiao ching* ("Filial Piety"), and the *Hsiao hsüeh* ("Moral Philosophy for Youths"), a small work of interpretation by Chu Hsi (1130-1200) that was then used in China for elementary instruction in the Classics. The Classics selected by the Jesuits for translation were those which had been given new prominence by Chu Hsi and the Neo-Confucianists of the orthodox school then dominant in China.

While the Jesuits provided scholarly treatises and translations of the Confucian Classics, the merchants and diplomatic emissaries of Europe supplied by their accounts a less sophisticated and a more impressionistic documentation on China and its people. The Dutch, who had been sailing directly to the East since 1595, became particularly aggressive in the 1620's as they sought to secure a monopoly of the trade with China. In connection with these efforts they established a fort and settlement in southern Taiwan in 1624. But with the dynastic troubles that swept China, Dutch hopes for an expanded trade were quickly disappointed. Once the Ch'ing dynasty took over at Peking, the Dutch tried to negotiate directly at the capital. But the embassies sent to Peking in 1656, 1667, and 1685 produced few concrete results, and so no further efforts were made to establish legitimate trading relations with China.

The Dutch produced a number of independent ac-

counts of China that were published in Europe between 1644 and 1670. Isaac Commelin issued a collection of early Dutch travel accounts in 1644 that was followed two years later by the publication of William Bontekoe's *Journal*. These reminiscences paint a picture of the Chinese that is far different from the glowing and adulatory image of an ancient, rational society created by the Jesuits. To the Dutch observers the Chinese were sinister, devoid of all virtue, and experts in treachery. The Dutch emissary, Johann Nieuhof, in his account of the embassy of 1665, presents a more balanced view of China based both on the Jesuit writers and his own experiences. Olfert Dapper, a Dutch physician, compiled in Holland the reports of the second Dutch embassy to Peking, and in 1670 issued an encyclopedic compendium on China gleaned from the embassy descriptions and a wide range of other sources. His book, entitled *Atlas Chinensis* in its English translation, is often erroneously attributed to Arnoldus

Montanus. The Dutch accounts share a distrust of the Chinese and a skeptical view of China's vaunted civilization. The Dutch also provided Europe with its first comprehensive descriptions of the Chinese island of Taiwan, and of the widespread ruin produced on the mainland by the dynastic wars.

III

The Jesuits were meanwhile faced with a crisis of their own, the Rites Controversy. In its origins this bitter struggle within the Catholic Church can be traced to Ricci's view, which stressed the idea that no essential conflict existed between Confucianism in its pristine form and the tenets of Christianity. The original doctrines of Confucius, according to Ricci, taught monotheism and possibly even contained a primitive knowledge of Jehovah. Corruption of ancient Confucianism had taken place over the centuries as was clearly demonstrated by the growth of Taoism and the successful introduction of Buddhism into China.

Father Nicolas Longobardi, the Jesuit successor of Ricci at Peking, was himself skeptical that the ancient Chinese had knowledge of the true God. The Dominican and Franciscan missionaries, who began to evangelize in south China in the 1630's, were hostile to "accommodation" in any form. They branded all the Chinese sects as idolatrous, and initially made no serious efforts to study the language or to understand Chinese civilization. The two methods of evangelizing quickly came into conflict, as each group embarrassed and outraged the other. It was not long before the issue was joined in Europe as well as in the East.

At first the controversy raged over the question as to whether or not the ancient Chinese had a conception of the true God. Soon this debate led to the more practical question of the Chinese term best suited to render in its full significance the Christian conception of God, a problem that the Jesuits had earlier resolved in Japan by introducing the Latin word *Deus* into Japanese. But in China, where the Jesuit linguists knew that new terms could not so readily be added to the language, and where the Jesuits held that there already existed a primitive conception of Jehovah, the question of terminology could not be so adroitly handled. A host

of terminology could not be so adroitly handled. A host of other Christian terms, "soul" and "spirit" for example, could not easily be given Chinese equivalents that would carry with them the overtones that these words and concepts necessarily must have for believers. To the Dominicans and Franciscans the Confucianists for all their learning were simple atheists or agnostics who taught a materialistic doctrine inimical to the Christian faith. They were particularly outraged when the Jesuits permitted their Christian converts to continue performing ancestral rites. The Jesuits, following the logic of their original position, held that these rites were social and political rather than religious ceremonies.

The controversialists first appealed to Rome for an opinion in 1645. Pope Innocent X took a position that was critical of the Jesuit policies. But in 1656, Pope Alexander VII took a benign attitude on the question of the "Chinese rites" and granted that they should be permissible under certain conditions. The Dominican, Domingo Fernández Navarrete, then assumed leadership in the struggle against the Jesuits. In China, where he was superior of the Dominican mission from 1664, Navarrete gathered a mass of data relating to the "terms" and "rites" questions. On the basis of these he prepared two imposing and authoritative volumes called *Tratados históricos, políticos, éticos y religiosos de la Monarquía de China* (Rome, 1674). While it was a powerful attack upon the Jesuit position, Navarrete's book was also an excellent compilation of observations on Chinese life, customs, and practices.

At this juncture the authorities in Rome became understandably confused and disturbed over the Rites Question. The Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome decided to include the China question among the problems of general missionary activity and procedure then under investigation. The learned of Europe were consulted and began to take sides on the question. The *Missions étrangères* in Paris, which had increasingly become critical of the Jesuit effort to dominate the mission field, urged the Holy See to dispatch an Apostolic Vicar to China. Charles Maigrot, sent to China in this capacity, stood firmly in his mandate of 1693 against the practices being followed by the Jesuits. In Europe the Jansenists joined forces with those who denounced the Jesuit practices in China. The faculty of the Sorbonne in 1700 condemned the view advanced by the Jesuit, Louis Le Comte, that the primitive Chinese had practiced morality while the rest of the world still lived in corruption. The Rites Controversy, as it became involved with the Jesuit-Jansenist debate, threatened to produce an irreparable split within the Church.

In a dramatic effort to investigate and resolve the controversy, Pope Clement XI sent a special legate to China in the person of Charles de Tournon, Patriarch of Antioch. The De Tournon legation arrived at Canton in 1705 to begin its investigation. The atmosphere blackened quickly when, in 1706, De Tournon roundly denounced the Chinese, including the emperor, as atheists. Opposed on all sides for his ignorance and intolerance, the legate was condemned and arrested by the Chinese. De Tournon died in China in 1710 without retracting. In Europe the Papacy forbade further controversy, and in 1715 issued the constitution *ex illa die* which clearly condemned the Jesuit position.

Controversy nonetheless continued, both in Europe and China, until a strong papal pronouncement, *ex quo singulari*, was issued in 1742 requiring the Jesuits in China to take a special oath to abide by the papal decisions.

IV

Étienne de Silhouette, a pupil of the Jesuits, wrote in his *Idée générale du gouvernement... des Chinois* (Paris, 1729) that the controversies over the Chinese Rites “have given rise in the minds of everyone to a desire to know China” (Rowbotham, p. 145). He might also have observed that the question of the Rites and the religious, philosophical, linguistic, and social questions linked to it, had long been of deep interest and concern to intellectuals both inside and outside the Society. The compilation of Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667), an important work by a Jesuit scholar who had never been to China, inaugurated for the last generation of the seventeenth century the European age of erudition on things Chinese. Kircher's huge tome, with its numerous illustrations, was quickly reissued in Dutch, English, and French translations, and it thereafter became the starting-point for those who wrote or thought about China. Kircher's distinction as a scholar, his interest in the comparative study of languages, his analytical presentation of the Nestorian monument, his perceptive comments on flora and fauna, and his incorporation of authentic and numerous engravings of Chinese persons and scenes all combined to produce a work of enduring value and persistent influence.

The Chinese language with its peculiar system of characters had intrigued the earliest commentators. Sample characters began to appear in European publications of the late sixteenth century. While a practical knowledge of Chinese was acquired by most of the missionaries to China, the scientific study of the Chinese language in Europe emerged in the seventeenth century through diverse routes. Jacob Golius in the Netherlands first became interested in the Chinese language by way of his Arabic and Persian studies. Students of Near Eastern languages were given an even better starting-point when Kircher published parallel columns of Syriac and Chinese (also Romanizations) copied from the Nestorian monument. Andreas Müller, the provost of Berlin and a student of Near Eastern languages, was one of the first to use the Nestorian inscriptions and other available materials in his fruitless efforts to produce a key for the easy understanding of Chinese. His contemporary in England, John Webb, published in 1669 a book in which he sought to prove that Chinese was the primitive language spoken from the time of Adam to Noah, and that it had remained in a petrified condition ever since.

When Father Philippe Couplet brought two Chinese converts to Europe in 1685, the Jesuit and one of his charges were quizzed by linguists at Oxford, Berlin, and Vienna about the nature of the Chinese language. Another Chinese convert remained in Paris to work on a dictionary that the French Jesuits were preparing as a tool for missionaries in the field. By 1700 European scholars had learned from their investigations of Chinese something about the differences between the literary and spoken languages; the tonal system and dialects of the spoken tongue; the monosyllabic nature of the characters; the absence of grammar and inflection; the historical evolution of the characters; and the

tion; the historical evolution of the characters; and the various styles of calligraphy. They were not able, however, to produce the key either to Chinese or to the hieroglyphs of Egypt, which a number of them vainly sought.

European interest in the Chinese language was originally linked to the general Renaissance concern with Hebrew and Egyptian as primitive and emblematic languages; to the efforts of the rationalists to discover the primitive language from which all others were supposed to derive; to the hopes of certain optimists who sought to find a language more universal than Latin, and to the ambitions of others to construct an artificial and perfected philosophical language for use in the arts and sciences. Chinese appealed to language theorists because the characters, they believed, were based on concepts rather than arbitrary sounds. Seventeenth-century linguists thought this conceptual basis essential to the construction of a universal language.

Some interested scholars thought of Chinese as the lost language of Noah, or as the primitive language of all mankind; others persisted in holding the belief that the revival of Chinese would restore the languages of the world to that perfect condition which had obtained before Babel. Leibniz hoped to use elements from Chinese in developing a philosophical language that would replace Latin and help to make direct communication possible among the intellectuals of the world.

Closely related to the confusion of tongues was the problem of China's antiquity and history, and its relationship to orthodox Christian and Western beliefs in monogenesis. The publication of Martini's *Historiae sinicae* (1658) set the stage for a fundamental controversy over historical chronology which was finally to shatter Western concepts based upon the Bible. Issac Vossius, an eminent Dutch scholar who was avowedly an ardent admirer of the Chinese, published his *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi...* (The Hague, 1659), the first essay to examine the implications of Martini's historical data for Western thought. Martini's book, according to Vossius, showed that China's history

antedated the universal deluge, that its civilization was continuous, and that its historical records took no notice of the Flood. Vossius, casting Christian tradition aside, proceeded directly to the conclusion that the history of man was fourteen hundred and forty years older than it was commonly supposed to be. The reason for the error in the West was the tendency of the Christian chroniclers to rely upon Hebrew texts rather than upon the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Vossius likewise concluded that, because the Flood is not mentioned in the Chinese annals, the probability is that it was not universal but simply an event in the history of the Jews. Vossius, on the basis of his faith in the Chinese annals, thus reduced the Bible to a book of local history (Pinot, p. 205).

The critics of Vossius, especially Georg Horn, stressed his rashness in accepting uncritically the evidence of the Chinese annals. They also attacked the authenticity of China's historical traditions and the

accuracy of Martini's chronological calculations. A tendency gradually developed, however, to effect a reconciliation of Chinese and biblical history through numerous elaborate devices, including the use of the Septuagint chronology suggested by Vossius. The Chinese annals were thought to be at best distorted renditions of the events related in Genesis. The Chinese, it was surmised, could recall their antediluvian history through remembrances preserved for them by Noah's family. The sage emperors of China were identified with Adam, Cain, Enoch, and Noah. Once such identifications had been established, it became possible to argue that the Chinese annals provided verification for the historical authenticity of Genesis.

The Jesuits, in part because of their position in the Rites Controversy, were compelled to uphold the veracity of the Chinese annals. In 1686 Philippe Couplet published a *Tabula chronologica monarchiae sinicae...* (Paris), an effort at reconciling Chinese and Christian chronologies by trying to show that concord existed between the Septuagint and the Chinese records. In so doing he added fourteen hundred years to the period between creation and the life of Abraham. But this solution failed to satisfy either the intellectuals of Europe or the missionaries in China. The Bible was hereafter used historically by the missionaries in China mainly for the purpose of filling in gaps or of explaining obscure references in the Chinese annals. In Europe the Bible as a source for world chronology increasingly fell into desuetude. Even in the 1970's we are required to use concordances to reconcile Chinese and European dates.

In their conception of the beginnings of the world the Europeans were committed to a search for common origins. The ancient civilizations of Persia and Egypt were familiar to the writers of antiquity and the Bible, and so could be brought into universal history through these channels. China raised an almost insoluble problem because its civilization developed in isolation, its history was uninterrupted, and its chronology conflicted with Western conventions based on the Bible. Theories had to be devised consequently to account for the repopulation of China after the Flood. Egypt, because of its antiquity and the affinities of the hieroglyphs to Chinese characters, was identified by some as the center from which the great postdiluvian migration to the East began. The people of Pre-Columbian America, who likewise wrote in pictographs, were thought to be descendants of the earliest wave in the great eastward migration. But such a theory of development upset the traditional periodization of the world based on the "four monarchies": Chaldean, Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman. In the light of the new knowledge this old geographical and political scheme of periodizing gave way completely, and was supplanted by periods based entirely on chronology, i.e., ancient, medieval, and modern. It was only by this device that China's history could be correlated with classical and later Western historical periods.

The most ingenious and tortuous effort to reconcile Judeo-Christian and Chinese traditions was advanced by a small group of Jesuits in China who have been called "Figurists." They claimed to find evidence in the Confucian classics and in other Chinese works that would support a theory of the common origin of mankind and the law. The Figurists held that the Ancient Law given by God to man was originally in the hands of a supreme lawgiver: Enoch in the Hebrew tradition, Zoroaster in Persia, Fu Hsi in China. Shem, the son

of Noah, carried the pure *Logos* to China after the Flood. Fu Hsi, following the precepts of Enoch, promulgated the law in three forms: pictographic concepts and folk heroes for the simple people, more complex symbols for scholars and religious leaders, and mystical symbols for the sages. A source of mystical symbols of great import was thought to be the *I Ching (Book of Changes)*, one of the most cryptic of the Chinese classical books. Once they had concluded that the mystical figures (trigrams and hexagrams) of the *I Ching* were symbols of eternal verities they tried to decipher them. While nothing came of these attempts at cryptography, the Figurists by their enthusiasm and ingenuity did help to elevate China and its civilization to a place of primary importance in the deliberations of those intrigued with theories of common origin and universal kinship.

The first and greatest of the European thinkers to come under the spell of Figurist ideas was Leibniz. The German philosopher, who had long been fascinated by the revelation of China's great civilization, became a correspondent of Father Joachim Bouvet, one

of the leading Figurists. Around 1701 Leibniz was won over to the idea that the "hieroglyphics" of the *I Ching* were the creations of Fu Hsi and were mystical symbols that represented the Infinite and the Chaos from which God had rescued mankind. For a time he himself experimented with the trigrams, and sought through the analytical use of his binary arithmetic to show that they had a coherence and order about them which indicated that they might be a key to all the sciences. A successful deciphering of these symbols might lead, Leibniz thought, to the establishment of a firm scientific basis for the story of Creation and for the history of the antediluvian epoch. André-Michel Ramsay and Montesquieu were also intrigued by the ideas of the Figurists, but they made no serious efforts to help the Jesuits document their fantastic claims. However, they were impressed, as Leibniz was, by the Chinese Classics as sources which provide evidence for the homogeneity of human thought and for the objective existence of universality.

European religious and lay thinkers of the seventeenth century, under the influence of the debates attending the Rites Controversy, began to speculate as to whether the Chinese were materialists or spiritualists, atheists or deists. The freethinker François La Mothe le Vayer in his *De la vertu des payens* (Paris, 1642) placed Confucius in Paradise with other great pagan thinkers. He also asserted that the Chinese, from time immemorial, have recognized but one God, and he then deduced that the Chinese ethical system is based on reason and the law of nature. Pascal believed that the Chinese were God-fearing people whose religious beliefs could be understood only allegorically. In the *Pensées* (1670) he wrote: "China obscures, but there is clearness to be found; seek it." Pierre Bayle suggested that Spinoza's pantheism owed a debt to Confucian concepts of God. But Bayle, while praising the tolerance of China, like many other rationalists unhesitatingly branded the Chinese as atheists, and his opinion was to have influence well into the eighteenth century. Herbert of Cherbury, a precursor of the

English Deists, looked upon the Chinese as proponents of natural religion. Antoine Arnauld, the Jansenist lawyer and articulate foe of the Jesuits, saw nothing but iniquity in the Confucian ideas. Christian Thomasius, the Protestant educator of Halle, viewed Chinese religion as blind faith in the authority of dogma. Malebranche, the Oratorian philosopher, in his *Conversation between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher on the Existence of God* (1708) tried to refute the Chinese idea that matter is eternal. He, like Bayle, saw points of similarity between Spinoza's philosophy and Chinese thought.

Leibniz was the only secular philosopher of the later seventeenth century to support the Jesuits in the Rites Controversy and in their interpretation of Chinese religion and thought. In his diverse writings Leibniz shows himself to be convinced that the ancient Chinese were monotheists who conceived of God as being both spirit and matter. This Chinese God he sees as an entelechy similar to his own Supreme Monad. In the practice of their religion the Chinese worship God in the virtues of particular objects. But they are not idolaters, for they worship the spiritual rather than the material essence. In ancestral worship, he contends, there persists a concept of the immortality of the soul; rites are performed before the ancestors to remind the living to act so as to deserve the recognition of posterity. Leibniz' interpretation of Chinese religion was more than faintly reminiscent of the leading ideas in his own *Monadology*.

Like the Jesuits themselves, Leibniz rejoiced openly in the edict of toleration for Christianity promulgated in 1692 by the K'ang-hsi emperor. He congratulated the Jesuits on this success and heralded it as a vindication of their understanding of how best to reconcile Christian and Chinese thought. In 1697 he published his *Novissima Sinica* as a call to Protestants to emulate the example of the Jesuits and to dispatch a mission to China. He was even encouraged to hope, after the conclusion in 1689 of the Treaty of Nerchinsk between Russia and China, that the land route to Peking might be reopened and regular communications established through Russia between learned groups in China and Europe.

V

The Jesuits took seriously Leibniz' advice to send more useful objects and practical information to Europe from China. They also continued throughout the eighteenth century, even after the suppression of the Society in 1773, to publish detailed information on Chinese life ranging from the history of the Jews in China to brief essays on Chinese games. The *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, an intentional popularization, were issued in printed form beginning in 1702, and were later compiled and reissued in twenty-six volumes at Paris between 1780 and 1783. J. B. Du Halde, one of the editors of the *Lettres édifiantes*, published in four volumes his encyclopedic *Description de la Chine* ... (Paris, 1735) which was translated into English and Dutch in the following year. In following the encyclopedic tradition which they helped to inaugurate, the Jesuits published at intervals from 1777 to 1814 what were called *Mémoires concernant les Chinois* (Paris). Unlike their earlier publications, the Jesuits, who were now generally in disrepute, here issued in sixteen volumes, with but few editorial comments, a wide vari-

ety of translations of Chinese materials. Contemporaneously, Father Mauriac de Mailla published in 1778 a translation in twelve volumes of the *Tung-chien kang-mu* ("The Outline and Details of the Comprehensive Mirror"), a twelfth-century version of Chinese history prepared under the direction of the philosopher Chu Hsi.

What most impressed the Jesuits and Leibniz about China, was its superiority to Europe in the establishment and maintenance of a rational social order. Leibniz fancied from what he read that the K'ang-hsi emperor was a model ruler who governed his subjects firmly but with great respect for law and the advice of his counsellors. So great was Leibniz' admiration for the government, social stability, and moral system of the Chinese that he confessed:

... we need missionaries from the Chinese who might teach us the use and practice of natural religion, just as we have sent them teachers of revealed theology

(trans. in Lach,
Novissima Sinica, p. 75).

To Leibniz and the Jesuits, the morality of the Chinese was inseparable from government. The Chinese, it was alleged, have no concern with abstract questions of morality but are interested only in applying to daily life the teachings of Confucius regarding the duties of men. The morality of the Chinese is seen to be a set of prescriptions designed to procure and assure individual, familial, and social happiness. The successful organization of the Chinese monarchy, as opposed to the European states, is based on the fact that the emperor applies and adapts to the administration of the state the principles which obtain in individual and family life. Political means are used in China to achieve a more perfect morality. The end of life, society, and government in China is happiness, here and now. Abstract religious virtue, with its invisible and other worldly rewards, is of no interest to the Chinese. China flourishes as a great and virtuous empire without the aid of revealed religion.

Among the earliest of the philosophical popularizers to propagate to the learned public the Sinophilism of the Jesuits was Christian Wolff, the follower of Leibniz. In a lecture delivered at the University of Halle in 1721 before the combined faculty and student body, Wolff proclaimed the excellence of Chinese moral philosophy and its correspondence with his own teachings regarding the efficacy of human reason in meeting the problems of daily life. Duty and virtue, the difference between good and evil, and the imperative to right action may be learned from nature as well as revelation, according to both the Chinese and Wolff. While Wolff contends that no conflict exists between this doctrine of lay morality and Christian teachings, his Pietistic colleagues at the university remained unconvinced. In their determination to end what they thought of as Wolff's heretical teachings, the Pietists prevailed in 1723 upon King Frederick William I of Prussia to banish Wolff from his territories.

From the sanctuary of the University of Marburg Wolff continued thereafter to write about and teach his "practical philosophy." Others continued to write polemical tracts about Wolff and his interpretations

of Confucian morality and Chinese statecraft. In 1730 at Marburg Wolff delivered a lengthy lecture on China as the outstanding working example of an enlightened government. His views of the “Real Happiness of a People under a Philosophical King” did not go unnoticed by Voltaire and the young Frederick whom he was tutoring at Rheinsberg. Within German university circles the moral philosophy and Sinophilism of Wolff continued to be a subject for learned debate until the last generation of the eighteenth century. Wolff’s major pronouncements on Chinese morality and government were greeted with great cordiality by the Jesuits. In the *Description* of Du Halde, issued five years after Wolff’s lecture at Marburg, emphasis continued to be placed upon the natural morality, rational religion, and enlightened statecraft of the Chinese.

The first systematic treatise on the science of statecraft published in Europe was Montesquieu’s *L’esprit des lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748). For his information on China Montesquieu used the merchant accounts as well as the adulatory statements of the Jesuits, but preferred the merchants as the less biased observers. The merchants, as we have seen, were as unanimous in their condemnation of the treachery, deceit, and dishonesty of the Chinese as the Jesuits were in their praise of China’s natural morality and good government. In response to the conflict in his sources, and in harmony with the thesis of his book, Montesquieu concluded that a wide gulf separates theory from practice in the governing of China. Peace and tranquillity are assured by patriarchal repression and by the dominion of fear. An attack upon a magistrate becomes an attack upon the entire system, hence dissent and liberty are nonexistent and reform of evil impossible. As long as the elements are cooperative, the people industrious, and the state not too repressive, life in China is satisfactory. But nature is not often benign and so disruptions occur. And, since reform of the state is not possible, the individual Chinese make out as best they can by resorting to artifice. The state, handcuffed by its own system, tolerates deception while eschewing reform. China, because it is governed by the rod, is classified as a despotism in which honor and virtue are little more than theoretical objectives. Nonetheless, by the attention he gave to China, Montesquieu recog-

nized that study of its laws and institutions is necessary to any objective examination of the principles of government and similar questions of universal import.

Rousseau, in his *Discourse on Political Economy* (first printed in the *Encyclopédie* in 1755) likewise experienced the need to reckon with China in propounding his generalizations. The emperor of China he sees as being exemplary in unswervingly following the dictates of the “general will” in resolving disputes between the officials and the people. Rousseau approvingly noted that it is “the constant maxim of the prince to decide against his officers” without delay or investigation, and concludes that since the “public outcry does not arise without cause” the Chinese emperor finds “seldom any injustice to be repaired.” He also praised the fiscal system of China “where taxes are greater and yet better paid than in any other part of the world.” The reason for this, in Rousseau’s estimation, is that food grains

are free of taxes, and the heavy duties levied on other commodities are paid by the ultimate consumer, or by those who can afford to pay.

Voltaire in his historical works, especially in the *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756), measured China's civilization against the achievements of other peoples. China occupies the place of honor in his *Essai* and is the first civilization he considers. The Chinese are especially successful, in Voltaire's eyes, in using government to protect civilization. The emperors of China, comparable to philosopher-kings, for centuries maintained a stable, tolerant, and wise regime. Their benign, patriarchal rule, reinforced and aided by a corps of dedicated mandarins, served the people well. Society, following the Confucian principles, was built on respect for the Golden Rule, mutual toleration, and public service. In upholding the Confucian ideals, the Chinese produced throughout history an intelligent, rational, and deistic ruling class which set an example to the rest of society by cultivating virtue, refined manners, and an elevated style of life. But the Chinese system, for all of its moral and political virtue, could do nothing to encourage the expansion of the arts and sciences. Superstition, ancestor worship, and the character system of the language were persistent deterrents to advancement. The consequence was that China did not develop the arts and sciences as it might have done. That China's ancient civilization was overtaken by the European in the mid-seventeenth century is best documented by the fact that "even" the Jesuits were able to teach the mandarins something from their first arrival on the Chinese scene.

If Voltaire's Sinophilism was qualified, a number of political theorists of the mid-eighteenth century were convinced that Europe had more to learn from China than it had to teach. In Germany, a leading cameralist writer of the day, J. H. G. Justi published in Berlin in 1762 *Vergleichungen der europäischen mit den asiatischen und andern vermeintlich barbarischen Regierungen*. In this comparative work, as well as in several of his other writings on political economy, Justi concentrates on China as the foreign state most worthy of study. He is particularly attracted by China as an example of enlightened monarchy in which the unlimited authority of the ruler is effectually combined with moderation in its exercise. Moral restraint in the monarch is inculcated in China by careful education of the prince in humility, industry, respect for human life, reverence for learning, and concern for agriculture, the main occupation of the people. Like Leibniz, he believed that the Chinese emperor is constrained to virtue by his desire to receive the favorable judgment of history. While subjects have the duty to remonstrate with the ruler, he sees in China no formal constitutional restrictions on the emperor. Systematic training in civil morality is taught to the people by the mandarins, who are themselves selected, rated, and promoted by a civil service institution. No hereditary nobility exists in China, and elevation to high rank comes only through excellent performance in public service. The censorate, which acts as the eyes and ears of the emperor, is the surveillance institution that guarantees integrity and efficiency at all levels of government. Administration by boards rather than by individuals alone also helps to check license and despotism among officials. Most impressive of all is the fact that the Chinese system is internally so well balanced and its administrative machinery so wisely constructed that it works *automatically* to insure the general welfare. In China, Justi clearly thought he had

found a working example of the kind of enlightened despotism that he and others were advocating for the German states.

In France the ideal of an enlightened and rational absolutism was most fully articulated by the Physiocrats. The Physiocrats were especially critical of state economic policies which overstress commerce and neglect agriculture. In China they saw a government vitally concerned with agriculture, as was symbolized dramatically by the annual spring rites at which the emperor, or his deputy, turned the first furrow. The most characteristic of the Physiocratic writings which elevated China to a model for Europe was François Quesnay's *Le despotisme de la Chine* (Paris, 1767). Quesnay sees the government of China as one in which the ruler through legal despotism enforces the natural economic laws. Authority is rightly invested in an emperor who is impartial, tolerant, and constantly careful to protect the public welfare. Since China is an agricultural nation, the ruler correctly pays special

attention to problems relating to the land and the cultivator. He does not lay arbitrary taxes, but follows the Natural Law by requiring as payment "a portion of the annual produce of the soil" (Maverick, p. 290). He does not tolerate monopolies, but does his best to encourage free and natural competition in all economic enterprises. He demands regular accountings of public funds and swiftly punishes malversations. The perpetuity of China's government is attributed to the stable natural order enforced by the ruler. China's greatest problem is overcrowding of the land with the result that too many of its people live in poverty or slavery.

VI

With the beginning of direct intercourse in the sixteenth century, the artists and craftsmen of Europe had become intrigued with Chinese textiles, porcelain, and lacquer ware. A pronounced taste for Chinese art objects was widespread in Europe by the time tea was introduced to Restoration England. The motifs on the Chinese products were widely copied in Europe both in imitations that were made of the products themselves and in other art forms. Europeans were successful by the late seventeenth century in producing an acceptable and competitive lacquer ware. A generation later they had learned to make true hardpaste porcelain. Along with the art products themselves, the Europeans sought to obtain information on Chinese techniques. Books and articles on Chinese arts were collected and read by interested amateurs and professionals as the China vogue spread from France to the other European countries, and from the nobility to the lowest classes in society. Never before had Europe received so powerful and varied an artistic stimulus from a distant civilization.

The craze for Chinese art objects reached its peak in the early and middle years of the eighteenth century. Royalty, nobility, and men of substance collected Chinese cabinets, chairs, tables, screens, fans, hangings, porcelains, and lacquered bowls. Interiors were paneled with lacquer or wallpapered with Chinese designs. In the palaces a special chamber was often designed

to house the porcelain collection of the owner. Many of the items collected were prepared in China especially for this vast European market and were designed to appeal to the European taste for the exotic. As a consequence they often reflected more about the Chinese conception of European taste than about Chinese art itself. Parasols, pagodas, and mandarins were depicted on the wares made in China as the Europeans conceived of them rather than as they actually looked. European artists, who incorporated these contrived designs into their own works, were often copying Chinese people, objects, and scenes that were born in the minds of those European artists and artisans afflicted by Sinomania.

“Chinoiserie” (meaning bizarre tricks or monkey-shines in modern French usage) is a term descriptive of the eighteenth-century European view of China as a place of escape from the trials of daily life, as a haven of leisure and luxury, as a utopia where laughter is always gay. In this conception China is remote in distance rather than in time. Its “Golden Age” is not in the past or future, but in a perpetual and glorious present. Its landscapes are always green, its waters clear and cool, its skies sunny. The Chinese people are graceful, delicate, and colorful; they love beautiful gardens, quiet ponds, tinkling bells, and happy society. They are the gay Chinese of the porcelains who have almost no relationship to the wise Chinese of the Jesuits and philosophers or the wicked Chinese of the merchants. They are the untroubled people who live under the reasonable and tolerant rule of an enlightened and prosperous king.

The playful, and sometimes wistful, spirit of chinoiserie is best reflected in the visual arts. To Europeans, weary of Renaissance adulation of the staid art of antiquity, the strange objects of China provided welcome relief. Frivolous courtiers and serious artists at Versailles in the time of Louis XIV were among the first to bring the light spirit of chinoiserie into the established arts of Europe. Perhaps as a reaction against the classical plan of the park at Versailles, an exquisite pleasure house, the *Trianon de porcelaine*, was erected in the gardens in 1670. This was but the first of many such pavilions that would dot the classical and landscape gardens of Europe in the following century. But, as was often the case, the Trianon was a building whose basic architecture was uncompromisingly French and baroque. It was only the surface ornamentation which gave it a bizarre, Chinese appearance. As a general rule, the Chinese taste was incorporated into baroque art by the addition of exotic ornaments and motifs to forms that remained fundamentally European both in conception and structure alike.

The rococo art of the Regency period in France lent itself especially well to exotic treatment. Antoine Watteau in his drawings and paintings was the earliest and most influential of the creators of rococo chinoiseries. His mandarins, temples, and parasols became hallmarks of decoration *à la Chine* and were copied by lesser artists all over Europe. Monkeys came frequently into his fantastic decorations and they were regularly added to chinoiseries for exotic effects. The increased use of watercolors in painting probably owed a debt to the porcelain pictures. François Boucher, a painter and a designer of tapestries, stressed the charms

of Chinese pastoral and village life, and his people began to look like real Chinese in face and figure. Jean-Baptiste Pillement, draughtsman and painter to Louis XIV, drew chinoiseries for engravers that were even more fantastic and vivacious than the paintings of Watteau. The drawings of Pillement were copied everywhere, and are still considered to be the best examples of chinoiserie at the height of its refinement. While the artists themselves were not influenced by the conception of China found in the *philosophes*, there is no doubt that the popularity of the chinoiseries owed a debt to the high reputation which the savants gave to China. The ordinary person could readily draw the conclusion that these happy people lived under a philosopher-king.

In the eighteenth century it was generally agreed that the English landscape garden, as it then evolved, owed a substantial debt to the art of Chinese gardening. Sir William Temple, a critic of classical, formal gardens, noted in 1685 that the Chinese in their gardens seek to reproduce natural effects by following schemes based on "Sharawadgi," his own rendition of a Chinese or Japanese term meaning "studied irregularity." On the basis of Temple's remarks the conviction grew that the Chinese example was more important to the evolution of the landscape garden than were Roman prototypes, the semi-formal garden, or a new attitude towards nature in its wild state. Naturalism as an end in itself was not enough to satisfy Sir William Chambers, who believed that an inanimate, simple nature was too insipid and that gardens required "every aid that either art or nature can furnish" (Bald, p. 318).

It was as such an aid that the chinoiserie form was used. But because European garden architects had almost no direct knowledge of Chinese garden design, art historians today generally hold that the Chinese example had no influence upon what has been called the Anglo-Chinese garden. The case for Chinese influence has usually been supported exclusively by reference to the large number of garden buildings, pagodas, and bridges which were included in the new gardens by their designers or added by their owners. Whatever else it was, the Anglo-Chinese garden was certainly another art form which came under the influence of the vogue for ornamenting through chinoiseries.

From the arts of gardening and architecture, the revolt against classical rigidity stimulated by the idea of "Sharawadgi" speedily passed to the other arts. Chinese persons or scenes were introduced into baroque novels to provide gallant, grotesque, or fantastic elements, as in C. W. Hagdorn, *Aeyquan, oder der Grosse Mogul* (1670). Romances were based upon Oriental tales to lend them an idyllic and exotic air. Utopian writers cited China as an example of a tolerant society. Books on Chinese designs as exhortations to adopt the new taste are typified by Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* (1754). Writers of fictional travel accounts, sometimes called extraordinary voyages, provided thumbnail sketches of Chinese people and places.

The *sage chinois*, who represented in literature the idealized Chinese of the *philosophes*, was frequently used as a literary spectator of and commentator upon the European scene. The Marquis d'Argens dedicated his *Lettres chinoises* (The Hague, 1755) to the shade of Confucius, "the greatest man the world has yet pro-

Confucius, "the greatest man the world has yet produced," and he speculated that Confucius and Leibniz were holding frequent conversations in another world. Oliver Goldsmith in his *Chinese Letters*, which appeared in *The Public Ledger* between 1760 and 1762, put his critical observations of European society into the mouth of Lien Chi Altangi out of deference to the prevailing fashion. Voltaire in his play of 1755 called *L'Orphelin de la Chine* (or "Confucian morals in five acts") actually utilized as the basis for his plot the translation of a Chinese drama that had been published by Du Halde. Voltaire's play, which was extremely popular on the contemporary stage, celebrates the triumph of Chinese civilization over the barbarous Mongols. Voltaire's drama was also an indirect attack upon Rousseau's adulation of the primitive and unspoiled society. The essayists of the *Encyclopédie* wrote at length on Chinese customs and compared them to those prevailing in Europe and in other parts of the world. In most of these comparisons China's practices almost always win high honor for their rationality, refinement, and good taste.

VII

Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century disillusionment with China as a model of rationality, good government, and the gay life was expressed with increasing frequency and greater vigor. The hostility in Europe towards the Society of Jesus, its expulsion from a number of countries, and its formal dissolution by the Papacy in 1773 led many contemporary observers to be more than a bit skeptical about the veracity of the glowing Jesuit reports of China. The growing criticism of rationalistic thought and enlightened absolutism also produced a reaction against a China which had been elevated to a model society by rationalistic social, economic, and political theorists. The more effective closure of China to European trade had the practical result of eliminating regular intercourse and of forcing Europe's attention to turn to other more hospitable places. The outbreak of the French Revolution and the continental wars brought an end to almost all European relations with eastern Asia. England,

which managed to retain a degree of independence from continental involvements, turned the major share of its attention to India. The United States, where the China craze imported from Europe began just after the revolt against Britain, was one of the few places in the Western world where disenchantment with China had not set in by the end of the eighteenth century.

The intellectual and artistic foes of rationalism and classicism stood in the vanguard of those who attacked the China of the *philosophes* and the rococo painters. The young Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) raised two fundamental questions. What advantage, he asked, has China "reaped from the honors bestowed on its learned men?" Can it be, he goes on satirically, "that of being peopled by a race of scoundrels and slaves?" Or is the reward for holding learning in honor the defeat of the empire by "rude and ignorant Tatars?" Dr. Samuel Johnson, who had been an ardent admirer of China in his earlier years, came to look upon the Chinese as barbarians who had

no art other than “pottery” and who had never advanced sufficiently to possess an alphabet. Baron F. M. Grimm, who castigated the Jesuits in his literary correspondence for deceiving Europe with false reports, branded China an unenlightened despotism with the Confucian moral code fitting precisely a “herd of frightened slaves” (Reichwein, p. 96). The young Goethe, who had read the *Analects* as well as Montesquieu and Rousseau, had no patience with the “knickknacks” of chinoiserie and was inclined to regard China itself as possessing a hybrid, overrefined, superficial, and sick civilization.

As ideas about China during the Enlightenment were subjected to a more intimate inspection, the tendency grew to stress the static quality of its civilization. Enlightenment philosophers of progress generally concerned themselves with the advance of reason in the West and rarely referred in their considerations to other parts of the world. Voltaire and other rationalists were primarily intent upon revealing the universality of reason and were content with simply finding a place for China in their cosmic designs. In doing so, even some of the greatest admirers of China posited a civilization that was unchanging, unprogressive, and being rapidly overtaken by the West. None of the enlightened writers, not even the authors of universal history from Bossuet to the Göttingen school, undertook seriously to bring China into their considerations of historical process.

Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) asserted that the poverty of China's lowest classes is far greater than anything to be found in Europe. Like Montesquieu, Smith was inclined to accept the travelers' view of China and to put aside that of the Jesuits as suspect. “The accounts of all travelers,” he noted, “inconsistent in many respects, agree in the low wages of labor, and in the difficulty which a laborer finds in bringing up a family in China” (Book I, Ch. VIII). Since the travel accounts from Marco Polo to those of his own day describe China in essentially the same terms, Smith concluded that China “seems to have been stationary” (ibid.). But though China appears to stand still, “it does not seem to go backwards” (ibid.). Its towns and cultivated lands are not deserted or neglected. China's failure to develop economically, despite its acknowledged wealth in people and resources, he ascribed to its neglect of international trade. Failure of the state to encourage trade and provide security for investors and workers produces a bipolarization of Chinese economic life by which “the oppression of the poor must establish the monopoly of the rich” (Book I, Ch. IX).

J. G. von Herder, in his earliest writings, conceived of China as an agrarian country dominated by a paternalistic government which inhibits the growth of the intellectual and creative capacities of the people. In his *Ideen* (1791) Herder self-consciously attempted an objective appraisal of Chinese civilization in an effort to let it fit itself into his universal historical conception. He reviewed China's natural environment and history and concluded that its physical isolation and rigid institutions prevent the growth of dynamism and creativity. The descent of the Chinese from barbaric Mongols left a heritage of coarse habits and unrefined tastes. Natural growth is repressed by the false stress placed upon filial piety and obedience to authority. The civilization that evolves in stubborn isolation from other world cultures is stultified, artificial, and unimaginative. “The empire,” he asserted, “is an embalmed mummy inscribed with hieroglyphics and

wrapped in silk." Later in life Herder modified this view and praised the Chinese for their tolerance, patience and enlightened government.

T. R. Malthus in *An Essay on the Principle of Population...* (1798) analyzed the incentives to and checks upon the increase of China's population. He estimated on the basis of Du Halde's figures that China's population in the early eighteenth century was almost 240,000,000; at the end of the century Sir George Staunton, the British emissary to Peking, estimated it at about 334,000,000. Malthus accounted for China's vast numbers and their rapid increase by reference to the productivity of the land, its intensive cultivation, the government's concern for agriculture, the industriousness and relatively high social position of the farmer, and the encouragement given to marriage by the religious and social systems. He also noted that despite its vast area, China had a population density

of thrice to twice that of France, a deplorable situation brought on mainly by the cultural imperatives encouraging marriage. But limits are set upon the operation of marriage as an incentive to increase of population by the large number of priests, monks, scholars, servants, and slaves who remain single and childless. Disease, especially among children, is a positive check but not as important as might be expected in such an overcrowded country. Infanticide by exposure and drowning is common but it varies with abundance and scarcity. Frequent crop failures from drought, floods, or plagues of insects produce devastating famines that, because of China's isolation, cannot be relieved by outside help. Unrelieved scarcity results in riots and wars, which with widespread famine act as the most powerful check on population increase. Malthus saw little prospect for China to improve the lot of its people through manufacture and the encouragement of foreign trade. Its wealth, based on cultivation, had already reached its zenith and little hope for relief could be envisaged either through greater agricultural or industrial productivity. In terms of material development China seemed doomed to stagnation and predestined to suffer a staggering burden of overpopulation and grinding poverty.

The thesis that China was a static and unprogressive civilization received its classical formulation in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (1830-31). Hegel was a close student of the critical merchant and Protestant accounts of China as well as of the adulatory writings of the Jesuits. China, like other Oriental states, possesses for Hegel a civilization in which nature terrorizes man and in which progress is limited by geographical and racial contradictions. While China has its own *Volksgeist*, it has never advanced beyond the initial stages in the realization of freedom. The only free individual is the despot; for others freedom under the state has never been realized and no sense exists of the infinite worth of the individual.

Hegel saw Confucius as a moralist, not a systematic or speculative philosopher. The sage prescribed principles for action, and made morality for the individual identical with the emperor's will and law. It is this prescriptive quality of Chinese morality which accounts for the unchanging, despotic character of

counts for the unchanging, despotic character of Chinese society and for the failure of the Chinese to have an interest in abstract knowledge for itself. Since China's civilization does not progress, it is relatively certain that China was not better off in antiquity than at present. Study of prevailing conditions might then be assumed sufficient to unlock the secrets of China's past. Hegel, who was also a close student of Voltaire's idea of universal history, explicitly rejected the uniformity of nature and placed the stagnant Orient, including China, at the bottom of his ladder of linear history which culminates in freedom's self-realization in the Europe of his day. But by this scheme Hegel did not succeed in explaining how universal history itself progressed from its first "unchanging" phase to the Greek stage in which a greater degree of freedom somehow developed.

Marx's concept of Asia, as spelled out in his writings of the 1850's, was based essentially on the views of the classical economists, especially John Stuart Mill. Both Marx and Engels embraced the then current belief in an Asiatic society that was unique in possessing peculiar systems of land ownership and production which definitely set it apart from the agrarian societies of classical antiquity and feudalism in the West. Climate and geography necessarily made artificial irrigation the basis of Asian agriculture. The Asiatic state came into being to control waterworks spread over vast territories where the people, living in dispersed, self-supporting villages, depended upon strong central authority to organize and control irrigation. In China the economy rests upon a combination of small agriculture and domestic industry in which the state consumes almost totally whatever surplus value can be produced. The Asiatic mode of production thus made the state the real landlord, and it maintains in perpetuity a condition of general slavery for the masses.

China, Marx and Engels thought in 1850, was the "oldest and most unshakeable empire of the world" (Lowe, p. 19), isolated and rotting. But, at about this time, China began to be forced out of its shell of isolation by imperialist attacks from the West. The best evidence for China's loss of stability was the outbreak of the Taiping rebellion in the 1850's and the changes that it threatened. Faced by the reality of a China in decline, Marx and Engels had to fit China into their theoretical framework as a changing element. China, it was concluded, under pressure from industrial capitalism, would leap over antiquity and feudalism to the capitalist and ultimately to the socialist modes of production. Marx and Engels saw changes in China of the kind they expected to see in the West. In their preoccupation with Europe they failed to notice indigenous reasons for change. In their concern with a changing China, they abandoned their efforts to fit China into their unilinear scheme of universal history as they tried to understand what influence it might have upon the world transition from capitalism to socialism.

VIII

Professional study of China, especially of language, literature, and history, made rapid progress in the early nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century a few compendia, grammars, and dictionaries had been pro-

duced, such as G. S. Bayer's *Museum Sinicum* (St. Petersburg, 1730) and Étienne Fourmont's *Grammaire chinoise* (Paris, 1742). The Society of Jesus, which was revived in 1815, continued to provide the scholars of Europe with raw materials from the field. The Jesuits issued translations as well as essays on Chinese and its relation to other Asian tongues. J. P. Abel Rémusat, who in 1814 became professor of Chinese at the Collège de France, inaugurated serious study of Taoism and Chinese medicine, and translated novels of romance and family life. He also participated in the organization of the *Société asiatique* in 1822. J. H. Klaproth, an associate of Rémusat, published the *Asia Polyglotta* (1823) in which he divided Asian languages into twenty-three groups and indicated how comparative studies might be undertaken. Sir William Jones, the father of modern Sanskrit studies in the West, studied Chinese language and history in his efforts to understand India's early relations with China.

The Protestant missionaries, who started evangelizing China in 1807, compiled dictionaries in English, studied dialects seriously, and established educational institutions and printing presses in southeast Asia and China. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary in China (1807), published between 1815 and 1823 a six-volume *Dictionary of the Chinese Language*. W. H. Medhurst published between 1832 and 1837 his *Dictionary of the Hok-kien Dialect of the Chinese Language*. Both of these early dictionaries were published at Macao as were other early vocabularies and encyclopedias designed for the use of missionaries. The Chinese themselves began around 1875 to prepare dictionaries for the use of Westerners. But the English-speaking world owes its greatest debt to the British scholar Herbert A. Giles who published at Shanghai in 1892 his *Chinese-English Dictionary*, designed for merchants and missionaries. He provided as well a system of transliteration which Western students still depend upon in working with the Chinese language. In the nineteenth century Chinese dictionaries were also prepared for Portuguese, French, German, and Russian users.

As comprehension of Chinese improved, translations of popular literature, classics, histories, and documents became more numerous. Dramas, poems, and short stories were translated into English and French. As the Protestant pastors and their families steadily grew in number, they came to exercise an enormous influence upon the growth of scholarly knowledge and upon the formation of public opinion and policy in their homelands. Elijah C. Bridgman the first American missionary to China, launched a periodical called the *Chinese Repository*, published in China from 1832 through 1851, which was designed to inform foreigners about China's past and present. Bridgman also translated the Bible into Chinese (with M. S. Culbertson), published in 1862. S. Wells Williams, an American missionary-scholar, lectured on China and compiled an encyclopedic two-volume study, *The Middle Kingdom* (1848), which remained a standard reference work until the end of the nineteenth century. Many of the missionaries or their children acted as interpreters in diplomatic negotiations with China or returned home to teach in the universities, advise the government, or work in export businesses. In the learned societies devoted to the investigation of Chinese affairs the views of the missionaries commanded respect.

Knowledge of China produced a practical impact upon the agriculture and administration of the enter-

upon the agriculture and administration of the enterprising West. Serious projects were undertaken in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century to compete with China in raising silk and tea, and experiments were performed to adapt Chinese plants and animals to the needs of American agriculture. T. T. Meadows, a British diplomat, published *Desultory Notes on the Government and People of China* (1847) in which he described the civil service system of China and urged the institution in Britain of a comparable examination system for the recruitment, rating, and advancement of civil servants. Through his statement the problem was aired, and in 1855 Britain created its first civil service commission. Most of the civil service systems now in existence, including those started before the British system, owe an incalculable debt to the Chinese example.

James Legge, in the 1850's, undertook the translation into English of the Confucian and Taoist texts, and became the first professor of Chinese at Oxford. His pioneer translations, worked out with the aid of a Chinese assistant, have been criticized by modern scholars as being ethnocentric and inaccurate. Nonetheless, they still remain the standard English versions. In France the Marquis d'Hervey Saint-Denys published a valuable anthology of T'ang poetry in 1852 that was influential among the literati of Europe. The Berlin Orientalist, Karl Arendt, rendered into German in the 1870's a number of selections from Ming novels the themes of which inspired poets and dramatists of the following generation. Continental Sinologists also wrote at length on Chinese administration and international affairs with increasing reliance on Chinese sources. H. B. Morse in the early twentieth century organized for the English-speaking world the international relations and commercial administration of the Chinese empire, mainly on the basis of Western sources.

The study of China in relation to its continental neighbors was given its present structure in the works

of Sir Henry Yule. In 1871 he published *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian* with a complete scholarly apparatus. His documentation, drawn from his personal travel experiences as well as from the best available literary sources, set a new standard for Eurasian studies. He also edited the works of other medieval travelers and his studies were continued and augmented by Henri Cordier, a French diplomat and scholar. It was Cordier who compiled the *Bibliotheca Sinica* (1904-08) which remains the standard bibliography of Western works on China. Paul Pelliot, the founder of the leading scholarly journal *T'oung Pao* (1890-), continued the Yule tradition but with a greater attention to monographic research. René Grousset, a French popularizer of Asian studies, sought more self-consciously than his colleagues to reinforce the literary sources with materials derived from study of the visual arts.

The Protestants, originally hostile to Buddhism for its outward resemblances to Catholicism, began seriously by the end of the century to translate and study its texts. Much of the growing interest in the study of Asian religions historically and on their own terms was due to the inspiration of Max Müller, the editor

of the *Sacred Books of the East* (1875-1900). In this collection he presents, side by side with other Oriental books, most of the Chinese philosophical and religious texts in careful translations. The availability in English of this repository of material inspired serious historical and comparative studies of world religions.

Max Weber in his lengthy essays on *Confucianism and Taoism*, first published in 1916, brought China into his sociology of religion and more specifically into his theoretical considerations about the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. These essays, which consider the social and economic as well as the religious foundations of Chinese society, constitute one part of a series of comparative studies designed to throw light on the general question as to why rational bourgeois capitalism became a dominant phenomenon *only* in the West. In China, as in other Asian societies, Weber concludes that the dominant religious traditions did not possess an "economic ethic" compatible with capitalistic growth. He concedes that traditional China possessed the materialistic potential for capitalistic development, but contends that Confucianism lacked the dynamism of ascetic Protestantism since it stressed rational adjustment to the world as given rather than rational mastery of it. Taoism he sees as a conservative and negative force which stressed passive acceptance rather than innovation and activism. In his analysis of the structure and function of Chinese society, Weber provides startling insights into the roles of the bureaucracy, literati, and the kinship system, which have inspired numerous recent investigations in depth by specialists in social history. For comparative religion, his examinations of Confucianism and Taoism still constitute empirical starting-points for generalized typological concepts.

IX

In the early nineteenth century the reaction against China as a model state led to a more positive interest in the Chinese as human beings. The sources for this new interest were found in the translations of popular literature, especially poetry, which had become increasingly available. A precursor of this trend was Ludwig Unzer, the German poet, who published in 1773 an elegy entitled *Vou-ti bey Tsin-nas Grabe, eine Elegie im chinesischnen Geschmack*. In this poem, which the young Goethe criticized as contrived, Unzer sought to depict the feelings of a Chinese who is bereaved at the death of his beloved. Unzer's allusions to Taoist beliefs and other Chinese attitudes are naive, but his poem is important as the first European effort to show that the individual Chinese is subject to the same emotions as others when facing death.

Goethe, who had satirized the Chinese in his youth, was in the final decade of his life to express open admiration for the Chinese attitude towards nature, the self-discipline and refinement of the people, and the aesthetic qualities of Chinese literature. He was particularly moved by the Chinese poems which were published in English translation in Peter Perring Thoms' *Chinese Courtship* (1824). He rendered a few of Thoms' translations into his own poetic language and epitomized others in his set of lyrical poems called *Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten* (1827). Friedrich Rückert published in 1833 his imitation in freely paraphrased odes of the *Shih-ching* ("Book of Poetry"). The German romantic poets thus deepened, personalized, and beautified Europe's conception of the Chinese. In their vision of Chinese imaginative life they fused an admiration for the intellectual resources of

used an admiration for the intellectual resources of the Chinese with a sensitivity to Chinese creativity that was not appreciated in the eighteenth century.

But not all of the German poets shared Goethe's enthusiasm. Heinrich Heine, at the beginning of the third book of his *Romantische Schule* (1833), used one of the stories of Chinese beauties, translated by Thomas, to lend color to his own attack upon the grotesque character of German romanticism. Others in the romantic and Young German movements saw in China nothing but dry pedantry and tiresome automatism in government. The Liberals of the 1830's regarded China as a model of the police state that they so heartily despised (see Rose, p. 314). The American Transcendentalists, like the British romantic poets, were concerned more with Indian than with Chinese thought.

But the ethical teachings of Confucius appealed to Emerson, particularly the emphasis on the duty of the individual to assume social responsibility. Tennyson expressed the Victorian exasperation with a static and unprogressive China by proclaiming: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay" ("Locksley Hall," line 184).

In France, Théophile Gautier, influenced by the China specialist G. Pauthier and the novelist René Bazin, became at mid-century a propagandist for Chinese literature and art. He wrote stories and verses on Chinese themes, collected Chinese art, and talked about Oriental subjects with Flaubert, Baudelaire, and Victor Hugo. His daughter, Judith Gautier, who studied Chinese with a tutor, translated Chinese poems into French verse in the *Livre de jade* (1867). Her intention was to transmit poetic quality rather than linguistic accuracy, a goal which has been retained by most Western translators of Chinese poetry ever since. She also wrote several novels about China and collaborated with Pierre Loti in preparing a Chinese play entitled *La Fille du Ciel*. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, who were more interested in Japan than in China, were among the first to point out the debt of Japanese literature and art to China. Among those who fell under the spell of the Goncourts was Émile Guimet, an industrialist and founder of the Paris museum of Oriental art that still bears his name. Georges Clemenceau, while not active in politics, prepared just at the beginning of the twentieth century a play about China that was inspired by his study of the Chinese classics and his reactions to the Boxer Rebellion.

Collection of Chinese art became popular in Europe after 1860, the date of the sacking of the summer palace in Peking. The Boxer expedition of 1900 also brought a windfall of Chinese art into the West. But while individual connoisseurs and museums built up impressive collections of all forms of Chinese art, Western artists have so far not been inspired to imitate Chinese painting and sculpture. The influence of Chinese art in the West has been limited to a continuation of the popular vogue for chinoiserie and the decorative arts. This is particularly surprising in the light of the attraction that Japanese color prints, architecture, and furnishings have had for Western artists. The visual arts have also had but a small interest as sources for China's social and intellectual history. Only

in recent years, and especially in the works of C. W. Bishop and H. G. Creel, have the findings of archaeology been used in the West as aids in the reconstruction of China's ancient past.

The dispatch of Chinese students to the West on Boxer fellowships and other grants helped at the beginning of the twentieth century to stimulate a new interest in Chinese thought. Irving Babbitt at Harvard early evinced an interest in the humane and moderate qualities in Buddhism and other faiths as they were practiced in China. The Imagist poets, particularly Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, were attracted to Chinese poetry for its compact portrayal of universal wisdom. In Germany, O. J. Bierbaum, one of the leaders of impressionist art and culture, wrote novels and poems on the basis of his own renditions of Chinese themes. He stressed the erotic elements and burlesqued the pompous characters of his Chinese literary sources. More accurate translations of the meaning and spirit of Chinese poetry were provided in Germany by Richard Wilhelm, in America by Florence Ayscough, and in England by Arthur Waley. Through the efforts of both poets and translators, Chinese poetry, mythology, and history became a source of inspiration for creative writers in the contemporary West.

X

The industrial development of Europe and its expansion overseas in the mid-nineteenth century had the general result of forcing an end to the seclusion of both China and Japan. China was opened to Western penetration by the wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60, and by the treaties which followed. Japan was opened by the "black ships" of the Americans in 1853-54 and thereafter by a series of treaties with the Western powers. It was this train of events, observed and commented upon by Marx and Engels, which transformed quickly the belief in China's stagnation into a positive assertion of Europe's superiority. In his essay "On Liberty" (1859), John Stuart Mill envisaged China as a nation victimized by despotic custom. China's failure to improve over the millennia he attributed to the success of the Chinese in repressing individuality and mental liberty, and in impressing uniformity of thought and conduct through education and state control. The yoke of conformity to maxims and rules weighs so heavily upon society that, in Mill's view, if China is "ever to be farther improved, it must be by foreigners."

The Protestant missionaries were initially scornful of Chinese society, thought, science, and religion. Unlike the scholarly Jesuits, the conservative Protestants of the Victorian age saw little but vice and deprivation in China. The work of the missionary, they thought, was to bring the light of Christ to the heathen Chinese in order to save them from eternal damnation. But preoccupation with Chinese language and literature gradually brought a more enlightened generation of missionary scholars into being in Europe and America, a generation which took a more tolerant view of Chinese civilization. For example, James Legge, the missionary linguist, concluded in 1867 after long study

as a great man, but by 1893 he admitted: "The more I have studied his character and opinions, the more highly have I come to regard him" (Mason, p. 204, n. 33).

In the mid-nineteenth century the vast majority of Europeans held widely divergent and contradictory views on Chinese society. Both missionary and secular writers praised the Chinese for mildness, docility, and adaptability. They were also thought of as industrious, shrewd, and practical, but with a penchant for lying and deceit without conscience. Chinese of all social levels were considered to be extremely polite, urbane, and courageous in facing personal adversities; but they were also thought to be cruel, sensual, and licentious. "Of the earth earthy," in Legge's words, "China was sure to go to pieces when it came into collision with a Christianly-civilized power" (Dawson, p. 139).

The "scientific" historians of the nineteenth century, in their preoccupation with national and European history, rejected China even for comparative purposes. Leopold von Ranke in his *Lectures on World History* (ca. 1830-48) pronounced as "unhistorical" Hegel's postulation of the eternal stagnation of the Orient, and classified the Hindus and Chinese as living eternally in a state of *Naturgeschichte* of a completely secular and unreligious character. Ranke then went on to exclude China from history proper by asserting that the Chinese sources are mythical, unreliable, secondary, or unavailable to one who does not read Chinese. Jakob Burckhardt prized the Western heritage so highly that he completely excluded China from his lectures in the fear that alien infiltrations might muddy the limpid stream. Ernest Lavisse, who shared Burckhardt's high regard for the West and his fears for the future, grimly prophesied in 1890: "All strength gives out; the ability to maintain the lead in history is not a permanent attribute. Europe, which inherited it from Asia three thousand years ago, will perhaps not always keep it" (*Vue générale de l'histoire politique de l'Europe*, p. 239).

The potential wealth of China in natural resources was spelled out for the West in three large volumes and an atlas published between 1877 and 1885 by Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen. In his *China*, Richthofen gave for the first time a geographer's systematic estimate of China's economic resources. He called attention to the rich oil fields of Shantung and Manchuria and to the huge reservoirs of capable labor available in China. The prospect envisaged by Richthofen of an industrialized and modernized China was shortly transmuted in the West into the specter known as the "Yellow Peril."

The threat of China to white, Christian supremacy was raised repeatedly in the last third of the nineteenth century by missionaries, racists, and military theorists. Count Arthur de Gobineau who theorized on the superiority of the white over the yellow and black races, warned of the dangers to white dominance from excessive intermingling with inferior breeds. Blood pollution was identified by Houston Stuart Chamberlain as a threat to the superiority of the Teutonic supermen. Kaiser William II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia corresponded after 1895 about "the Defense of the Cross and the old Christian European culture against the inroads of the Mongols and Buddhism..." (Levine, *Letters from the Kaiser...*, p. 10). The British publicist, C. H. Pearson, prophesied in 1893: "We shall wake to find ourselves elbowed and hustled and perhaps even thrust aside by peoples whom we looked

down upon as servile and thought of as bound always to minister to our needs" (*National Life and Character*, p. 85). In the United States, the Hearst press warned at the end of the century that more adequate defenses were needed to protect the American way of life against the floodtide of Oriental emigration. The ghosts of the theorists were given flesh and bones by the startling military victory of Japan over Russia in 1905 and by the swift rise thereafter of strong nationalist and anticolonial sentiment throughout the Far East.

XI

While it was generally alleged in the West that the Chinese were scientifically inept and militarily weak, it also gradually became apparent after 1860 that China had staying-power as well. How was it possible that the Chinese with all their adversities continued to go their own way and to remain singularly unimpressed with the material superiority of the West? Chinese immigrants proved to be industrious, willing, and honest workers who adapted successfully to new environments. The Chinese of the treaty ports were also quick to learn the ways of the West. The government in Peking, despite its obvious weakness, showed a remarkable ability to play off one Western power against the other to preserve China from partition. Nationalist demands for the reform of the Manchu government and the development of an embryonic industrial base in the Yangtse valley during the 1860's provoked Westerners to begin probing for the sources of China's seemingly unquenchable vitality.

The basis for this new vision of China was not found simply in the increased knowledge and understanding that resulted from closer contact. It also emerged from the belief that there was something to discover in Chinese culture that the West did not possess at all or possessed only to a lesser degree. Growing disillusionment with the nationalistic, materialistic, capital-

istic, and individualistic society of the West drove leading thinkers to seek for new values and directions. Joseph Ferrari, an Italian parliamentarian, wrote a comparative study called *La Chine et l'Europe* (1867) which denies that China is barbarous, static, or isolated and asserts that its civilization merits attention as an historical counterpoise to Europe. Eugène Simon, a French agricultural expert and consul in China, published *La cité chinoise* (1885; cf. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 1864), which idealizes China as a peasant society where liberty in all its forms—political, economic, religious, and intellectual—is realized. Simon's book, which was very popular, prophesied that all European attempts to subject China to industrialization, colonization, or modernization would fail because of the astounding vitality of the rural nation and its naturalistic civilization. On contemporaries, Simon's book, along with Richthofen's of about the same period, had an impact out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. Paul Ernst, the German poet, was inspired by Simon to adulate the collectivist peasant culture of China for giving a higher place to spiritual than to material values. Later in life Ernst took most of his illustrations and inspirations from his study of Chinese art, poetry, and Taoism. He eventually concluded that China offered the best of the world's civilizations.

China offered the rest of the world a unique meta-physical revelation.

Tolstoy began to take an interest in China following the religious crisis he experienced in 1884. He read widely, especially in the books of T. T. Meadows and Eugène Simon, on the political and social organization of China. Like Simon he was intrigued with Taoism and the peasant society of China and in his publications he urged the Chinese not to follow the way of the West. He discerned a spiritual kinship among China, Russia, and the other great agrarian countries which set them apart from the industrialized, materialistic West. He was especially attracted by the Taoist doctrine that men by their own efforts achieve harmony with nature and that the role of government should be kept to a minimum. He also responded affirmatively to Confucian theories about the moral and immoral effects of music. Tolstoy so greatly admired China that he asserted just before his death in 1910: "Were I young I would go to China" (Bodde, p. 29).

John Dewey first lectured at Peking in 1912, and again after the First World War. Along with his pupil, Hu Shih, Dewey was disturbed by the popularity of "isms" in China. He urged Chinese and Westerners alike to study the problems themselves, propose workable solutions, and avoid the panaceas of socialism, anarchism, or bolshevism. Dewey was convinced that socialism could have no roots in China because of its low level of industrial development. Bertrand Russell, a devoted pacifist in World War I, spent one year lecturing in China during 1920. Although he was known internationally as a socialist, Russell felt that industrialization in China could best be promoted by a partially nationalized system of capitalism. In the articles which he wrote for *Dial* and the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1921, Russell unabashedly asserted that the Chinese were more "laughter-loving than any other race," not self-assertive either nationally or individually, avaricious for money for enjoyment rather than power, and socialist and scientific rather than capitalistic and mechanistic in temperament. R. H. Tawney, the British historian and member of the League of Nations Commission (1931-32) on the reorganization of education in China, likewise held a romantic notion of the historical isolation of China and its effects upon the growth of institutions, ideas, and practices.

While disenchantment grew in the twentieth-century West over China's inability to solve its own political and economic problems, inquiring minds nonetheless continued to examine China's past institutions for fresh ideas. Henry A. Wallace, as a progressive American student of agriculture, was inspired by studying the economic principles of Confucius to advocate experimenting in the United States with the "ever-normal granary" idea of the Chinese. When Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture in 1933, he continued to work for a program that would provide a constant supply of grain at all times without serious price fluctuations. In 1938 Wallace's program became part of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, a piece of legislation that owed its direct inspiration to Chinese ideas and practices. At the end of the Second World War Wallace called for the internationalization of the "ever-normal granary" idea as a necessary step on the road to world recovery. In response to Wallace's suggestions and the pressing needs of the time, the United Nations created a World Food Bank to establish and manage a world food reserve. Heavy political attacks from various nations quickly brought an end to this scheme.

Twentieth-century efforts at world history have self-consciously sought to make room for China and to integrate its civilization into the totality of history. H. G. Wells, in his *Outline of History* (1920) deplors the fact that Chinese culture has received such a minimal treatment in world history. While he strives to bring China into his work at each appropriate point, his isolated paragraphs on China are sketchy to the point of being unintelligible. Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918-22) treats Chinese civilization as an organism with a life cycle of its own that, after an initial flowering, fell into decay and putrefaction. Arnold Toynbee in his monumental *A Study of*

History (1934-61) assigns Chinese civilization a philosophical equivalence to Europe. But the actual amount of space devoted to Chinese civilization is nonetheless relatively slight. Toynbee's ideas about the origins of the Yellow River civilization as a response to a challenging environment and his chronological divisions of Chinese history have been severely attacked by specialists. In William McNeill's *The Rise of the West* (1963), China is for the first time integrated intelligibly into the history of the human community by the stress that is placed on its relationship to rather than its isolation from other centers of civilization.

Academic study of China in the West during the twentieth century has mainly been characterized by greater attention to command of the language, to internal developments, and to case studies of village life, social classes, bureaucracy, and the effects of modernization and Westernization. Translations from popular literature have focused upon the novels and dramas of social and individual discontent. Western literary creations about China, especially those of Alice Tisdale Hobart and Pearl Buck, glorified the sturdiness of the common man in meeting adversity and the satisfactions found by Chinese of all classes in the fullness and vitality of the ancient culture. The resistance of China to Japanese aggression reawakened interest in the study of China's relations with its neighbors and in the nation's ability to survive in spite of foreign depredations and internal political divisions. To the end of World War II the belief was commonly held that the social and cultural ties of traditional China were still solid enough to withstand fundamental changes.

XII

Lenin, originally wedded to the Marxist idea that China suffered from the system of production and governmental despotism peculiar to Asia, gradually began by the First World War to shift to the view that China might become a future center of revolution and social democracy. In his writings of the war years, Lenin dismissed as irrelevant the peculiar character of Asiatic society and sought to demonstrate that elimination of private property would lead everywhere to the victory of socialism. But in the 1920's he advocated a closer union between the Western proletariat and the Eastern toilers in their common struggle against traditional bondage and capitalistic imperialism.

Trotsky, a close student of Chinese affairs, saw in

Trotsky, a close student of Chinese affairs, saw in the economic backwardness of China a positive incentive to creative revolutionary action. In his theory of permanent revolution Trotsky envisaged China as one of the leading elements in the movement towards global revolution and rapid social and economic progress. While he did not believe that the peasantry as a class was devoted to international revolution, he was convinced by 1927 that a socialist revolution would succeed in China. The undirected political radicalism of the Chinese would be swept towards socialism by world revolutionary trends too powerful to be resisted.

Stalin, once Lenin's influence was removed, began to emphasize the "feudal" character of China's agrarian society and bureaucratic government, and to deny the common interests of the peasants and workers. Of the three types of class societies described by Stalin (slave-holding, feudal, and capitalist), Nationalist China was to become the prototype for latter-day Marxists of the "feudal" or "semi-feudal" society. Until his death Stalin remained convinced that the followers of Mao Tse-tung were "margarine Communists" and that revolution based upon the peasantry would fail. In 1950, the leading lights in Oriental studies in Russia declared the complete "rout of the notorious theory of the 'Asiatic mode of production'" (Wittfogel, p. 5).

Karl Wittfogel, a close student of the Marxists and Weber, finds the source of *Oriental Despotism* (1957) in what he defines as the hydraulic society. The total power characteristic of Asian states derives in his eyes from governmental management of the large-scale works of irrigation and flood control necessary to the development and nurturing of agriculture. The class that manages the government, not the property-owners or the workers, constitutes the dominant elite in such societies. Agrarian despotisms, such as China, suffer from landlordism, capitalism, and domination by a gentry inspired and sustained by the administrative bureaucracy. Social stagnation is characteristic of hydraulic societies, and fundamental social changes in them have been affected historically only through the impact of external forces. The endurance of the Confucian tradition in China is a cultural expression of the staying power of the monopoly bureaucracy which upheld it as the official credo. Even in Communist China a managerial order has been retained which, while differing from the old bureaucracy in structure and intent, owes a substantial debt to the agrarian despotism of traditional China.

The victory of communism in China in 1949 brought sympathy and affection in most Western powers to a swift end. The treason of China to the West, and to Western expectations, set up a formidable, and through the 1960's, irreducible barrier to communication and understanding. Communist China is seen by those who fear it as a growing industrial and nuclear power as nothing but a belligerent and implacable foe. Respect persists for its ancient culture; but fear of a united, efficient, and totalitarian China as the leader of Asian communism has come to override almost all other considerations.

China and its civilization have been subject to a variety of interpretations. The number increased with the passage of time, but no one interpretation was ever completely lost. At all periods the West remained undecided as to how best to evaluate and relate to Chinese civilization as a totality. A fascinating ambiguity constantly appears between the Westerner's view of objective conditions in China, and his own vision of European society in its relations to other civilizations. While the West's changing conception of China strongly reflects the main currents of Western intellectual history, occasions arise when objective conditions in China impress themselves upon the current image. To our own day China is still conceived of as being at once remote and fantastic, wise and admirable, backward and inferior, and fearful and dangerous. While it is conceivable that these paradoxical characterizations are entirely of the West's own creation, they are also reflections of the distortions that inevitably occur whenever spokesmen of one civilization take a fixed position from which to look at or generalize upon an alien civilization of great longevity and complexity. The total impression which Westerners possessed at every period derived from the prevailing intellectual conditions at home, the stereotypes inherited from the Western past, and the objective conditions in China itself.

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[See also **Buddhism**; Enlightenment; **Islamic Conception**; Language; **Marxism**; Romanticism; Socialism.]