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**C**HINA'S  
**R**ESPONSE  
**T**O THE **W**EST



*a documentary survey*  
1839-1923

**Ssu-yü Teng**

*with*  
*E-tu Zen Sun*  
*Chaoying Fang*  
*and others*

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**Reigns of the  
Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty**

Shun-chih	1644-1661
K'ang-hsi	1662-1722
Yung-cheng	1723-1735
Ch'ien-lung	1736-1795
Chia-ch'ing	1796-1820
Tao-kuang	1821-1850
Hsien-feng	1851-1861
T'ung-chih	1862-1874
Kuang-hsü	1875-1908
Hsuan-t'ung	1909-1911
Republic of China	1912-

*A Note on Style of Translation.* Our first draft of September 1950 reproduced Chinese names literally, as given in the original sources — thus Ku Yen-wu was at times referred to by his other name, Ku T'ing-lin; Prince Kung by his personal name, I-hsin; or Tseng Kuo-fan by his posthumous name, Tseng Wen-cheng-kung. Similarly, Shanhaikuan, where the Great Wall meets the sea, when referred to by the single character *kuan* was translated as “the Pass (i.e., Shanhaikuan)”; and we generally inserted parentheses around phrases implied by but not literally expressed in the Chinese original. This scholarly exactitude, while reassuring to other scholars for whom it was unnecessary, could only distract and bewilder the uninitiated general reader. To avoid perpetuating that sterile esotericism which has bedevilled the Chinese people and their Western students throughout history, we have now simplified the text. One man is cited by one name, not several. An emperor is known by his reign title, e.g., K'ang-hsi. Our translations try to give the full meaning of the original, even if part of it was only implied by the context. *Square brackets* enclose material added by way of editorial explanation, including page numbers from the original text. Capitalization in translations is used to indicate the Chinese elevation (to the top of the next line) of characters referring to the emperor, the dynasty, and the like. *Dates* given for memorials are normally those on which they were seen by the emperor, i.e., later than the actual date of composition.

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## 1

## THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

### CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This is a survey of one of the most interesting, but neglected, aspects of modern history — the way in which the scholar-official class of China, faced with the aggressive expansion of the modern West, tried to understand an alien civilization and take action to preserve their own culture and their political and social institutions.

Since China is the largest unitary mass of humanity, with the oldest continuous history, its overrunning by the West in the past century was bound to create a continuing and violent intellectual revolution, the end of which we have not yet seen. The traditional system of tribute relations between the ancient Chinese empire and the "outside barbarians," who had formed the rest of China's known world, came to an end with the Anglo-Chinese treaty of Nanking in 1842. For a full century after 1842, China remained subject to a system of international relations characterized by the "unequal treaties" established by the Western powers, beginning with the treaty of Nanking, and not formally abolished until 1943.

Throughout this century of the "unequal treaties," the ancient society of China was brought into closer and closer contact with the then dominant and expanding society of Western Europe and America. This Western contact, lent impetus by the industrial revolution, had the most disastrous effect upon the old Chinese society: In every sphere of social activity the old order was challenged, attacked, undermined, or overwhelmed by a complex series of processes — political, economic, social, ideological, cultural — which were set in motion within China as a result of this penetration of an alien and more powerful society.

The massive structure of traditional China was torn apart much as the earth's crust would be disrupted by a comet passing too near. In the end, the remnants of the old China — its dress and manners, its classical written language and intricate system of imperial government, its reliance upon the extended family, the Confucian ethic, and all the other institutional achievements and cultural ornaments of a glorious past — had to be thrown into the melting pot and refashioned. The old order was changed within the space of three generations.

The ancient Chinese society, which had grown and developed through four millennia as the world's most populous and in many ways most highly cultured state, has been remade within a few score years. Rapid change is nothing new to

Westerners, but the rate of social change in modern China has exceeded anything we can imagine for it has included the collapse of old ways and the growth of new ways on a scale and at a tempo unprecedented in history.

### *Modern China, a Problem in Understanding*

The West may well be disconcerted to note that this strenuous century of modern Chinese contact has now finally resulted in the rise to power of Chinese Communism. Since this event is certainly the most portentous in the whole history of American foreign policy in Asia, every intelligent American must strive to understand its significance. Does the Chinese communist victory constitute, as it seems to some, a rejection of the West? Or is it, in a sense, a final step in accepting certain aspects of the West? Or again, is it merely the latest phase of a continuing process within the body of Chinese society? Final answers to such oversimplified questions cannot be expected. Evidence may be cited to support all three of these suggested interpretations and several more besides: the new order at Peking is nationally committed to rejecting all forms of inferiority to the West, such as the "unequal treaties"; it is a genuine and thus far (1953) quite orthodox branch of the international communist movement, although few may wish to call that movement a proper form of "Western" influence; and it is at the same time obviously the climax of a revolutionary process long endemic in the Chinese body politic.

Underlying this book is the belief that modern China, including the communist rise to power there, can be understood only against the background of its contact with the West. A knowledge of China's growth as a traditional society is, of course, prerequisite. But the contemporary scene within the Middle Kingdom cannot be understood merely by reference to classical worthies like the Duke of Chou (*ca.* eleventh century B.C.) or the philosophical maxims of Confucius (551-479? B.C.) and Mencius (390-305 B.C.) or the thought of a medieval scholar like Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200). New forces are at work, induced by the modern experience of the Chinese people. The origin and growth of these forces can be studied only within the context of the century of Western influence. Nationalism, party dictatorship, the cult of the masses, the worship of technology, the leadership of youth, and the emancipation of women — all these are new elements inspired mainly by Western contact. On the other hand, the Christian West will disclaim credit for that indoctrination of the mind and police control of the person which are integral parts of Chinese Communism and yet reminiscent also of China's past.

In spite of all the furor of change in recent decades, the hold of the past is still curiously strong in present-day China. Not far below the surface lies the ancient civilization of the Middle Kingdom, a subsoil which limits and conditions the new growth. Our efforts at analysis inevitably differentiate between the ancient Chinese heritage and modern Western influences. We assume that they each contributed, in varying degree, to the modern society which we knew up to 1949 (Communist China, so little known and difficult to appraise, is beyond the scope of this volume). Exactly how the heritage from the past and the influences from abroad have interacted within Chinese society during the last century is, of course, the nub of our problem. In many instances the conflict between traditional China and the West no doubt produced a stalemate. In the realm of law, for example, it might be argued (until such time as legal scholars apply themselves more fully to Chinese studies) that the impact of Western law served to undermine the Confucian ethic as a basis for administration and the achievement of social justice, without being able to take its place. It may be that the weakening of the ethical basis of the Confucian state was not compensated by a firm establishment of

Western legal institutions, and that China has been left somewhere in between.

In this volume we study the period from 1839 to 1923 because it spans the century from the first arrival of the Western powers in force to the first acceptance of Marxism-Leninism. In 1839 Commissioner Lin Tse-hsü (1785-1850) strove to settle the opium problem by destroying the opium stocks of foreign merchants, thereby precipitating the showdown between China's ancient tributary system and the expanding power of Britain. In 1923 Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), having already led a republican revolution which ended the ancient imperial system in 1912, finally adopted some of the methods (although not the creed) of the Russian Communists. Between these two leaders of their generations who appear at the opening and close of our period lies an enormous gulf, so vast that they would have had great difficulty in understanding each other's conversation. Commissioner Lin had been trained in the Confucian classics, Dr. Sun in Western medicine. Lin represented an imperial potentate whose dynasty was the twenty-ninth in succession to have its history recorded as ruling all or part of the Chinese empire since its first unification in 221 B.C. Sun had worked most of his life to destroy that empire. In the end, he accepted communist help only in order to create a regime adequate to take the empire's place.

Paradoxically, however, these two men exemplify the unity which underlies the amazing diversity of modern China's history. Both Lin, the old-style mandarin, and Sun, the modern revolutionist, were concerned with the government of the Chinese state. Both felt the Western stimulus and reacted strongly to it. Both were patriots. Like all other Chinese officials, scholars, and revolutionists who will be quoted in this book, they were vitally concerned with the fate of China, its civilization, and way of life. Behind all the variety of viewpoints, assumptions, analyses, and proposals put forward for China's salvation during this century of change and collapse there has been a cultural bond, a strong consciousness of China as an entity and of the Chinese people as a unit in history. "All-under-Heaven" (*T'ien-hsia*, the empire) and the "Middle Kingdom" (*Chung-kuo*, China) have remained primary concepts, starting points of the reformer's thinking. Thus the leadership of modern China in the period 1839-1923 remained ethnocentric and China-centered. Many students of Chinese history doubt that the Chinese Communists can remain otherwise, in the long run, even though students of international communism agree that nationalistic independence of Moscow, or "Titoism," is a very rare phenomenon among communist movements.

Any study of the acculturation of one society by another involves a number of independent variables. One must appraise and characterize the value systems or ideals of both societies, and this requires one to generalize upon a scale so broad as to be sometimes almost meaningless. The "American way of life" must be compared with the "Chinese way of life." Not only must the student of cultural miscegenation turn from one culture to the other, ambivalently, but he must also live in the past as well as the present, and appreciate the Confucianism of old China as well as the utilitarianism of Victorian England. This is a well-nigh impossible task at a time when we know so little of the actual content of life and thought in premodern China. But the attempt must be made, sooner or later, as best we can. The documents and commentaries in this volume are presented as a first step in this direction.

### *Some Preliminary Definitions*

Let us begin by clarifying certain concepts. First of all, it would be quite unrealistic to think of premodern or "traditional" China (or the "Confucian state") as archaic and static, backward and unchanging. Chinese society has always been

in a process of change, older values and institutions giving way gradually to newer ideals and forms. Through this evolutionary development, China's ancient ways have undergone continuous modification as century followed century. The China of 1839 was vastly different from that of Confucius or Mencius, and also very different from the medieval China of Neo-Confucian philosophers like Chu Hsi. When we call the Chinese society of the early nineteenth century "traditional," we are only stressing its close continuity with its own China-centered heritage from the past.

Secondly, we face the problem, what was the general nature of this traditional Chinese society? It was most unlike that of Western Europe and America; but how? Among several answers that could be given, one of the most illuminating (for those who seek to put societies in categories) is the concept of old China as an example of "Oriental Society." Even before Karl Marx used the term "Asiatic mode of production," Western scholars like J. S. Mill had noted certain general characteristics which seemed to make the ancient empires of the Near East and Asia quite different in kind from the society of Europe. Social historians today are developing this concept; while we can hardly try to summarize it here, we can note certain features. Traditional China, like other ancient empires, came to be organized under a centralized monolithic government in which the official bureaucracy dominated most aspects of large-scale activity — administrative, military, religious, economic, political. This agrarian bureaucratic state got its revenue largely from the agricultural production of the illiterate peasantry, who also provided the manpower for the conscript armies and for the *corvée* labor which was used to control the water supply through diking and ditching. Large-scale public works, like the Great Wall or the Grand Canal, comparable to roads and airfields today, have been built by this mass-labor force, mobilized and superintended by the officials. The latter were of course drawn from the small literate element of the Chinese population, the literati who could transact public business using the intricate Chinese writing system. Since only the well-to-do could normally afford the years of study required for literacy in the classics, officials came more from the landlord-gentry class than from the peasant masses. Thus the landlords produced scholars, and the scholars became officials, forming a complex upper stratum so closely interrelated and interdependent that the ideal men of distinction were landlord-scholar-officials, rather than generals or merchants.

In this society, the individual was generally subordinated to his family group. The scholars and administrators, like the emperor above them, were expected to follow an ethical rather than a purely legal code of conduct. A Western-type individualism and the supremacy of law never became established, nor the personal freedom under law represented by our civil liberties and institution of private property. (The legal safeguards of personal liberty are, to be sure, a rather recent and not yet perfect achievement in the West.) At any rate, the old China was based on the farming family and ruled by the bureaucrat. It was politically centralized while economically decentralized, and strong in the customary ethical sanctions which preserved the patriarch and the ruler at the top of the social hierarchy, while weak in the institutions of property and enterprise. All this has affected the capacity of the Chinese state to follow the Western pattern of capital investment and industrialization. As we shall note below, China's modern industrial enterprises had to be under official patronage if not control, yet the tradition was to invest one's personal savings in land rather than in productive industry. This undoubtedly impeded China's industrialization.

Perhaps enough has been said to indicate how the institutional patterns of old China influenced her response to the West in every sphere — economic and political as well as military, social, and intellectual. We forego at this point any further

effort to define the general nature of the old Chinese society. Although we are about to look at bits of the record, we cannot expect to see the whole picture in detail ahead of time; for the detailed picture has still to be put together.

Our explanation of terms may conclude with two further points. First, to say as some do that nineteenth-century China was "feudal" or "semi-feudal" seems to us not very meaningful, if we judge these terms by their use in European or Japanese history. China does not fit into the proper institutional pattern. Second, the terms "stimulus" (or "impact") and "response" are not very precise. We are in danger of assuming that there was a previous "Western impact" merely because there was later activity which we call a "Chinese response." This "Chinese response" or activity is the thing we want to study, but it obviously was part of Chinese conduct as a whole. In other words, the Western impact was only one of many factors in the Chinese scene. The response to it can only be unscrambled with difficulty from Chinese history in general. Until we can work out a more precise analytic framework, the title of this study will remain more metaphorical than scientific.

#### *The Scope of this Volume*

These considerations give us a limited objective — to mark some of the broad outlines and trace some of the main patterns in the intellectual history of modern China's attempt to comprehend the West and adjust to it. We proceed on the assumption that Western influence did indeed precipitate the remaking of Chinese life and values. Every patriot and statesman since the time of Lin Tse-hsi has had to consider China's relationship to the West as one of the primary problems confronting the Chinese state and its people. Beginning with the movement for coastal defense, there has been a succession of formulations and reformulations of the ancient "barbarian problem." The imitation of Western arms, the program of "Self-strengthening" through Western studies, later through industrialization and eventually through institutional reform, the movement for revolution and republicanism, the cult of "Science and Democracy," the literary "Renaissance," the adoption of party tutelage and "democratic centralism" — all these and many other programs have had their day and contributed to the long struggle for the remaking of Chinese life. All of them have been related, in greater or less degree, to the Western influence on China, even down to the alleged "American imperialism" which helps today to sanction the power of the Chinese Communists.

Within this single volume we make no formal effort to describe or define the Western impact. The inequalities of the treaties are well enough known; the foreign consuls' legal jurisdiction over their nationals known as extraterritoriality; the conventional treaty tariff and the commercial exploitation that went hand in hand with it; the treaty ports which, as Chiang Kai-shek so fervently declared in *China's Destiny*, became centers of infection whence the old social order was contaminated and broken down. Less has been written to evaluate the social influence of the great Protestant, and also the revived Catholic, missionary movements of the nineteenth century. Similarly the influence of Western studies in China and of Chinese students who had studied in the West has been only imperfectly evaluated. The monographic work essential to scholarship has not yet been done. Scholarly conclusions can hardly yet be formed.

Our main effort, therefore, is to stimulate and assist the kind of monographic study necessary to any intellectual progress in this field. It will not be enough for Western social scientists to apply new interpretations to the meager record of modern Chinese history thus far available. Not enough facts are known. We cannot rely on propagandist "scholarship," with its dogmatic disregard for the truth —

or rather, its Procrustean regard for the truth as a relative matter — to give us the real story. It is necessary for trained and competent Asian and Western scholars alone and in collaboration to spend long periods of time in translation and research, else we shall never know what has really happened in China since its opening to the West.

The memorials, essays, and diaries of Chinese statesmen and reformers form perhaps the most convenient and practicable avenue of approach to this immensely difficult subject. Texts are artifacts. Their original meaning can be wrung out with patience. In the process, reflections and interpretations will occur to the translator. The corpus of Chinese literature is well organized, within its own universe of discourse. Statements of fact and idea can often be cross-checked and verified. Every author whose writings are quoted below could profitably become the subject of monographic research. To this end, we have given bibliographical suggestions, in our *Research Guide* (see *Notes and Sources*), which are intended to supplement the aid to be found in Dr. A. W. Hummel's invaluable *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period 1644-1912*, 2 vols., (Washington, D. C., 1943-1944). We have tried in our own commentaries to avoid duplicating the material presented by Fang Chao-ying, Tu Lien-che and the various other contributors to that biographical dictionary. It is assumed that the user of this volume will have it at hand.

Since so many of these items are memorials addressed to the emperor, it should be explained to non-specialists that official business in the Chinese empire was formally transacted and decisions made by the process of proposal from the high officials and decision by the ruler and his advisers. It was almost literally a case of "Man proposes, God (or the Son of Heaven) disposes." Consequently, for a policy to get any official result, it had to be embodied in a proper document or report ("memorial") from one of the emperor's officials, whereupon an imperial edict or decree could be issued to summarize, comment upon, or confirm it. Whether or not an edict was to follow, the emperor was expected to append at the end of a memorial, after he had read it, a brief comment, even so brief as "Noted" or "I am informed" (equivalent to "OK"), just to show that he was on the job. This comment is usually called a "vermillion endorsement," since the emperor used red ink. The recorded date of a memorial was normally the day when the emperor saw it, not the actual date of writing.

The bold new program of translation and comment which this volume represents will in the course of time seem to have been overbold, if not foolhardy, and no longer new. But it is our thesis that the field of modern Chinese intellectual history has lain fallow far too long. Our selections of material have had to be arbitrary and without benefit of prolonged research on all the persons and movements dealt with, but this is a pump-priming operation, conducted on the assumption that Western students of China will increase in number and productivity, and that they will not fail to meet the intellectual challenge of modern China's metamorphosis.

## CHAPTER II. SOME ELEMENTS IN THE CHINESE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

In nineteenth-century China, more than in most times and places, the problems of the day were met in terms of the past. During China's long history, orthodoxy of thought had been stressed by one ruler after another, ever since the first em-

peror of the Ch'in in 213 B.C. burned the books hostile to his regime. A great continuity of intellectual tradition had thus been established, constantly preserved by the official historians and by the literati who mastered the ancient classics. The orthodoxy of ideas inculcated in this way was used by the imperial government to ensure the loyalty and obedience of its subjects. Consequently, both unorthodox ideas and foreign ideas were potentially dangerous to the regime in power.

Here we see one channel of Western influence — Western ideas could become weapons in the struggle for power within China. Both the institutional reformers of 1898 and the republican revolutionists of 1911 eventually demonstrated this. Even the Taiping rebels of 1850-1864 invoked the Christian Bible to support their cause. More recent and successful rebels have used Marx and Lenin. Yet the process of ideological change in modern China had to begin with the reinterpretation of the Chinese heritage, rather than with its denial and rejection.

In this chapter, therefore, we must take note of three major elements in the intellectual background of nineteenth-century Chinese thinkers: one was the ethnocentric, even "nationalistic," ideology of certain scholars who had opposed the alien rule of the Manchus; the second was the influence left by the early Catholic missionaries; the third was the traditional attitude of the Ch'ing court toward the West.

### a. Some Early Ch'ing "Nationalist" Thinkers

These independent-minded Chinese scholars of the early Ch'ing period (1644-1911) courageously challenged the orthodoxy which the new Manchu rulers were fostering. While remaining within the bounds of the Chinese classical tradition, they boldly questioned some of the doctrines of the day, especially the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528). Beginning in the last years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), they argued against certain traditional interpretations of Confucianism and demanded drastic re-examination of the classics, thus setting a precedent and providing a stimulus for the scholars of the late nineteenth century. The precedent that they set, however, should not be exaggerated — the methods and interpretations of these seventeenth-century scholars did not come down in an unbroken tradition out of which the late Ch'ing reformers emerged. On the contrary, some of them were all but forgotten and were rediscovered only after Western contact had obliged Chinese reformers to look in their own past for precedents which would justify their new interpretations of Chinese tradition. It was in this way, as convenient predecessors in the exposition of ideas they now found necessary, that the reformers of 1898 used seventeenth-century scholars like Ku Yen-wu and Huang Tsung-hsi. Among other things, these men had opposed alien rule, by the Manchus or any other non-Chinese. Two centuries later their writings naturally became of value to patriotic scholars who sought an ideological basis for modern Chinese nationalism.

One major form of China's response to Western contact has thus been the reappraisal of Chinese tradition, in the effort to use it for modern purposes. The next few pages illustrate the type of writings available for this endeavor.

Huang Tsung-hsi (1610-1695) was a famous scholar of the late Ming, whose political treatise, written in 1663, was called *Ming-i tai-fang lu*. (For data on this and other works, see our separate *Research Guide*.) The tenets of this work were derived from two sources: a) Mencius' thesis, that the people are the most important members of any state, while the ruler is less significant; b) a chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Li-chi*) which presents the idea that "the empire is for the public," *T'ien-hsia wei-kung*, i.e., it is not for one person. (This was a slogan later used by Sun Yat-sen. For these Chinese characters, see list in the *Research Guide*.)

The main points of Huang's political philosophy were that the institution of ruler is for the benefit of the people and the ruler and his ministers are public servants of the people. A good ruler should be loved by the people as their parent, but a bad ruler should be killed. Huang approved tyrannicide. After the legendary golden age, he argued, political disorder in China had resulted from the neglect of duty by rulers who considered the empire their private property. Huang still believed in enlightened monarchy, although he disapproved the practice of "patterning after the ancestors" or ancestral law (*fa-tsu*), according to which all emperors of a dynasty should obey the regulations laid down by the dynastic founder. He also argued that a good legal system is of primary importance, while able administrators are secondary. One of the reformers of 1898, T'an Ssu-t'ung (see Ch. XVI below), is said to have printed several hundred thousand copies of excerpts from Huang's *Ming-i tai-fang lu* for secret distribution, to promote his own ideas of reform. These excerpts strongly influenced the thinking of the late Ch'ing period.

Writing "On the ruler," Huang says: <sup>1</sup> \*

At the beginning of creation, every man was selfish and every man was self-seeking. There was public good in the empire but probably no one cared to promote it; there was public evil in the empire, but probably no one cared to get rid of it. Then there appeared a man who did not consider his personal interest as the object of benefit but made it possible for the people of the empire to share the benefit. . . The assiduous toil of this man must have been a thousand or a myriad times more than that of the people of the empire. Well, after spending himself a thousand or a myriadfold in assiduous toil, he still did not enjoy the benefit. . . Rulers of later ages were different. They considered that the authority to bestow benefit and harm was entirely concentrated in their own hands; the benefit of the empire was entirely received by them, while the harm of the empire was entirely given to others [p. 2]. . . They considered the empire as their chief item of personal property. . . In ancient times the people of the empire were the primary interest, the ruler was secondary, and what the ruler planned and did was for the empire. Now the ruler has the primary interest, the people of the empire are secondary . . . and the one who does great harm to the empire is the ruler. . . In ancient times the people of the empire loved their ruler, comparing him to their parents, respecting him as Heaven; that was indeed not too much. Now the people of the empire hate their ruler, looking on him as an enemy, calling him a dictator (*tu-fu*); this is certainly the position he occupies.

On the subject of the minister, Huang says [p. 3], "When I enter government service, I work for the empire, not for the ruler; for the myriads of the populace, not for one family." In his chapter "On the law," he writes [p. 5]:

What is called law is for the protection of the one imperial personage and is not the law for the sake of society as a whole. . . Some critics say that each dynasty should have its own laws, and that to obey ancestral law is filial piety. . . These are plagiarized statements of vulgar scholars [p. 6]. . . Some commentators even say, there is government by man, no government by law; I should say, government by law should come before government by man.

\* The reader's attention is called to the Note on page vii.

Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), also known as Ku T'ing-lin, was a very learned scholar who with Huang Tsung-hsi and others tried to restore the Ming dynasty. He traveled extensively in North China, carrying on a kind of geographic, topographic, and economic survey. Stressing agriculture, irrigation, and rural economics, he encouraged the use of labor-saving machinery and the opening of mines. As a reaction against the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming, Ku advocated the pursuit of knowledge "of practical use to society," *ching-shih chih-yung*. Among his famous works are the *Jih-chih lu* (Notes of daily accumulation of knowledge), dealing with a large variety of subjects; and the *T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu* (A book on the strategic and economic advantages and disadvantages of the counties and states of the empire), author's preface dated 1662. He was also a pioneer scholar in Chinese philology and he emphasized the inductive method of research in classics and history.

Living in the same environment, Huang and Ku both reacted against the political oppression of the early Ch'ing period. Their thinking was largely similar, but in attacking despotism Huang took the people as the fundamental element of the state, while Ku did not consider them of such cardinal importance. Ku attacked the overconcentration of authority in the hands of the emperor. Although he eulogized ancient feudalism as a means of sharing the empire among the public, he still did not think that it should be restored. Instead, he favored the division of state authority among local magistrates who should have full power in developing education, agriculture, and military affairs. The power of each magistrate should be again divided among the heads of small political divisions, where the people should have considerable right of self-government. He hated the way in which the scholar-literati acted as a law unto themselves in rural communities and objected to the legal restriction of the people's freedom.

Ku Yen-wu was in favor of reform: "If the laws or institutions are not reformed, it will be impossible to meet the present crisis. We are already in a situation where we must reform, yet we still try to avoid actually doing it. . . This will certainly cause great corruption."<sup>2</sup>

Ku favored thorough reform, not a patchwork; reform based on present conditions and not restricted by ancestral law:

When our predecessors initiated legislation, they could not thoroughly study the facts and circumstances and prepare in advance for future revision. Their successors followed what was already a corrupt practice, and were restricted by the established statutes which they could not change, or had to make by-laws, to amend them. Thereupon, the more numerous the laws, the more they were abused. All the affairs of the empire became more vexatious. The result was that the laws were not understood and not enforced. The upper and the lower classes tried to fool each other, the only consideration being that they should not neglect the system laid down by their ancestors. This state of affairs was most prevalent in the Ming dynasty.<sup>3</sup>

But Ku Yen-wu searched for a golden age in the past. His political purpose was "to make use of Chinese institutions and to transform the barbarians" (*yung-hsia pien-i*). He tried to restore the self-confidence of the Chinese people, to develop the Chinese traditional ethics and wisdom. In a letter to a friend he says that his purpose in writing the *Jih-chih lu* was "to disperse rebellion and to cleanse away the dirt of politics, to model after our antiquity and to use the political and social systems of the Hsia [ancient China], to supply more information to future students and to wait for a good time of administration by future emperors."<sup>4</sup>



Fortunately Ku Yen-wu was not bigoted nor bound by Chinese traditionalism. He recognized the good points of the barbarians also: "There are some Chinese customs which are inferior to those of foreign countries." He admired the frugal, assiduous, and military spirit of the Khitans. He praised the honest customs of the Uigurs, who made only slight differences of rank between the ruler and his ministers. He thought the system of encouraging the cultivation of arable land and its equal distribution under the Toba Wei dynasty (A.D. 386-535) in North-west China might serve as a model for later ages.<sup>5</sup>

Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692), also called Wang Ch'uan-shan, was a renowned historical critic and a voluminous writer. After the Ming dynasty was overthrown he retired to a small boat-shaped island in Hengyang, Hunan, where he lived the life of a hermit, writing books for some forty years. Because he had little association with other scholars, he became an independent thinker.<sup>6</sup> From his historical and inductive approach to political problems, he built up his theory of evolution — that the legal system should be changed from time to time and in each dynasty be a single unit. Accordingly Wang objected to all conservative attempts at restoration of the past; it is futile, he thought, to imitate antiquity. The society of ancient times was rightly governed by ancient law; the political system of today cannot rightly be enforced in the society of the future. The administration of each dynasty should fit the needs of its time and be adjusted to contemporary conditions. For instance, in the old days, it was a good system for soldiers to become farmers and vice versa, but in modern times when warfare has become far more complicated, it is necessary to have well-trained, specialized soldiers; untrained farmers cannot at the same time serve as soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

Wang Fu-chih discovered another theory — that every species and race, all the way from insects to human beings, aims at its own preservation and organization. Self-preservation is a natural law. Even the ants know how to protect themselves; human beings are certainly not to be excepted. Since the forming of groups is inherent in human nature and the establishment of a ruler is for the purpose of protecting the group, it is logical and necessary for the group to govern itself. Each race should be controlled by its own ruler, and should never allow any encroachment by an alien race. In other words, all states should be national states and self-governing. He would rather have even a usurper on the throne than a foreign race dominating China.<sup>8</sup>

Still another of Wang's new ideas was that differences of culture are produced among various races which live in different geographical zones. Since the barbarians and the Chinese were bred in different places, their spirit, actions, and customs also differed. China should not allow barbarians to invade her territory and her culture. Wang considered that culture fluctuates and civilization does not stay in one place. He observed that in many cases culture has progressed from barbarism to civilization, while in other cases it has remained stagnant. He thought there was a possibility of China being reduced to a barbarous or savage condition. Wang's method for forestalling a barbarian invasion was to make good use of the time element. "He who would succeed in controlling barbarians should have a good knowledge of the times and seasons. When the combination of circumstances favors attack, he attacks; when it favors defense, he defends."<sup>9</sup>

Chu Chih-yü (1600-1682), also called Chu Shun-shui, was another ethnocentric thinker who had great influence in both China and Japan. Born in the same district as Huang Tsung-hsi, he fled to Annam and Japan to request aid against the invading Manchus. Having failed in repeated attempts to overthrow the Manchu rule, he remained in Japan after 1659. His scholarship attracted the attention of Japanese savants who not only studied under him but recommended him to be a teacher of Prince Tokugawa Mitsukuni, grandson of the great Ieyasu. Under

Mitsukuni's auspices he prepared a detailed description of the Chinese state worship of Confucius and gave advice on the compilation of the colossal *Dai Nihon shi* or "History of Great Japan," a work which later influenced the leaders of the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

Chu was a man of great integrity and an advocate of pragmatism. His anti-Manchu writings, entitled *Yang-chiu shu-lueh*, were to be a great stimulus to rebellious Chinese youth near the end of the Ch'ing dynasty. Before his death Chu requested that his body should "not be returned to China so long as the Manchus rule."<sup>10</sup>

### The Literary Inquisition

The growth of Chinese "national" feeling against the Manchu regime, stimulated by writers like Huang Tsung-hsi, Ku Yen-wu, Wang Fu-chih, and Chu Chih-yü, was suppressed by the literary inquisition. This reached its height under Emperor Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795), when more than two thousand selected Chinese works were wholly or partly destroyed. The partisans of the Ming had given the Emperor K'ang-hsi (1662-1722) much trouble and, even after their political suppression, had left many writings which expressed dissatisfaction or resentment against the Manchus. A purge of such works had actually begun with the first Manchu emperor after 1644.<sup>11</sup>

As an example of the inquisition, we may note the case of Lü Liu-liang (1629-1683) and Tseng Ching (1679-1736). Lü was a classicist as well as a pamphleteer. He refused to take the civil service examinations but instead wrote commentaries on Sung philosophy in which he openly deplored the plight into which China had fallen and the inability of the Chinese people to check the disaster of the Manchu invasion. His expression of anti-Manchu sentiment was quite influential and during the Yung-cheng period (1723-1735) led a certain Tseng Ching, a *chü-jen* (provincial graduate) of Hunan, and his disciples to attempt to overthrow the Manchu government. Tseng was so much interested in Lü Liu-liang's writings that he sent one of his loyal students to read them all at the latter's home in Chekiang, and to get acquainted with Lü's disciples. In 1728 Tseng Ching sent the same student to persuade the governor-general of Szechwan and Shensi to rebel against the Manchus. This was reported to the court and ruthless punishment was dealt to the partisans, descendants, relatives and disciples of all the persons involved. Most of the writings of Lü and Tseng were destroyed. But from the *Tai-i chueh-mi lu*, a work which consists of all the arguments of Emperor Yung-cheng in defense of himself and his throne, as well as from the testimony of Tseng Ching, one can still trace a little of the nationalist spirit behind this abortive rebellion.<sup>12</sup>

Ideas and events of this sort were known to the Chinese scholars of the nineteenth century as part of their native tradition. In their response to the West they were necessarily more under the influence of this tradition than of any other. Just as the China of today can be more thoroughly understood by reference to the nineteenth century, so the record of Chinese thought must be pursued farther back, in order to gain that over-all perspective which the historian seeks. Is it not possible, for example, that the effectiveness with which the Ch'ing government suppressed the growth of creative and ethnocentric anti-Manchu thought in the eighteenth century contributed directly to China's inability to respond more vigorously to the Western stimulus a century later?

After the literary inquisition had reached its height in the late eighteenth century, the "nationalist" movement was represented chiefly by secret societies

of various names and forms which sought to overthrow the Manchus. Some of these societies contributed, in some degree, to the Taiping Rebellion and subsequently to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary movement. The study of the secret societies deserves separate monographic treatment, beyond the scope of this volume.<sup>13</sup>

#### b. *The Early Jesuit Influence in China*

The first extensive cultural contact between China and Europe began near the end of the sixteenth century, when the Jesuit missionaries, in the wake of the Portuguese, reached China by sea. Their dual function is well known: they not only diffused Western ideas in China, including elements of mathematics, astronomy, geography, hydraulics, the calendar, and the manufacture of cannon, but they also introduced Chinese (particularly Confucian) ideas into Europe.<sup>14</sup> The Jesuits found it easier to influence China's science than her religion. Perceiving this, they used their scientific knowledge as a means of approach to Chinese scholars. Although a small number of their Chinese converts took part in the translation and compilation of religious and scientific books, the majority of the native scholars, entrenched in their ethnocentric cultural tradition, were not seriously affected by the new elements of Western thought.

The great Jesuit pioneer, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), tried to fit Catholicism into Chinese thought. In general he accepted Confucianism in its most ancient phase but rejected the Confucian development after Han and T'ang, especially the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung. He accepted the term *Shang-ti*, the highest deity in the Confucian classics, but not the *T'ai-chi* or "Supreme Ultimate" of the Neo-Confucians. Ricci and his followers likewise accepted the *hsien-ju*, the early Confucianists, but not the *hou-ju*, the Confucianists of later ages.<sup>15</sup>

The cosmological ideas of the Roman Catholic Church and of Neo-Confucianism differed in several important respects: a) the Neo-Confucians did not recognize a creator or almighty God in the universe; instead, they believed that the growth of creatures is by *li* or "natural law"; b) they recognized the existence of *hsin* (mind or conscience), which is somewhat comparable to the soul of Christianity, but they did not believe that this mind or conscience is bestowed by God; c) they acknowledged that every human being has the power and free will to reach his best state of development, to be free from sin or crime, and without God's help to go to Heaven. While both the Catholics and the Neo-Confucianists sought to understand the universe, to distinguish truth, to cultivate virtue and to teach people how to be good, their purposes appear to have been just sufficiently similar to bring them into rivalry and conflict.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The Various Forms of Chinese Interest*

Those Chinese scholars who accepted both Christianity and Western science, like Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562-1633) believed that Western learning overcame the shortcomings of Confucianism and replaced Buddhism; and that Confucianism and Christianity could be developed in China in parallel fashion. Their acceptance of what Ricci had to offer was based first of all on a rational appreciation of the Jesuits as philosopher-gentlemen. One late Ming writer says: <sup>17</sup>

The *T'ien-chu kuo* [the Lord-of-Heaven country, i.e., the Catholic state, presumably Italy], lies further to the west from the Buddhist state [India]. Their people understand literature and are as scholarly and elegant as the Chinese. There is a certain Li-ma-tou [Matteo Ricci] who came from the

said state, and after four years reached the boundary of Kwangtung by way of India. Their religion worships *T'ien-chu* ["the Lord of Heaven," the Catholic term for God], just as the Confucianists worship Confucius and the Buddhists, Buddha. Among his books there is one entitled *T'ien-chu shih-i* (The true meaning of Christianity) which frequently explains the truth by comparison with Confucianism but sharply criticizes the theories of nothingness (*hsü-wu*) and emptiness of Buddhism and Taoism. . . I am very much delighted with his ideas, which are close to Confucianism but more earnest in exhorting society not to resemble the Buddhists, who always like to use obscure, incoherent words to fool and frighten the populace. . . He is very polite when he talks to people and his arguments, if challenged, can be inexhaustible. Thus in foreign countries there are also real gentlemen.

Firearms and applied science further commended the Jesuits to the court of Peking, as they already had to the daimyo of Japan. Long before Ricci finally received a court stipend in Peking in 1601, European weapons had been introduced into South China. But apparently they were not widely welcomed until Japan invaded Korea in 1592. The Japanese, benefiting by the early Portuguese importation of firearms after 1542, won victories in Korea, and the Chinese recognized the necessity of improving their weapons. In 1622 the Ming emperor, already threatened by the new Manchu power beyond the Wall, sent an envoy to Macao seeking Jesuit help in casting cannon. In the following year Westerners were summoned to the capital for this purpose. Ch'ü Shih-ssu (Thomas Ch'ü, 1590-1651) memorialized the throne in 1628 requesting the study of Western cannon and other weapons; he declared that in 1619 an imperial decree had ordered Hsü Kuang-ch'i to search for Western weapons and that he had obtained four cannon. Li Chih-tsao (d. 1630) had secured twenty-three more from Canton in 1621. Thus the Ming sought Western cannon for defense against the Manchus much as the Manchu government two centuries later was to seek Western cannon and the help of the "Ever Victorious Army" at Shanghai to suppress the Taiping Rebellion. The Ming dynasty attempted to acquire Portuguese artillery and three or four hundred men from Macao to repel a Manchu invasion; but apprehension over having Western soldiers in China led to the cancellation of the mission at Nanchang. Only the commander, Gonzales Tedeira, and a few others continued to Peking.<sup>18</sup>

Thereafter in the waning years of the Ming not only Jesuits but also other foreigners from Macao went to Peking, both to make weapons and to serve in the Chinese forces. In 1639 Franciscus Sambiaso presented to the emperor many gifts, including a clock, binoculars, maps, an organ, a mirror, and a parrot. He submitted a memorial to the throne calling attention to the need for a good calendar, the selection of ores, the promotion of international trade and the purchase of Western guns. This actually constituted a modernization program for China; but the Ming dynasty was busily engaged in warfare against the Manchus and among these recommendations the Chinese emperor took an interest only in the calendar and the guns.<sup>19</sup>

While the conversion to the Roman Catholic faith of such Chinese scholar-officials as Hsü Kuang-ch'i and Li Chih-tsao is well known, it nevertheless poses several questions. First, what element in Christianity was responsible for its friendly reception by certain scholars and members of the imperial family, several score of whom are said to have been converted by 1640? <sup>20</sup> Did their baptism mean acceptance of basic Christian tenets, or were these converts won over by rationalism (as opposed to faith), because they believed Christianity to be less unworldly than

Buddhism and Taoism? Both Hsü and Li were also interested in Western guns and cannon, and on his part Matteo Ricci accepted some Chinese phraseology (e.g., *Shang-ti*), and admitted the validity of ancient Confucian teachings. Do these signs indicate that, rather than a fundamental conversion to a new faith, the Chinese acceptance of the Christian religion was only a manifestation of tolerance?

Secondly, it is noteworthy that the immediate Jesuit influence in China was through items of practical significance, such as cannon, the calendar, or Ricci's map of the world. Why is so little trace of Christian doctrine to be found in the writings of Chinese scholars in the subsequent century? If this is to be explained by the fact that government suppression cut off contact and the relatively few professed converts had few successors, we still face the question why the minds of the non-Christian scholars were not more permanently influenced by Western knowledge or ideas.

Such questions raise the knotty problem of the Chinese religious consciousness. The long and complex religious experience of the Chinese people had included, among many other faiths, the great flowering of Buddhism in the seventh and eighth centuries, a religion characterized by belief in an incarnate yet divine savior. We know that Chinese Buddhism had a profound influence upon the subsequent Neo-Confucian philosophy, although the extent of this influence is still being appraised. It is plain that China's early experience of Buddhism lay behind her later reaction to Christianity, in ways that remain to be studied.<sup>21</sup>

If we turn the other way and look at the centuries after the Jesuit contact, we may assume that the use of Western cannon in the seventeenth century served as a useful precedent in the minds of officials in the nineteenth century. The authentic record of the use of Western cannon two-centuries before must also have helped the nineteenth-century officials to admit the superiority of Western arms.

#### *The Conservative Antagonists of Western Christianity and Science*

Opposition to the Jesuits and other Western missionaries was motivated partly by the xenophobic suspicion that foreigners were spies; partly by ethical scruples against Christian religious ceremonies which seemed contrary to Chinese customs such as the veneration of Heaven, ancestors and Confucius; and partly by professional jealousy, on the assumption that if Catholicism were to become prevalent in China, the decline of the doctrines of Confucius, Buddha, and Lao-tzu would damage the position of their protagonists. Soon after Ricci's death in 1610, troubles had begun.

The Chinese Buddhist leadership appears to have been vehemently anti-Catholic. Meanwhile most Chinese scholars remained dogmatically opposed to the Westerners' religion. Lacking enthusiasm for their religion, they also disliked their science. From 1659 on, the scholar Yang Kuang-hsien (1597-1669) wrote a number of treatises denouncing the Christian religion and criticizing the calendar made by Adam Schall von Bell. In 1664 he charged Schall with errors in astronomical calculation, and accused the missionaries, with their "million followers" scattered throughout the land, of plotting against the state and indoctrinating the people with false ideas.<sup>22</sup>

The calendar controversy in particular was caused by the opposition of traditionalists. In a sense, it represented a first symptom of unrest in the Chinese academic world caused by Westerners, just as the Opium War of 1840-1842 was to be the first such disturbance in China's modern political history. The conservatives objected to Western scientific instruments, arguing that clocks were expensive but useless, that cannon could not annihilate enemies but usually burned the

gunners first, and that on Ricci's map of the globe China was not in the very center and was not large enough. They also objected to Western painting because it lacked forceful strokes.<sup>23</sup>

Since such objections were not conclusive, the conservative scholars adopted another tactic, quoting irrelevant Confucian classics to refute the newly introduced Western knowledge. Yang Kuang-hsien says that the calendar of the legendary Emperors Yao and Shun should be used, even though its predictions may be inaccurate. Juan Yuan (1764-1849), a nineteenth-century representative of the anti-Western-science school, says that it is unbelievable that the earth is rotating and he who believes it rebels against the Confucian classics.<sup>24</sup> A more powerful line of attack was to make a forced interpretation of Western discoveries, cite some vague references from the Chinese classics, and claim a Chinese origin of Western science. In this way it was claimed that the Western calendars were derived from the chapter "Yao-tien" in the *Book of History*; the essential ideas of Western discussions of the earth were derived from the commentary on the tenth chapter of *Tseng-tzu*; <sup>25</sup> and the formula for computing the circumference of a circle had been figured out and handed down by Tzu Ch'ung-chih (429-500).<sup>26</sup> As for algebra, it was said to have been the method of Li Yeh of the Yuan dynasty, while other elements of Western mathematics were derived from the ancient mathematical classic, *Chou-pi suan-ching*.<sup>27</sup>

Behind all this condemnation of Western learning lay the basic political fact that the Manchu rulers of China could not tolerate the propagation of a foreign religion which asserted the spiritual supremacy of Rome over Peking. By 1640 Japan, under the Tokugawa, had proscribed Christianity and foreign contact (except for the Dutch in Nagasaki) as politically dangerous. In China by the end of the seventeenth century there were Catholic congregations in all but two of the provinces; the Roman Catholic faith was banned in the Yung-cheng period (1723-1735), though less drastically than in Japan (Chinese Christians were compelled to follow the example of those in Japan and trample on the cross).<sup>28</sup> Even before 1773, when the Jesuit order was dissolved by the Pope, the missionaries at the Chinese court had been limited to serving as technical personnel — painters, musicians and architects — rather than as persons of intellectual importance. They had lost influence as a link between Western and Chinese culture.

#### *The Jesuits and Chinese Science and Technology*

It remains an interesting question what influence the Catholic missionaries had on the native Chinese tradition in mathematics, medicine, and similar fields. We know that Western military superiority, which forced China into closer contact with Europe and America, was a product of technology. Like the tank-and-airplane team today, British gunboats in the 1840's proved decisive in battle. The inadequacy of China's military techniques — her musketeers, mounted archers, and banner-decked war junks — was a symptom of scientific backwardness. Yet it would be quite wrong to conclude that Chinese society had always lagged behind the West in her material culture. On the contrary, medieval China's earlier use of printing, the compass, and gunpowder had indicated her comparative advancement over medieval Europe. The native roots of science and technology in China have not yet been thoroughly examined, although the modern world has already gained useful drugs (like ephedrine) from the old Chinese pharmacopoeia, and the products of many Chinese craftsmen and artists have long been recognized as without peer abroad. How far Chinese technology was influenced by the West before the nineteenth century is still uncertain.

The superiority of the Jesuit knowledge of mathematics was soon recognized

by Chinese scholars. Since the thirteenth century, when the abacus had begun to replace the old Chinese calculating rods,<sup>29</sup> the Chinese mathematics based on the latter method of calculation had fallen gradually into neglect. By the late sixteenth century even the foremost scholars knew practically nothing about higher mathematics. Hence the publication of the Chinese translation of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* in 1607, and certain Jesuit works on mathematics and calendric calculation in subsequent years, created a new interest among the scholars in mathematical studies.<sup>30</sup> The Western method of calculation, writing down the progress and results of reasoning step by step, probably had more appeal for Chinese scholars than the use of the abacus. Under the first four Manchu emperors, the Imperial Board of Astronomy was almost continuously entrusted to one or more Catholic missionaries in Peking. Emperor K'ang-hsi himself studied mathematics under several Jesuits and so did certain selected officials in a special school.<sup>31</sup> Thus, for more than a century, Chinese mathematicians learned only from Western teachers or translated texts. It was not until the 1770's that rare ancient Chinese textbooks on mathematics began to be reprinted and studied.<sup>32</sup> As more and more masterpieces of Chinese mathematics reappeared, the history of its development before the fourteenth century became better known. Yet the Western methods of calculation remained prevalent and, because they were sufficient as a means for understanding and solving the problems posed in ancient Chinese texts, few scholars bothered to learn again how to manipulate the cumbersome calculating rods. Thus an interest in ancient Chinese mathematics was revived in the late eighteenth century, while Western mathematics as introduced in the preceding century continued to be fully accepted and studied. More modern Western texts were translated after 1850.<sup>33</sup>

The Chinese level of mechanical technology, as summarized in the work, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu* (Natural resources utilized for manufacturing) of 1637, was probably as high as the material resources and sciences of the day permitted. The early Jesuits introduced some ideas about labor-saving machines but they failed to rouse any general interest. Among the Western manufactured articles that were admired most in China were clocks, organs, telescopes, and eyeglasses, but only the last of these was imitated by Chinese artisans.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, in medicine, a Jesuit work on anatomy printed in 1635 did not arouse much interest among Chinese physicians. Certain new drugs such as quinine were imported but in quantities too small to have any lasting influence. The real beginning of Western medicine in China was Dr. Alexander Pearson's introduction of vaccination against smallpox in 1805. Although limited at first to Canton, this technique soon spread to other parts of China and was also adopted by Chinese physicians. In the 1830's the Protestant missionaries began to establish free clinics and hospitals as the best means to promote Christianity, having found that the Chinese officials and gentry usually would permit and occasionally even sponsor such philanthropic institutions. Thereafter modern medicine and medical education had a steady growth in China. Yet at the same time the old Chinese medicine, except in the field of surgery, has widely persisted.<sup>35</sup>

Surveying and map-making were other kinds of Western technology that the Jesuits brought to China. A general cartographic survey of the empire in the period 1707-1717 was conducted by teams of Jesuit fathers with trained Chinese students, one of whom later took an active part in the surveying of the newly conquered area in Turkestan and Ili (1755-1759). All this produced a number of the most accurate maps of Eastern Asia which had yet been made; but in China some of them were not even printed and those that were published did not have much circulation. Only in Europe were these maps put to good use. After the middle of the eighteenth century the technique of surveying and map-making

was lost among the Chinese. It had to be learned as a new subject more than one hundred years later.<sup>36</sup>

All in all, the residual influence of the Western technology made available to China through the early missionaries seems to have been rather slight. Even when present, it was seldom acknowledged. Meanwhile an anti-Western political tradition had become well established.

### c. *The Attitude of the Ch'ing Court toward the Westerners*

The Chinese monarchy under the Manchus continued to be a powerful and centralized institution. The emperor was expected to carry a heavy administrative burden day by day, to rule as well as reign. All official business of any importance was supposed to pass before him. The Son of Heaven at the top of the Chinese social pyramid was indeed expected to perform a superhuman function, supervising the major personnel, the use of funds and military forces, public works and ceremonies, on a vast and intricate scale.

Two results flowed from this emphasis on the monarchy: one was that a ramified and conservative administrative mechanism had to be maintained at Peking to carry on the various imperial functions under the emperor's aegis. The other was that the emperor himself, as a single man, had all he could do to keep up with his daily duties and meet the dynasty's problems, without seeking further fields of activity outside the court. He was not easily susceptible to new influences coming from abroad, yet his response to them was an essential act of leadership if the Chinese state was to make any response at all. The attitude of the emperor, or the court which surrounded and assisted him, was therefore of prime importance in China's relations with the West — a circumstance which the Jesuits had clearly perceived.

Since the court's attitude was to play a great part in the nineteenth-century acceptance of the West, let us note briefly the precedents which the early Ch'ing emperors bequeathed to their less fortunate successors of a later day.

When the Manchu conquerors first came to Peking in 1644, they found the Jesuit Adam Schall there, in charge of a bureau compiling a set of monographs on Western methods of calculation for making the calendar. Schall was permitted to continue his work, and when he had the new calendar for 1645 prepared in time for publication, his position as head of the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy was confirmed. During the following two hundred years, except for a short interruption, some Catholic missionary was always in charge of that Bureau. The first Manchu emperor in China, Shun-chih (1644-1661), was very friendly towards Schall and sometimes sought the aged missionary's advice. His successor, K'ang-hsi (reigned 1661-1722) was even more conciliatory towards the Jesuits and made use of their services to a considerable extent. During a controversy in 1669, when their predictions concerning astronomical phenomena were proved correct, he became interested in Western mathematics. Thereafter, the emperor studied Western mathematics and scientific subjects and kept several of the Jesuits near at hand to provide information or translations. In 1689 he sent two of them with the embassy from China which went to negotiate a treaty with the Russians at Nerchinsk — a treaty demarcating the Sino-Russian boundary in the northeast which remained in force down to the 1840's. For more than a century after 1689, Western missionaries at Peking served as interpreters whenever Russian or other European diplomatic missions came there. K'ang-hsi also employed them to teach selected young students mathematics and art, and to supervise the repairing of clocks and music boxes. In the last decade of his reign, as we have noted, he sent them out in teams to conduct a cartographic survey of the whole empire.

He also tried his best to arbitrate rationally in the so-called rites controversy between the Jesuit and other Catholic orders. The tolerance of this illustrious ruler, however, did not always stretch to the point of permitting missionary work in the entire empire. Evidently fearing that political repercussions would follow provincial proselytizing, K'ang-hsi introduced a system of passports in order to allow only certain missionaries in Peking and Macao. This policy was followed by his successors.<sup>37</sup>

Yung-cheng (1723-1735) developed a dislike for Western missionaries because some of them had taken the side of his opponents on the issue of his succession to the throne. Those who had official posts in Peking he tolerated, but he deported many others who were working in the provinces.<sup>38</sup> Under Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795), European mechanics were still employed to assemble and repair the clockworks and other devices brought from Europe, and several Jesuit missionaries served as architects of the buildings and landscape garden in Italian style which formed a part of the Old Summer Palace. About 1747 a fountain in the Western style was constructed by Michel Benoist, and this became the nucleus of a group of buildings in the Italian style designed by Castiglione.<sup>39</sup> By the last years of Ch'ien-lung, however, when the Macartney embassy of 1793 visited Peking from England, the Europeans had ceased to play much part at the Ch'ing court. Their long-continued activities there, perhaps because more technical than ideological, had evidently not given the Manchu rulers any real understanding of the West. The center of contact shifted to Canton.

Until this time, the missionaries at Peking had usually been referred to as "men of the Western Ocean" (*Hsi-yang jen*), meaning Europeans. But as Sino-Western contact and conflict increased in the early nineteenth century, the generic term "barbarians" (*i*), long applied to the Europeans at Canton, came into more general use. In the traditional Chinese society, every person had his place and designation; and since the early Portuguese adventurers who reached China by sea after 1514 were non-Chinese in culture, and also inclined to piracy and rapine, this appellation had been fitting both in the old Greek sense of "barbarian" as "outlandish" and in the later sense of the term as "barbarous." The non-Chinese of Inner Asia had provided an inexhaustible reservoir of "barbarians" since the beginning of Chinese history. There was nothing novel in the idea of bellicose foreigners turning up on the Chinese frontier. The Portuguese and their successors had been assimilated into the Confucian scheme of things by being allowed to dwell on the southeast coast at Macao or Canton under a careful, if polite, quarantine. The success of the Jesuits at Peking had been an inside job, quite distinct from the trade of Western merchants on the South China coast. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Western world was represented there chiefly by the British East India Company trading at Canton, where a complex of Sino-Western problems was gradually accumulating over such questions as diplomatic equality, taxation of trade, and legal procedures. It was most unfortunate for the Manchu dynasty at Peking and the Chinese and Manchu officials who represented it at Canton that the Chinese concept of the West had been so little developed.

Knowing little of the West in fact, China's ruling class applied to it the ancient theory of tributary relations—the grand and ancient concept that the Middle Kingdom was indeed the center of civilization, that the Son of Heaven actually represented all mankind in his functions as a moral and ceremonial intermediary between human society and the unseen forces of Nature, and that all the surrounding tribes and peoples should naturally recognize this central fact. The Chinese theory of state, in short, was that of a universal empire. Foreign rulers who wished contact or trade with the empire should first enroll as tributaries, accept investiture, send envoys to perform the kotow (three kneelings and nine prostrations)

before the Son of Heaven, and otherwise obey the regulations for tributary intercourse. As European contact increased, the Ch'ing court persisted in the effort to fit Western nations into this traditional and outmoded tributary framework.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the most famous example of this attitude is the lofty and condescending edict of Ch'ien-lung to King George III in 1793, which read in part:<sup>41</sup>

AN IMPERIAL EDICT TO THE KING OF ENGLAND: You, O King, are so inclined toward our civilization that you have sent a special envoy across the seas to bring to our Court your memorial of congratulations on the occasion of my birthday and to present your native products as an expression of your thoughtfulness. On perusing your memorial, so simply worded and sincerely conceived, I am impressed by your genuine respectfulness and friendliness and greatly pleased.

As to the request made in your memorial, O King, to send one of your nationals to stay at the Celestial Court to take care of your country's trade with China, this is not in harmony with the state system of our dynasty and will definitely not be permitted. Traditionally people of the European nations who wished to render some service under the Celestial Court have been permitted to come to the capital. But after their arrival they are obliged to wear Chinese court costumes, are placed in a certain residence, and are never allowed to return to their own countries. This is the established rule of the Celestial Dynasty with which presumably you, O King, are familiar. Now you, O King, wish to send one of your nationals to live in the capital, but he is not like the Europeans, who come to Peking as Chinese employees, live there and never return home again, nor can he be allowed to go and come and maintain any correspondence. This is indeed a useless undertaking.

Moreover the territory under the control of the Celestial Court is very large and wide. There are well-established regulations governing tributary envoys from the outer states to Peking, giving them provisions (of food and traveling expenses) by our post-houses and limiting their going and coming. There has never been a precedent for letting them do whatever they like. Now if you, O King, wish to have a representative in Peking, his language will be unintelligible and his dress different from the regulations; there is no place to accommodate him. . . .

[P. 14] The Celestial Court has pacified and possessed the territory within the four seas. Its sole aim is to do its utmost to achieve good government and to manage political affairs, attaching no value to strange jewels and precious objects. The various articles presented by you, O King, this time are accepted by my special order to the office in charge of such functions in consideration of the offerings having come from a long distance with sincere good wishes. As a matter of fact, the virtue and prestige of the Celestial Dynasty having spread far and wide, the kings of the myriad nations come by land and sea with all sorts of precious things. Consequently there is nothing we lack, as your principal envoy and others have themselves observed. We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufactures. . . .

In such terms the Englishmen and Scotsmen who were about to batter down the gates and destroy the Middle Kingdom's ancient superiority over all other

peoples were still categorized as uncultured barbarians outside the pale of civilization. Chinese and Manchu officials, making systematic reports in their memorials to the emperor, regularly applied to the British and Americans at Canton the same terms that were traditionally used with reference to the Burut and other tribes of Central Asia or to the Lo-lo and Miao-tzu aborigines of south-west China. Curiosity about Europe and America appears to have been very slight among the ruling class of China. The confusion based on ignorance was confounded by the difficulties of translation between the Chinese and European languages. The Portuguese had been called *Fo-lang-chi* ("Franks") because they came from the same region as the Franks who had fought the Saracens at the time of the Crusades. When the French arrived, France (*Fo-lang-hsi*) was confused with Portugal. The union of Spain and Portugal in the late sixteenth century confused those two countries in the Chinese mind. The presence at Portuguese Macao of Italian Jesuits identified Portugal with *I-ta-li*. Meanwhile the Dutch from Holland (*Ho-lan*) were confused with the French, and when a Dutch king took the British throne, Holland became confused with England.<sup>42</sup>

If the names of the European barbarians were topsy-turvy, their habitat was even more so. Since they all arrived by ship from the "Southern Ocean" (*Nan-yang*), through which Chinese merchants plied their trade by junk with Southeast Asia, it was often assumed that these European barbarians dwelt somewhere to the southwest, beyond the minuscule sultanates and ports-of-call like Sungora, Patani, and Johore which were strung along the Malay peninsula. When Europe was assigned to its proper place in the "Western Ocean" (*Hsi-yang*), confusion still resulted from the fact that this had been the very logical name anciently assigned to the Indian Ocean west of Malaya. Europe had to be called "Great Western Ocean" (*Ta-hsi-yang*) to distinguish it.

The personal characteristics of the strange people who came to China from Europe were well known to the Chinese linguists, hong merchants, and compradores who specialized in the foreign trade. But to most of the empire, Europeans were known only through rumor and folklore. Some of the latter has been enshrined in books of the period, which comment on the barbarians' "dazzling white" flesh, high noses, and "red hair" (*Hung-mao*, the name of the Dutch in particular). "Their custom is to esteem women and think lightly of men. Marriages are left to mutual arrangement," says one imperial compilation of the 1750's,<sup>43</sup> thereby indicating the curious and chaotic state of Western mores. But this Chinese observation of the West hardly went beyond the superficialities of manners — "they wear short coats and tip their black felt hats as a sign of politeness. The Swedes take snuff, which they carry in little containers made of golden thread." This appears to have been about the level of understanding of the West which prevailed in China in the period when the industrial revolution was beginning to remake the world. The diplomatic effort of Lord Amherst at Peking in 1816, like that of Macartney in 1793, was labeled a "tribute mission from the King of England" and did little to educate the Chinese upper class. After all, between 1655 and 1795, there had been some seventeen missions from Western countries, including Russia, which got as far as audience with the emperor, and all but the British had performed the kotow. The record contained nothing to show that Europeans were not tributary to China like other countries, whenever they wanted relations with China at all. Indeed, the Chinese records available to Commissioner Lin Tse-hsi in 1839 also state *pro forma* that Macartney performed the kotow, although we know he did not.<sup>44</sup>

As the export trade in teas and silks at Canton grew in volume and value, a few accounts of it and of the foreign trading nations were drawn up by Chinese chroniclers. One of these accounts, the "Maritime record" (*Hai-lu*), was taken

down by a scholar from the lips of an old blind interpreter who in his youth had sailed the seas.<sup>45</sup> He describes the many-storied houses of England, the three bridges of London and its plethora of prostitutes, how the soldiers wear red and the women wear narrow-waisted dresses, tight above and full below — all exotic enough, but hardly enlightening. This and other works of its kind do state, however, that England lives by overseas trade and by seizing profitable posts like Bombay, Bengal, and Singapore. At the beginning of our story in 1839, the British position in India was well-known and the strength of England's naval guns had already been exhibited on the coast of China. Yet the Chinese officials of the 1840's seem to have been profoundly ignorant of what they faced. One of their first efforts, aside from self-defense, had to be the study of Western geography, to learn the name, location, products, and size of each country — almost like children in school.

# 2

## RECOGNITION OF CHINA'S NEED TO KNOW THE WEST, 1839-1860

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### CHAPTER III. COMMISSIONER LIN'S PROGRAM FOR MEETING BRITISH AGGRESSION

Unlike the Japanese, the Chinese of a century ago did not look back on a tradition of borrowing from abroad. The empire was vast and its institutions were slow to change. It took the rulers of China two decades, after the first defeat by British arms in 1840, to acknowledge the necessity of studying the West -- a necessity which many Japanese students of the "Dutch learning" had recognized even before the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853. Japanese scholars, though secluded from foreign contact, were evidently more curious about the Western world than their contemporaries in China, who knew of the Western merchants at Canton but made little effort to seek them out.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Chinese officials were supremely ignorant of the West but well-versed in human nature and in Chinese tradition, they at once applied to the British those concepts and practices which had become traditional in China's dealings with barbarians -- particularly the joint methods of coercion and persuasion which have so often been combined in Chinese statecraft. This was the approach of the famous Commissioner Lin Tse-hsü when he precipitated the Opium War in 1839 by blockading the British merchants at Canton and destroying their opium. His letter to Queen Victoria which forms our first document below was an appeal to conscience, just as his drastic action at Canton was a resort to force. Unfortunately for Lin, this combined approach failed in both its aspects; for British gunboats soon retaliated with superior power, while the British refused to acknowledge that the opium trade was the main and only point in dispute. To the Western mind, important questions of diplomatic equality, freedom of trade, and legal safeguards for foreigners in China were also at issue. Chinese opinion saw only the evil of the opium trade, which poisoned an increasing number of Chinese smokers and drained China's vital silver supply out of the country. But this was too simple a view of the problem which China faced.

We present below two brief items by Lin Tse-hsü. One was written when he tried to chastise the British, and one afterward. There follows a longer selection from the first famous geography of the 1840's, a book which tried to describe the West, almost for the first time in Chinese history. Finally, we note the early

growth of nationalistic anti-foreignism at Canton, a sentiment which was eventually to motivate great changes.

In the first document, the righteous moral tone of Commissioner Lin's appeal to Queen Victoria in 1839 is certainly striking. It indicates that the opium question in the minds of Chinese officials was not entirely, as some have alleged, a matter of economics; the responsibility of the Confucian monarch for the welfare of the common people was also involved. Lin Tse-hsü had reached Canton as imperial commissioner on March 10, 1839, and soon coerced the British merchants into surrendering their opium stocks, which were publicly destroyed. But by August it had become apparent to him that the opium trade could be finally checked only at its source. This famous letter to "the ruler of England" (*Ying-kuo wang*, i.e., without distinction of sex) was therefore a further and unprecedented effort to solve an insoluble problem.

Lin's phraseology toward the British ruler is courteous within the limits of traditional tributary language. His theory that the barbarians must perish without the rhubarb,<sup>2</sup> tea, and other exports from China is a manifestation of Chinese egocentricity which has not been entirely absent in recent times. Lin's use of rewards and punishments to make merchants calculate their advantage and disadvantage is in the Chinese tradition of administrative law. It is plain that the imperial commissioner expected human nature to be the same in Britain as in China. More important, he expected it to respond equally to the dictates of moral conscience.

#### DOC. 1. LIN TSE-HSÜ'S MORAL ADVICE TO QUEEN VICTORIA, 1839<sup>3</sup>

A communication: magnificently our great Emperor soothes and pacifies China and the foreign countries, regarding all with the same kindness. If there is profit, then he shares it with the peoples of the world; if there is harm, then he removes it on behalf of the world. This is because he takes the mind of heaven and earth as his mind.

The kings of your honorable country by a tradition handed down from generation to generation have always been noted for their politeness and submissiveness. We have read your successive tributary memorials saying, "In general our countrymen who go to trade in China have always received His Majesty the Emperor's gracious treatment and equal justice," and so on. Privately we are delighted with the way in which the honorable rulers of your country deeply understand the grand principles and are grateful for the Celestial grace. For this reason the Celestial Court in soothing those from afar has redoubled its polite and kind treatment. The profit from trade has been enjoyed by them continuously for two hundred years. This is the source from which your country has become known for its wealth.

But after a long period of commercial intercourse, there appear among the crowd of barbarians both good persons and bad, unevenly. Consequently there are those who smuggle opium to seduce the Chinese people and so cause the spread of the poison to all provinces. Such persons who only care to profit themselves, and disregard their harm to others, are not tolerated by the laws of heaven and are unanimously hated by human beings. His Majesty the Emperor, upon hearing of this, is in a towering rage [p. 34]. He has especially sent me, his commissioner, to come to Kwangtung, and together with the governor-general and governor jointly to investigate and settle this matter.

All those people in China who sell opium or smoke opium should receive the death penalty. If we trace the crime of those barbarians who through the years have been selling opium, then the deep harm they have wrought and the great profit they have usurped should fundamentally justify their execution according to law. We take into consideration, however, the fact that the various barbarians have still known how to repent their crimes and return to their allegiance to us by taking the 20,183 chests<sup>4</sup> of opium from their storehouses and petitioning us, through their consular officer [superintendent of trade], Elliot, to receive it. It has been entirely destroyed and this has been faithfully reported to the Throne in several memorials by this commissioner and his colleagues.

Fortunately we have received a specially extended favor from His Majesty the Emperor, who considers that for those who voluntarily surrender there are still some circumstances to palliate their crime, and so for the time being he has magnanimously excused them from punishment. But as for those who again violate the opium prohibition, it is difficult for the law to pardon them repeatedly. Having established new regulations, we presume that the ruler of your honorable country, who takes delight in our culture and whose disposition is inclined towards us, must be able to instruct the various barbarians to observe the law with care. It is only necessary to explain to them the advantages and disadvantages and then they will know that the legal code of the Celestial Court must be absolutely obeyed with awe.

We find that your country is sixty or seventy thousand *li* [three *li* make one mile, ordinarily] from China. Yet there are barbarian ships that strive to come here for trade for the purpose of making a great profit. The wealth of China is used to profit the barbarians. That is to say, the great profit made by barbarians is all taken from the rightful share of China. By what right do they then in return use the poisonous drug to injure the Chinese people? Even though the barbarians may not necessarily intend to do us harm, yet in coveting profit to an extreme, they have no regard for injuring others. Let us ask, where is your conscience? I have heard that the smoking of opium is very strictly forbidden by your country; that is because the harm caused by opium is clearly understood. Since it is not permitted to do harm to your own country, then even less should you let it be passed on to the harm of other countries — how much less to China! Of all that China exports to foreign countries, there is not a single thing which is not beneficial to people: they are of benefit when eaten, or of benefit when used, or of benefit when resold: all are beneficial. Is there a single article from China which has done any harm to foreign countries? Take tea and rhubarb, for example; the foreign countries cannot get along for a single day without them. If China cuts off these benefits with no sympathy for those who are to suffer, then what can the barbarians rely upon to keep themselves alive? Moreover the woolsens, camlets, and longells [i.e., textiles] of foreign countries cannot be woven unless they obtain Chinese silk. If China, again, cuts off this beneficial export, what profit can the barbarians expect to make? As for other food-stuffs, beginning with candy, ginger, cinnamon, and so forth, and articles for use, beginning with silk, satin, chinaware, and so on, all the things that



must be had by foreign countries are innumerable. On the other hand, articles coming from the outside to China can only be used as toys. We can take them or get along without them. Since they are not needed by China, what difficulty would there be if we closed the frontier and stopped the trade? Nevertheless our Celestial Court lets tea, silk, and other goods be shipped without limit and circulated everywhere without begrudging it in the slightest. This is for no other reason but to share the benefit with the people of the whole world.

The goods from China carried away by your country not only supply your own consumption and use, but also can be divided up and sold to other countries, producing a triple profit. Even if you do not sell opium, you still have this threefold profit. How can you bear to go further, selling products injurious to others in order to fulfill your insatiable desire?

Suppose there were people from another country who carried opium for sale to England and seduced your people into buying and smoking it; certainly your honorable ruler would deeply hate it and be bitterly aroused. We have heard heretofore that your honorable ruler is kind and benevolent. Naturally you would not wish to give unto others what you yourself do not want. We have also heard that the ships coming to Canton have all had regulations promulgated and given to them in which it is stated that it is not permitted to carry contraband goods. This indicates that the administrative orders of your honorable ruler have been originally strict and clear. Only because the trading ships are numerous, heretofore perhaps they have not been examined with care. Now after this communication has been dispatched and you have clearly understood the strictness of the prohibitory laws of the Celestial Court, certainly you will not let your subjects dare again to violate the law.

We have further learned that in London, the capital of your honorable ruler, and in Scotland (Su-ko-lan), Ireland (Ai-lun), and other places, originally no opium has been produced. Only in several places of India under your control such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, Benares, and Malwa has opium been planted from hill to hill, and ponds<sup>5</sup> have been opened for its manufacture. For months and years work is continued in order to accumulate the poison. The obnoxious odor ascends, irritating heaven and frightening the spirits. Indeed you, O King, can eradicate the opium plant in these places, hoe over the fields entirely, and sow in its stead the five grains [i.e., millet, barley, wheat, etc.]. Anyone who dares again attempt to plant and manufacture opium should be severely punished. This will really be a great, benevolent government policy that will increase the common weal and get rid of evil. For this, Heaven must support you and the spirits must bring you good fortune, prolonging your old age and extending your descendants. All will depend on this act.

As for the barbarian merchants who come to China, their food and drink and habitation are all received by the gracious favor of our Celestial Court. Their accumulated wealth is all benefit given with pleasure by our Celestial Court. They spend rather few days in their own country but more time in Canton. [p. 35] To digest clearly the legal penalties as an aid to instruction has been a valid principle in all ages. Suppose a man of another country

comes to England to trade, he still has to obey the English laws; how much more should he obey in China the laws of the Celestial Dynasty?

Now we have set up regulations governing the Chinese people. He who sells opium shall receive the death penalty and he who smokes it also the death penalty. Now consider this: if the barbarians do not bring opium, then how can the Chinese people resell it, and how can they smoke it? The fact is that the wicked barbarians beguile the Chinese people into a death trap. How then can we grant life only to these barbarians? He who takes the life of even one person still has to atone for it with his own life; yet is the harm done by opium limited to the taking of one life only? Therefore in the new regulations, in regard to those barbarians who bring opium to China, the penalty is fixed at decapitation or strangulation. This is what is called getting rid of a harmful thing on behalf of mankind.

Moreover we have found that in the middle of the second month of this year [April 9] Consul [Superintendent] Elliot of your nation, because the opium prohibition law was very stern and severe, petitioned for an extension of the time limit. He requested a limit of five months for India and its adjacent harbors and related territories, and ten months for England proper, after which they would act in conformity with the new regulations. Now we, the commissioner and others, have memorialized and have received the extraordinary Celestial grace of His Majesty the Emperor, who has redoubled his consideration and compassion. All those who within the period of the coming one year (from England) or six months (from India) bring opium to China by mistake, but who voluntarily confess and completely surrender their opium, shall be exempt from their punishment. After this limit of time, if there are still those who bring opium to China then they will plainly have committed a wilful violation and shall at once be executed according to law, with absolutely no clemency or pardon. This may be called the height of kindness and the perfection of justice.

Our Celestial Dynasty rules over and supervises the myriad states, and surely possesses unfathomable spiritual dignity. Yet the Emperor cannot bear to execute people without having first tried to reform them by instruction. Therefore he especially promulgates these fixed regulations. The barbarian merchants of your country, if they wish to do business for a prolonged period, are required to obey our statutes respectfully and to cut off permanently the source of opium. They must by no means try to test the effectiveness of the law with their lives. May you, O King, check your wicked and sift your vicious people before they come to China, in order to guarantee the peace of your nation, to show further the sincerity of your politeness and submissiveness, and to let the two countries enjoy together the blessings of peace. How fortunate, how fortunate indeed! After receiving this dispatch will you immediately give us a prompt reply regarding the details and circumstances of your cutting off the opium traffic. Be sure not to put this off. The above is what has to be communicated. [Vermilion endorsement:] This is appropriately worded and quite comprehensive (*Te-t'i chou-tao*).

In retrospect it is plain that the Manchu-Chinese defiance of Britain never had the slightest chance of military success. Confident of their power, the British

soon opened hostilities, and in 1840 Commissioner Lin was recalled from Canton in disgrace for having produced a war instead of a settlement. As punishment he was ordered to start on his way into exile in Ili.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of his recent experience with the British at Canton, he wrote letters in 1842 to various friends frankly admitting China's military inferiority to the West and favoring her purchase and manufacture of ships and guns patterned after the Western model. This confession is in sharp contrast with his former intransigent action in Canton. Had his plans for making modern weapons been carried out, China's modernization movement might have been advanced twenty years. Unfortunately, with the Court opposed to it, he dared not make an overt advocacy of Westernization but told only his friends and asked them to keep it confidential. One of these letters, translated below, was addressed to Wu Tzu-hsü,<sup>7</sup> a compiler of the Hanlin Academy and a good friend of Wo-jen and Tseng Kuo-fan (on these men, see Chapter VI and Doc. 18).

DOC. 2. A LETTER OF LIN TSE-HSÜ RECOGNIZING WESTERN MILITARY SUPERIORITY, 1842<sup>8</sup>

[Lin describes to his friend how impossible it proved to control the barbarians, p. 19.] The rebels' ships on the open sea came and went as they pleased, now in the south and now suddenly in the north, changing successively between morning and evening. If we tried to put up a defense everywhere, not only would we toil and expend ourselves without limit, but also how could we recruit and transport so many troops, militia, artillery, and ammunition, and come to their support quickly? . . .

When I was in office in Kwangtung and Kwangsi, I had made plans regarding the problems of ships and cannon and a water force. Afraid that there was not enough time to build ships, I at first rented them. Afraid that there was not enough time to cast cannon and that it would not be done according to the regulations, I at first bought foreign ones. The most painful thing was that when the Hu-men [the Bogue or "Tiger's mouth," the entrance to the Canton River] was broken into, a large number of good cannon fell into the hands of the rebellious barbarians. I recall that after I had been punished two years ago, I still took the risk of calling the Emperor's attention to two things: ships and guns. At that time, if these things could have been made and prepared, they still could have been used with effect to fight against the enemy in Chekiang last fall [1841]. Now it is even more difficult to check the wildfire. After all, ships, guns, and a water force are absolutely indispensable. Even if the rebellious barbarians had fled and returned beyond the seas, these things would still have to be urgently planned for, in order to work out the permanent defense of our sea frontiers. Moreover, unless we have weapons, what other help can we get now to drive away the crocodile and to get rid of the whales? . . .

But at this time I must strictly observe the advice to seal my lips as one corks the mouth of a bottle. However, toward those with identical aims and interests, I suddenly spit out the truth and am unable to control myself. I extremely regret my foolishness and carelessness. Nevertheless, when I turn my thoughts to the depth of your attention to me, then I cannot conceal these things from myself. I only beg you to keep them confidential. By all means, please do not tell other persons.

Lin Tse-hsü's concern over the British problem had led him while at Canton to compile information on the West and to suggest strategic principles for holding Britain at bay. As the British Governor of Hongkong wrote later, "When Lin . . . got involved with Europeans, he availed himself of the aid of interpreters, and of every work he could procure, either native or foreign, to obtain a knowledge of . . . every country of the world beyond China . . . the Missionary Tracts, the Chinese Monthly Magazine, a Treatise on Commerce, a Description of the United States and of England, a work on Geography, etc., which were all, more or less, abridged or abstracted. Translations were also made of all such articles in the newspapers as contained anything concerning China, and especially opium."<sup>9</sup> The result was a famous geography book on the "maritime countries" (*Hai-kuo t'u-chih*) which was compiled by the well-known scholar Wei Yuan (1794-1856), making use of Lin's materials. Some sections of the work name Lin as the compiler. Wei Yuan's first acknowledgment at the beginning of his preface is to the "Gazetteer of the four continents" (*Ssu-chou chih*), which was probably a compilation of translations from Murray's *Cyclopaedia of Geography* and was published by Lin in 1841.<sup>10</sup> After Lin was dismissed in disgrace, Wei Yuan completed the compilation and revised it several times. The first edition, 50 *chüan*, was published in 1844; the second in 60 *chüan* in 1849, and the third in 100 *chüan* in 1852.<sup>11</sup>

Wei Yuan had published in 1842 his famous "Record of imperial military exploits" (*Sheng-wu chi*) in which he surveyed the campaigns of the Ch'ing dynasty since its founding. He was a good scholar of military history and economic geography and a critical student of the classics. Indeed, his academic position in the mid-nineteenth century was almost comparable to that of Ku Yen-wu in the seventeenth and Tai Chen (1724-1777) in the eighteenth. During the Opium War, however, Wei Yuan was a minor civilian official at Yangchow and he did not receive the *chin-shih* degree until 1844. While he was familiar with the British military campaigns, his views on strategy and high policy undoubtedly derive from those of Lin Tse-hsü.

In the following section on military strategy against the British, there crops up the doctrinaire fallacy into which so much Chinese scholarly thinking was inclined to fall — a tendency to settle strategic questions on the basis of theories, closely reasoned but inadequately based on fact. Even so, his advocacy of land defense rather than sea battles is sensible and he at least explodes the theories so widely expounded in memorials of the period that British vessels could be sunk by divers boring holes in their bottoms, or burned by fireships floating against them.

In the field of diplomacy, Lin and Wei Yuan enunciate principles which were time-tested in their day and have been used effectively since. "Using barbarians to control barbarians," the Chinese counterpart of the balance-of-power concept in Western Europe, is not a foolproof stratagem (any more than is the balance of power). But like that similar device of empires, "divide and rule," it is often inexpensive and requires only a modest investment of force. "Learning the superior skills of the barbarians" strikes a more novel note, although it was soon to become the spirit of an entire epoch in nearby Japan and the slogan of many Chinese reformers.

In applying the principle of using barbarians, Lin at once hit upon the possibility of getting the Russians to invade India, which would indeed have put a stop to the British foray in China. The idea of using France and the United States against England was a similar shot in the dark, but wider of the mark. Exactly how far the Americans and French actually sought to mediate in the Opium War is not yet known.<sup>12</sup>